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## Research Article

### The Uniqueness of Japanese Passive Voice -A New Approach to Understanding Japanese Passive Voice-

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#### ABSTRACT

Japanese passive sentences structurally include “direct passive sentences” which have their equivalent in active sentences, and “indirect passive sentences” which have no equivalent in active sentences. Direct passive is expressed by the prefix “di-“ in Indonesian passive sentence, but indirect passive cannot be expressed by the prefix “di-“ and it seems difficult for Indonesian Japanese learners. Indirect passive does not exist in many languages, including in English and somehow in the Indonesian language, too. This paper aims to know why do Japanese people use passive voice to convey events or incidents, what functions does the passive distraction voice have different from the active voice, and to clarify about the differences and similarities between Japanese and Indonesian passive sentences. These points may be obvious to Japanese native speakers in some sense, but it will be such a great difficulty for Indonesian learners of Japanese to learn and use. Through this paper result, in which using a descriptive-qualitative method, there are four main conditions in Japanese direct passive sentences, namely the speaker’s point of view, conditions for changing conditions, conditions for specificity, and conditions for losses. In Japanese, if one of the four conditions has been fulfilled (or two or more conditions), then the passive voice can be accepted. Also, Japanese learners must understand that sentences with the Indonesian prefix “di-“ do not automatically become passive sentences in Japanese. If these important points are not well known or understood, this can lead to misunderstandings in the use of Japanese passive voice.

*Keywords: Japanese passive voice, Direct passive, Indirect passive*

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#### Introduction

In Japanese, the word passive is used for passive voice. The meanings are similar on the surface, but in reality they represent quite different contents. Regarding this passiveness, Yamada stated in "Japanese Grammar Theory"

as follows. "The passive of our language is something that makes the taste different. As mentioned earlier, so-called transitive verbs must not be replaced with passive verbs, and at the same time they are also passive with so-called intransitive verbs. Therefore, I have to

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think that there is a fundamental difference between the passive verb of my national language and the passive verb of the English national language. I should think that there is an area that is impossible to transfer my passive to him" [1].

By the way, there are various definitions of passiveness in modern Japanese. Shigeyuki Suzuki says as follows. "Passive sentence is a sentence that expresses the subject of the movement of the original verb (direct object), etc., and was created with the suffix "reru / ru", it is represented by a derivative verb [2]. Akira Matsumura says that "something is influenced by the action of the verb". The verb that takes this phase is called the "passive" (or "passive phase") [3]. Iwade explain that "Passive expression takes a passive phase (also passive) in which a verb is one of the voices and expresses the meaning that" a certain thing is directly or indirectly influenced by the action represented by that verb. "saying. "Passive (passive) is made by adding" reru "to the imperfect form of a verb. The sentence grasped and expressed centering on the subject of the act is the active voice, while the sentence grasped and expressed centering on the subject to be acted is passive (passive)" [4].

However, passive means when you are unilaterally acted or influenced by the other party. It is a sentence that describes the movement of the mind. So whether it feels annoying or beneficial depends largely on the meaning of the individual verb.

1. 私は父にたたかれた。(迷惑) I was hit by my father. (Troublesome)
2. 私は友人に助けられた。(恩恵) I was helped by a friend. (benefit)
3. 私はウェーターに水をこぼされた。(迷惑) I was spilled by the waiter. (Troublesome)
4. 私は友人に花束を贈られた。(恩恵) I was given a bouquet by my friend. (benefit)
5. 私は駅員に背中を押された。(迷惑) I was pushed by the station staff on my back. (Troublesome)
6. 私は先生に発音をほめられた。(恩恵) I was praised by the teacher for pronunciation. (benefit)

On the other hand, passive sentence in Indonesian are quite different from Japanese passive sentence. According to Sneddon et al. [5],

there are two types of passive sentences in Indonesian. It is one type of passive sentence and two types of passive sentence. In one type of passive sentence, the actor is the third person. The object of an active sentence is replaced with the subject in a passive sentence, and the verb prefix "me-" is changed to the prefix "di-". For example

Active sentence : Dia menjemput saya  
(Subject me-verb object)

Passive sentence : Saya dijemput oleh dia  
(= Saya dijemputnya) (Subject di-verb actor)

In the two types of passive sentences, the passive agent is a pronoun. This type becomes a passive sentence by moving the object to the beginning of the sentence and removing the "me-" prefix of the verb and is also called the zero type.

For example

Active sentence : Kami menjemput dia.

Passive sentence : Dia kami jemput.

Until now, we have looked at the distinction between indirect passive and direct passive. This was a combination of whether the recipient (subject) was directly or indirectly influenced by the agent.

Direct passive: Anne was praised by the teacher.

Indirect passive: The teacher praised my son.

Because Anne (subject / receiver) was praised directly by the teacher (actor), it is called direct passive. I (subject / receiver) was not directly praised by the teacher (actor), there is my son was praised. In other words, it was indirectly praised, so it is called indirect passive.

Two types of passive sentences in Japanese, "direct passive sentences" have a corresponding active sentence and "indirect passive sentences" that do not have a corresponding active sentence. Direct passive is represented by the prefix "di-" in Indonesian passive sentences, but indirect passive is not represented by the prefix "di-", so it seems difficult for Indonesian learners of Japanese. Furthermore, as a result of asking students what the passive sentence is and whether it is natural in response to the active sentence "I praised Hanako", the answered is yes, "Hanako was praised by me" was natural. In the Indonesian passive sentence, it becomes "Hanako dipuji oleh saya." (Hanako

was praised by me). This passive sentence seems natural in Indonesian, but is ineligible in Japanese. The Indonesian word "Hanako saya puji" (Hanako who I praised) is a natural passive sentence, and the Japanese passive sentence "Hanako was praised by me" is unnatural. It seems that there are fundamental differences in the essence of passiveness. Now, let's think about the differences and similarities between the Japanese passive sentence and the Indonesian passive sentence. These points may be obvious to the Japanese, who are native speakers, in a sense, but for Indonesian Japanese learners, it becomes a big difficulty in learning and using. Therefore, this study aims to determine the uniqueness contained in Japanese passive sentences, because each language has its own characteristics, which if it is not understood properly it will cause misunderstanding and confusion in its use.

**Material and Methods**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is research that analyzes data inductively to find and understand the overall meaning based on existing facts, so that it can be broken down into a theory [6]. These facts in this study were obtained from descriptive data which began with collecting basic theories regarding Japanese passive sentences and Indonesian passive sentences. Then proceed with collecting sentence data from reference books that are used to identify a problem, and solve problems so that it can be analyzed and make conclusions.

**Results and Discussion**

Regarding direct passive sentences, there are four important conditions for Japanese passive sentences.

**Passive sentence speaker's perspective rules**

The "speaker's point of view rule" is that the speaker (or writer) generally puts his or her point of view on a familiar person or person who is close to him or her and writes it. Gargle in the subject (or subject) of; to state the event. That is, it is generally difficult for a "speaker" to bring his or her point of view closer to a less fa-

miliar inanimate object, rather than to a particular person who is closer to him or her. A passive sentence in Japanese is a sentence that describes an event by focusing on the object (that is, the subject of the passive sentence) that the speaker receives the action / action, not the agent (actor) of the event. Consider the following active and passive sentences.

例: (1) 褒める

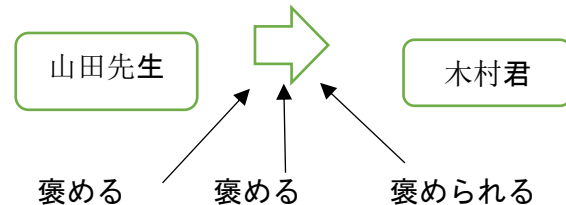


- (2) a. I praised Mr. Kimura.
- b. \*Kimura was praised by me [7]

In (1), the speaker himself praises Kimura-kun, which is usually said in an active sentence as in (2a). If you make a passive sentence like (2b), it is extremely unnatural because it feels like the speaker is looking at himself objectively and treating himself like another person. This point can be explained by the "speaker's viewpoint rule". Of course, the speaker is closer to himself than others and is "familiar", so it is most natural to take a self-directed perspective. Therefore, it is common to use the active sentence of (2a), and the passive sentence of (2b), which takes the viewpoint of another person's Kimura-kun, is ineligible in violation of the "viewpoint rule".

On the other hand, for example, when a person "praises" a person, how is it expressed? Consider the case where Professor Yamada praised Kimura.

3) 動作主 褒める 対象



- (4) a. Professor Yamada praised Mr. Kimura. (Active sentence)
- b. Kimura was praised by Dr. Yamada. (Passive sentence) [7].

In the Figure of (3), when Mr. Yamada praises Mr. Kimura, Mr. Yamada works unilaterally on Mr. Kimura, and Mr. Kimura himself does nothing. Let's show this one-way action with a one-way up arrow. Now, if the speaker describes the event in (3) from a viewpoint closer to Professor Yamada or from a neutral viewpoint, it will be expressed in an active sentence as in (4a), but the speaker should take a viewpoint closer to Mr. Kimura. For example, the passive form is used, that is, the passive sentence "Kimura-kun was praised by Professor Yamada" in (4b) is used. Therefore, it can be seen that a passive sentence is a sentence that describes an event by focusing on the object (that is, the subject of the passive sentence) that the speaker receives the action / action, not the agent (actor) of the event. The active sentence in (4a) is a sentence that describes the subject (subject) "Mr. Yamada", and the passive sentence in (4b) is a sentence that also describes the subject (subject) "Kimura-kun".

#### **Passive sentence state change constraint**

Japanese passive sentences are eligible when the event represented by the verb is directly targeted at the subject indicator and changes or affects the state.

Example:

- (5) a. My friend was scolded by Dr. Yamada.  
 b. Fortunately, the rescue team helped the victim in the storm.  
 c. Many houses were destroyed by the typhoon [7]
- (6) a. \*Hanako was waited by Taro for 5 minutes in front of the station.  
 b. \* Mr. Yamada was accidentally seen by Mr. Murayama at the venue.  
 c. \* Taro is known to Hanako [7].

The verbs (5) and (6) "scold, help, break, wait, see, know" are all transitive verbs that require an object, and these passive sentences are those in which the speaker has their own object. It is a passive sentence with a viewpoint and the subject. However, while (5a-c) is quite natural as Japanese, (6a-c) is unacceptable and ineligible as Japanese. In (5a), Professor Yamada directly targets the speaker's friends (The act of scolding as a direct target) causes the friend to be changed or affected as a result of the act. The same applies to (5b), where the

rescue team helped the victim, and the victim was rescued and changed from the previous state. Also, in (5c), the house has been destroyed and changed from its normal state. On the other hand, in (6a), the act of Taro waiting for Hanako is an autonomous act performed by Taro alone, and Hanako does nothing.

Therefore, Hanako has not undergone any change in that regard. Similarly, in (6b), the act of Dr. Murayama accidentally seeing Dr. Yamada has not been done to Dr. Yamada, and Dr. Yamada has not undergone any change. Furthermore, in (6c), even if Hanako knew Taro well, nothing was done to Taro, and Taro was not changed by that. In other words, in the qualified (5a-c), unlike the ineligible (6a-c), something is done directly to the subject indicator of the passive sentence, and the subject indicator is thereby in the previous state. It can be seen that it has changed from and is affected.

#### **Passive sentence characterization constraints**

Japanese passive sentences not only have a semantic function of stating the state change of the subject, but also a semantic function of stating what characteristics, characteristics, and attributes the subject has.

Example:

- (7) a. \* This mountain was climbed by Taro yesterday.  
 b. This mountain was climbed by Santouka hundreds of years ago [7]
- (8) a. \* This pool was swamed by elementary school students yesterday.  
 b. This pool is a freshly completed pool that no one has swam yet (Japanese Basic Verb Usage Dictionary, pp.406-407)
- (9) Mt. Fuji is known to people all over the world as the highest mountain in Japan.
- (10) Mozart's songs are loved by many people all over the world, regardless of age or sex [7].

Both sentences (7ab) violate the viewpoint rule because the subject is "this mountain", which is "inanimate". Also, these sentences violate the passive state change constraint, because even if a person climbs a mountain, it is unlikely that the mountain has been changed or affected. Therefore, it is understandable that

(7a) is ineligible. However, in (7b), it is qualified because it is characterized and characterized as if Santouka had climbed the mountain hundreds of years ago. Also, in (8a), even if an elementary school student swam in the pool yesterday, it does not state any characteristics or attributes of the pool. On the other hand, (8b) is characterized by the fact that the pool has just been completed and no one is swimming yet, which is a brand new pool that has just been created.

Similarly, (9) and (10) describe what kind of mountain Mt. Fuji is and what kind of Mozart's song is and characterize them. Therefore, these passive sentences meet the characterization constraints and are eligible. In other words, it can be seen that passive sentences in Japanese are eligible when the speaker characterizes / characterizes the subject.

### **Passive sentence interest expression restrictions**

The semantic function of a passive sentence in Japanese not only describes the state change and characteristics of the subject, but also has another semantic function of expressing interests.

Example:

(11) a. \* A cat walked in the school corridor.

b. A cat walked down a waxed school corridor, leaving footprints.

(12) a. \* Shinshu University was enrolled in Mr. Yamada.

b. Shinshu University was enrolled in *AumShinrikyo* [7].

In (11a) and (12a), even if a cat walks in the school corridor or Yamada enters the university, it is unlikely that the corridor or the university will be changed or affected by it. Therefore, these sentences do not satisfy the state change constraint of the passive sentence. In addition, these passive sentences violate the speaker's viewpoint rules because the subject is inanimate and the "d" noun phrase is a specific human (or animal). Moreover, the subject of the passive sentence is not characterized by the event. For the above reasons, these sentences are considered ineligible. However, (11b) shows that the speaker suffered damage and inconvenience as the cat walked down the waxed corridor. The same is true for (12b),

which shows that it has been inconvenienced by the admission of the enrollment of *AumShinrikyo* to the university. Looking at these sentences, even if the passive sentence does not describe the state change or characteristic of the subject, or violates the viewpoint rule of the speaker, the speaker or the subject is damaged by the event represented by the passive sentence. If you are shown to be inconvenienced, you will be eligible.

As mentioned before, there are four important restrictions / conditions for direct passive Japanese, but are there restrictions / conditions similar to Japanese for passive sentences in Indonesian? First, let's translate the above example of a passive sentence in Japanese into Indonesian.

(13) a. I praised Hanako (Saya memuji Hanako).

b. \*Hanako was praised by me (Hanako saya puji).

In (13a), the speaker himself praises Hanako, as in Japanese. And if you make it a passive sentence like (13b), it is extremely unnatural in Japanese. As mentioned above, according to the "speaker's viewpoint rule", it is most natural for the speaker to take a viewpoint closer to himself, but this sentence takes the viewpoint of Hanako instead of himself.

However, in Indonesian, the passive sentence of (13b) is quite natural, and it is appropriate to use a person other than yourself as the subject, "Hanako". As a result of conducting a questionnaire to Japanese language students, they all answered that the passive sentence "Hanako was praised by me" was correct and natural. In other words, Indonesian passive sentences do not have "speaker's viewpoint rules" like Japanese, and even if people or things that are close to or familiar to you are not the subject (or subject) of the sentence. It turns out to be appropriate as a passive Indonesian language. In other words, this difference is a big problem for Indonesian learners of Japanese, and it seems to be a point to be aware of in passive Japanese sentences.

Next, let's look at an example sentence of a state change constraint.

(14) a. My friend was scolded by Dr. Yamada (Teman saya dimarahi (oleh) Pak Yamada).

- b. Fortunately, the rescue team helped the victim in the storm (Dalam keadaan angin badai, korban diselamatkan oleh pasukan militer).
  - c. Many houses were destroyed by the typhoon. [7] (Banyak rumah dirusak oleh angin to pan).
- (15) a. \* Hanako was waited by Taro for 5 minutes in front of the station (Hanako ditunggu Taro di depan stasiun selama 5 menit).
- b. \* Mr. Yamada was accidentally seen by Mr. Murayama at the venue (Pak Yamada secara tidak sengaja dilihat oleh Pak Murayama di tempat pertemuan).
  - c. \* Taro is known to Hanako (Taro dikenal oleh Hanako).

As mentioned earlier, the above example sentence is ineligible as a passive sentence in Japanese. This is because there are state change constraints in Japanese passive sentences. On the other hand, the Indonesian words (14a, b, c) and (15a, b, c) are both passive and natural, and are often used in everyday conversation. Therefore, it can be seen that there is no state change constraint in the passive sentence in Indonesian.

Consider the following example sentence of a characterization constraint

- (16) a. \* This mountain was climbed by Taro yesterday (Gunung ini kemarin didaki oleh Taro).
- b. This mountain was climbed by Santouka hundreds of years ago [7] (Gunung ini didaki oleh Santouka lebih dari ratusan tahun yang lalu).
- (17) a. \* This pool was swamed by elementary school students yesterday (Kolam ini kemarin direnangi oleh anak SD).
- b. This pool is a freshly completed pool that no one has swam yet (Kolam ini belum direnangi oleh siapapun, karena kolam ini baru saja selesai (Japanese Basic Verb Usage Dictionary, pp.406-407))
- (18) Mt. Fuji is known to the people of the world as the highest mountain in Japan (Gunung Fuji sebagai gunung tertinggi di Jepang, dikenal oleh orang-orang dari seluruh dunia).

- (19) Mozart's songs are loved by many people all over the world, regardless of age or gender (Lagu Mozart tidak hanya oleh anak-anak muda, tapi dicintai oleh banyak orang di seluruh dunia) [7].

As mentioned earlier, the example sentences (16) and (17) in Japanese are ineligible as passive sentences. This is because Japanese passive sentences have characterization restrictions. On the other hand, in Indonesian, (16a, b) are both passive, natural and eligible. Also, (18) and (19) are eligible in Japanese, but also in Indonesian. Therefore, it can be seen that the Indonesian passive sentence does not require characterization as well as change and influence.

Next, let's think about the restrictions on expressing interests in passive sentences. As mentioned above, passive sentences in Japanese have restrictions on expressing interests, whereas what happens in Indonesian? Consider the following example sentence.

- (20) a. \* A cat walked in the school corridor (Lorong sekolah dilewati kucing).
- b. A cat walked down a waxed school corridor, leaving footprints (Lorong sekolah yang baru saja dicat dilewati kucing, sehingga berbekas tapak kakinya).
- (21) a. \* Shinshu University was enrolled in Mr. Yamada (Universitas Shinshuu dimasuki oleh Yamada).
- b. Shinshu University was enrolled in Alephs [7] (Universitas Shinshuu dimasuki oleh mahasiswa penganut kepercayaan Oum).

As mentioned earlier, Japanese (20a) (21a) is ineligible, but (20b) (21b) is qualifying. That is because there are restrictions on expressing interests. On the other hand, in Indonesian, the above (20a, b) and (21a, b) are all common as passive sentences. Therefore, it can be seen that it is eligible as a passive sentence even if the interest / nuisance is not displayed.

From the above, it became clear that the passiveness of Japanese has a uniqueness characteristics and completely different with Indonesian passive. But unfortunately, the uniqueness of Japanese passive sentences which are very important is not explained in Japanese

language textbooks for elementary and intermediate levels. So far, there are often errors in the use and understanding of passive sentences, especially for Japanese learners in Indonesia. Based on the results of a previously distributed questionnaire, where the respondents were 3rd year students majoring in Japanese at the University of Darma Persada, most students still did not understand well Japanese passive sentences. If the Japanese learners know and understand the uniqueness of the passive voice that has been described above, then misunderstandings in the use of passive sentences that have often happened can be minimized.

### Conclusion

Through this research, there are four important conditions for Japanese passive sentences.

1. Passive speaker's perspective rules: Speakers (or writers) generally place their point of view on someone close to them or close to them and use that as the object (or subject) of the sentence to describe the event.
2. State change constraint of passive sentence: A passive sentence is eligible when the event represented by the verb is directed directly at the subject indicator and changes or affects its state.
3. Passive sentence characterization constraints: Passive sentences are eligible when the speaker characterizes / characterizes the subject.

4. Constraints on passive statements: Passive sentences are eligible when communicating the meaning of interest.

From the above, a Japanese passive sentence is eligible if it meets any (or two or more) of the following four conditions / constraints.

Through this research, Indonesian Japanese learners will not be able to use it if they understand the four conditions and restrictions. Furthermore, I believe that misuse will not occur if we understand the restrictions of passive sentences in Indonesian. Also, I would like Japanese learners to understand that sentences with the Indonesian prefix "di-" are not necessarily passive sentences in Japanese.

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