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Syntax of DP Deletion and Pragmatics of DP Movement in Passive Voice[1]

Sintaxis de la eliminación de DP y pragmática del movimiento de DP en voz pasiva

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Abstract

This study examines the syntax of DP deletion and pragmatics of DP movement in passive voice from applied linguistics methodology. The data collection was a purposive sampling method as the study specifically alternated the data from Q1 SCOPUS publications, Thai national publications (TCI 1), and Thai undergraduate students' independent studies (IS) from a private university. There were 99 tokens. The data analyses were linguistics and inferential statistics. Linguistic analysis follows generative grammar, whereas the statistical analysis follows inferential statistical analysis SPSS29. The results of the study showed the similarities of DP by-phrase agent deletion between Q1 SCOPUS, TCI 1, and IS. However, the results in these publications were different pragmatically. The discussion was explained syntactically and pragmatically. The DP arguments in passive voice were omitted due to the reason of widely-known agents. Pragmatically, the movement of DP argument in Q1 SCOPUS and TCI 1 complies with the theory of pragmatic discourse of givenness, while this was not applied in IS. It is expected that the results in this study would be useful for English learners in how to apply passive voice to write research methodology appropriately.

Keywords: applied linguistics methodology, passive voice, pragmatics of DP movement, syntax of DP deletion

Resumen

Este estudio examina la sintaxis de la eliminación de la frase determinante (DP por sus siglas en inglés) y la pragmática de su movimiento en voz pasiva desde la metodología de la lingüística aplicada. La recolección de datos fue realizada mediante un muestreo intencionado, ya que el estudio alternó específicamente los datos de publicaciones Q1 de SCOPUS, publicaciones nacionales tailandesas (TCI 1), y estudios independientes (IS por sus siglas en inglés) de estudiantes de pregrado de una universidad privada. Se analizaron 99 muestras. El análisis de los datos incluyó lingüística y estadística inferencial. El análisis lingüístico sigue la gramática generativa, mientras que el análisis estadístico se basó en el análisis estadístico inferencial usando SPSS29. Los resultados del estudio mostraron similitudes en la eliminación del agente de la frase por DP entre las publicaciones de SCOPUS Q1, TCI 1 e IS. Sin embargo, los resultados de estas publicaciones fueron pragmáticamente diferentes. La discusión se explicó desde una perspectiva sintáctica y pragmática. Los argumentos de DP en voz pasiva fueron omitidos debido a que los agentes eran ampliamente conocidos. Pragmáticamente, el movimiento del argumento DP en SCOPUS Q1 y TCI 1 se ajusta a la teoría del discurso pragmático de la información conocida, mientras que esto no se aplicó en los IS. Se espera que los resultados de este estudio sean útiles para los estudiantes de inglés en cuanto a cómo aplicar la voz pasiva para escribir adecuadamente la metodología de investigación.

Palabras clave: metodología de lingüística aplicada, voz pasiva, pragmática del movimiento de DP, sintaxis de la eliminación de DP

Resumo

Este estudo examina a sintaxe da eliminação da frase determinante (DP pela sua sigla em inglês) e a pragmática do seu movimento na voz passiva a partir da metodologia da linguística aplicada. A coleta de dados foi realizada por meio de uma amostragem intencional, já que o estudo alternou especificamente os dados de publicações Q1 do SCOPUS, publicações nacionais tailandesas (TCI 1) e estudos independentes (IS pela sua sigla em inglês) de estudantes de graduação de uma universidade privada. Foram analisadas 99 amostras. A análise dos dados incluiu linguística e estatística inferencial. A análise linguística segue a gramática gerativa, enquanto a análise estatística se baseou na análise estatística inferencial utilizando o SPSS29. Os resultados do estudo mostraram semelhanças na eliminação do agente da frase por DP entre as publicações do SCOPUS Q1, TCI 1 e IS. No entanto, os resultados dessas publicações foram pragmaticamente diferentes. A discussão foi explicada a partir de uma perspectiva sintática e pragmática. Os argumentos de DP na voz passiva foram omitidos devido ao fato de os agentes serem amplamente conhecidos. Pragmaticamente, o movimento do argumento DP no SCOPUS Q1 e TCI 1 está em conformidade com a teoria do discurso pragmático da informação conhecida, enquanto isso não se aplicou nos IS. Espera-se que os resultados deste estudo sejam úteis para os estudantes de inglês em como aplicar a voz passiva para redigir adequadamente a metodologia de pesquisa.

Palavras-chave: metodologia de linguística aplicada, voz passiva, pragmática do movimento de DP, sintaxe da eliminação de DP

Introduction

In English classrooms, passive voice is normally taught as the interchangeable structure of active voice. The learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are likely to use the two structures interchangeably because they are interpreted the same semantically. However, they have never realized their differences regarding pragmatic aspects, specifically why the determiner phrases (DP), such as "Jerry" as in "Tom hit Jerry", are moved from the object position to become the subject. Consequently, passive voice is a problematic structure among EFL learners. In generative grammar, English is a non-null-parameter subject language (Chomsky, 1965; Radford, 2009). This means that the subject in English is required in all clauses owning to Extended Projection Principle or EPP (Radford, 2009). This denotes that the finite constituent T that is extended into the TP node must have the subject filled in (Bošković, 2002; Radford, 2009; Svenonius, 2002). Even though most arguments in English are in situ, the DP subject in passive voice is analyzed differently since it is moved via the chain of A-movement to the Spec T (Radford, 2009). With this perspective, passive voice in English is considered under the linguistic theories of markedness. The unmarked form is regular, but the marked form is irregular (Andrews, 1990). The syntactic representation of passive voice is interpreted as a marked structure where the DP movement is illustrated below.

Figure 1. Chain of A-movement

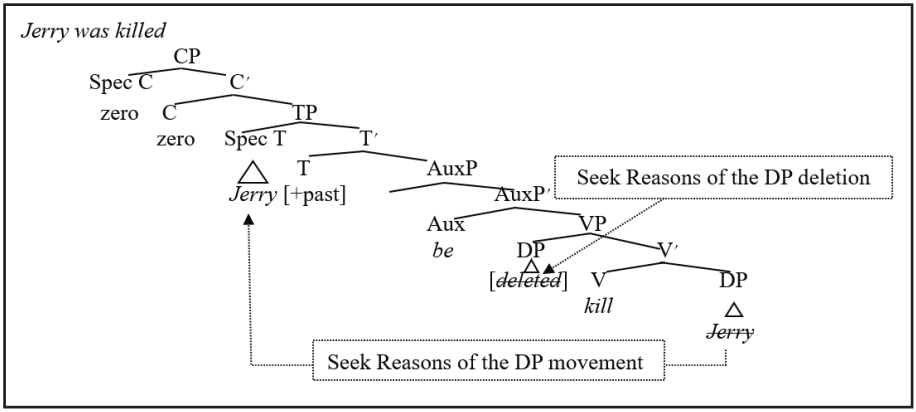


Figure 1 shows A-movement. The argument movement is sometimes called DP movement (determiner phrase). Arguments refer to the entities who perform an action or receive the energy from an action. For example, "Jerry" is the DP, and it originates as the complement of the transitive verb. The DP was moved via A-chain movement to be landed in the Spec T, becoming passive voice. The DP receives the theta-role theme prior to moving to the subject position.

Regarding the transformation from active to passive voice, there are four steps to follow (Radford, 2009). First, the argument is moved, with the DP relocated to the Spec T position. Second, a feature is added, specifically the auxiliary "be", which is inserted according to the tense of the finite verb in the active voice. Next, the main verb undergoes a transformation, changing into its past participle form. Finally, the processes of movement, addition, and transformation are illustrated in (1a) -(1b)

(1a) ABC company fired Mr. Jack yesterday.

(1b) Mr. Jack was fired yesterday.

Example 1a is active voice while example 1b is passive voice. "Mr. Jack" is the object in active voice. The DP is moved to be landed as the subject in passive voice due to the agent concealment for the company's positive reputation. A concealed agent is, therefore, the reason of the DP deletion in passive voice (Swan, 2015). However, different genres seem to have different reasons for the DP by-phase agent deletion. Accordingly, the current study seeks the reasons for DP by-phrase agent deletion in applied linguistics research methodology.

To apply the DP deletion and DP movement in passive voice, the current study employed the techniques of vicinities to determine how passive voice is used with other syntactic structures in adjacent areas. Vicinity was originally coined by corpus linguists (Sinclair, 1996; McEnery & Hardie, 2011). The boundaries to the left and the right are simultaneously investigated with the key. The vicinities between four and six words are adequate to investigate the collocations in corpus-based studies. For example, expletive "it" constructions in English were frequently collocated with the adjectives "clear", "true" and "possible" as in "it is clear", "it is true", and "it is possible" (Uchida, 2024). Nevertheless, the vicinities in this study refer to the whole sentences on either side of the passive voice.

As mentioned, it seems possible that various syntactic structures can be colligated with passive voice. For example, subjective complement is the syntactic structure to give additional information concerning the subject of the sentence. Swapping the DPs between subject and the copular "be" complement does not affect the grammaticality of the sentence (Wongkittiporn, 2024). However, they are the same semantically such as 2a and 2b.

(2a) **Mr. Obama** was the USA president.

(2b) The USA president was **Mr. Obama.**

Examples 2a-2b are subjective complements. The DP "Mr. Obama" in 2a is the subject. The DP "Mr. Obama" is the copular be complement in 2b. Despite having different positions, they have the same truth value, referring to a fact in the real world (Kearn, 2011). Therefore, 2a and 2b are syntactically and semantically identical.

Aside from that, noun clause complements are syntactic structures to fill in factual reports. The Verb Phrase (VP) complements of this structure can be cognitive, communicative and presentative, such as "believe", "think", "report", "address", and "show". The VP complement can be replaced by the pronoun it (Wongkittiporn, 2024), as in "Mr. Jack reported that GDP increased five percent in 2024" or "Jack reported it". The complementizer phrase (CP) "that GDP increased five percent in 2024" is the complement, which can be replaced by the pronoun "it". In addition, transitive complement is the structure that consists of the subject, erb and object. Usually, the subject of the sentence plays a theta-role of agent, refering to the one who instigates an action (Radford, 2009). For example, "Mr. James ate an apple".

Regarding the use of passive voice in English, the DP movement of the passive voice complies with either topic focus or principle of givenness. The topic focus means that the writers would like to put an emphasis on the topic of sentence as the agents are widely known, as in "Jerry's bag was stolen". The agent of the sentence was not mentioned or spelt out as it is commonly known as a thief (Swan, 2015). However, the passive voice is sometimes used for the benefit of discourse analysis to lik information together seamlessly. For example, "Tom played with Jerry. It was hit by Tom. So, he laughed at him". The structures in these sentences were analyzed as SVO-OVS-SVO. The pronoun with the case marking "it" was derived from "Jerry" and the pronoun with the case marking he was derived from *Tom*.

Previous studies focused on the syntactic structure of passive voice in different genres, such as medical texts and news articles. Passive voice is often used in these texts because the agents are widely-known agents. For example, the person who can prescribe antibiotic medication is a doctor (Amdur, Kirwan & Morris, 2010) and the people who writes news articles are journalists (Almahameed, Bataineh & Ammari, 2022). To fill the gap, this study investigated passive voice and their vicinities in applied linguistics methodology. At the present time, most university students are instructed to conduct a mini-research project after their coursework studies. Even though they are taught research methodologies, the subject of writing research, especially written in the English language, is not specifically taught at universities. Consequently, students are faced with the difficulties of writing their research papers in English. They select the right research methods for their research projects but writing them in English is a challenging task. As mentioned by Widdowson (2011), the section of methodology is considered an important one. The information about how a research study was conducted must be clearly provided in steps for the sake of replication in the future. A clear explanation in this section results in the reliability and validity of the study. Examining Q1 (Quartile 1) SCOPUS Q1, Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI 1) publications and undergraduate students' Independent Study (IS) is considered as an effective way to learn how language is used. Accordingly, EFL learners could have more examples from the results in this study to advance the quality of their writing. This information leads to the following research objectives of the study.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the syntactic reasons of the DP by-phrase agent deletion in passive voice in applied linguistics methodology

2. To examine the pragmatic reasons of the DP movement in passive voice via their syntactic vicinities in applied linguistics methodology

Methodology

Data Collection

To investigate the DP deletion and DP movement, the data in this study were divided into three datasets. The first phrase was the collection of passive voice and their vicinities in Q1 SCOPUS applied linguistics methodology. The second phrase was the collection of passive voice and their vicinities in TCI 1 applied linguistics methodology.

This study followed purposive sampling method as the researcher focused on the material of applied linguistics methodology only in Q1 SCOPUS and TCI 1. The first dataset was collected from an international journal called System. System is a reliable applied linguistics research journal that has been indexed in Q1 SCOPUS database for more than a decade. There were 10 research articles that were collected for this study. Approximately 100,000 words contained 52 tokens for data collection in this study. To avoid the bias that may occur during data collection, various topics from applied linguistics research articles were gathered to study, such as pedagogical approach, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and teaching technology.

The second dataset was collected from three Thai national journals as index in TCI 1, which were Journal of Studies in the English Language (jSEL), Thoughts and NIDA Journal of Language and Communication. These three national journals were selected as they are journals of English applied linguistics where the articles, sent to be reviewed, were written in English. They are reliable publications in Thailand. Approximately 150,000 words contained 40 tokens for data collection. Various topics of applied linguistics research were gathered to study.

The dataset from the third phase was derived from Independent Studies (IS) as written by fourth-year students, majoring in English, at a Thai private university. The students wrote their IS before they graduated. They were allowed to select topics concerning applied linguistics that they were personally interested in. The topics include the study of figurative language, English songs, the study of speech acts in English movies, and a survey of English among university students. Twenty-five

undergraduate students' IS papers focusing on methodology were randomly selected to study their use of passive voice and their vicinities. A total of 25,000 words provided only 7 tokens containing passive voice. These IS papers were not published, but they were part of the students' graduation requirement.

Data Analysis

Once the data were collected, the concept of vicinity, or the areas near or surrounding areas, follows McEnery and Hardie (2011). Vicinity refers to the whole sentential boundaries to the left and to the right that were collocated with passive constructions as the target sentence structure in this study. For example, "the data were collected from English newspapers. They were analyzed based upon generative grammar. The data analysis was checked by three experts from different universities". The sentences "the data were collected from English newspapers and the data analysis was checked by three experts from different universities" are the vicinity which were collocated with the target sentence. As mentioned, the current study focused on the syntactic structure that is used before and after passive voice. The whole sentence to the left and to the right of the passive voice were gathered to study. The data analysis in this study was given according to collocation patterns below

Collocation Patterns

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Passive Voice

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Passive Voice

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Noun Clause Complement

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Noun Clause Complement

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Subjective Complement

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Subjective Complement

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Transitive Complement

Passive Voice + **Passive Voice** + Transitive Complement

Transitive Complement + **Passive Voice** + Transitive Complement

Transitive Complement + **Passive Voice** + Transitive Complement

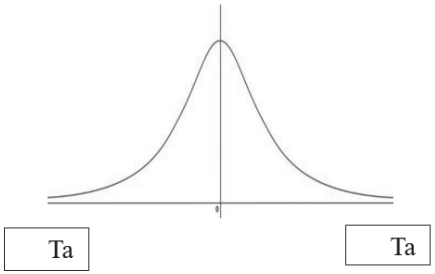
This research paper examined passive voice and their vicinities in applied linguistics methodology to interpret how they were semantically and pragmatically used. Both descriptive statistical and inferential statistical analysis via SPSS 29 were used to calculate the data.

Table 1. Coding Schema

Code 1	**Code 2**
Code 1 was given if passive voice and their vicinities complied with the prototypes in Q1 SCOPUS applied linguistics methodology	Code 2 was given if passive voice and their vicinities did NOT comply with the prototypes in Q1 SCOPUS applied linguistics methodology

As mentioned above, this current study was designed as a quantitative study, the data analysis followed inferential statistical methods via SPSS 29. The statistical analysis in this study was based on Pearson Correlation where the r value was between 1 and -1. The p-value was judged to be significant if the p-value was equivalent or less than 0.5. As mentioned by Matthey (1998), a p-value of 0.05 or less in the field of social sciences and humanities was considered significant. After filling either code 1 or code 2 in SPSS program, the researcher clicked "analyze" and "correlate". Select "two tails". When selecting the statistical analyzes of two tails, the results of the p-value could be both plus and minus.

Figure 2. Two-Tailed Test in Statistical Analysis



Statistically, a two-tailed test is a way to check a distribution whether the sample of the study is greater or less than a range of values, so the results of p-value could be either plus or minus.

According to Swan (2015), omitting the by-phrase agent in passive voice could be explained by four reasons including unknown agents, widely known agents, concealed agents and unimportant agents. The unknown agent is explained in that the instigator

of the action is unknown, such as murderers, thieves and commanders. The widely-known agents are the DP who is well-known. Spelling it out is not necessary, as in "the patient was prescribed antibiotic drugs for 7 days". The only person who can prescribe antibiotics is a doctor. Concealed agents are known agents, but the reason for concealment is for positive reputation as in "20 employees were fired after rebranding". The last reason for omitting the by-phrase agent is unimportant agents. This again is not the main focus of the story, so it is not necessary to be spelt out, as in "the house was cleaned perfectly".

Results of the Study

This section presents the results in this study regarding the DP by-phrase agent deletion. From a total of 52 tokens in the Q1 SCOPUS, 40 tokens in TCI and 7 Token in IS, the results of this study were given in Table 2.

Table 2. DP by-phrase Agent Deletion

Classifications	Q1 SCOPUS	TCI 1	IS
Total	52	40	7
DP Deletion	50 (96.15%)	39 (97.5%)	6 (86.57%)

Table 2 shows that passive voice in the section of methodology was used with the DP deletion. Only a few tokens were found to be used with by-phrase agents.

> (3a) The earliest intelligent chatbots, ELIZA and PARRY, were developed **by Joseph Weizenbaum and Kenneth Colby** in 1966 and 1972, respectively (Q1 SCOPUS)
>
> (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 3).
>
> (3b) To maintain accuracy, the results were cross-checked **by the three of us** regularly during and after the analysis (TCI 1) (Pupipat, Rungkaew & Meeparp, 2022, p. 10).
>
> (3c) "The data were analyzed by using Searle (1976) theory. (IS)

The DPs "Joseph Weizenbaum and Kenneth Colby" in 3a are the original developers of intelligent chatbot. Without spelling out the name of these developers, it would violate the maxim of quantity in pragmatics. As the writers did not provide adequate information for the readers to understand. So, the by-phrase agents must be kept. 3b was kept as the researcher wanted to place emphasis on several validators to give enough information for the reader to understand. The DP in 3c was kept as the researcher wanted to place emphasis on the conceptual framework that the study followed. To sum up this point, the syntactic structure of deleting DP in passive voice among the three datasets went along the same lines.

Phase 1

From the total of 52 tokens in the Q1 SCOPUS, the results were reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities

Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities	**Freq.**	**%**
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	17	32.69
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	15	28.84
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	7	13.46
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	6	11.54
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Noun Clause Complement	5	9.61
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Subjective Complement	2	3.84
Total	52	100

Table 3 represents the vicinities of passive voice in Q1 SCOPUS applied linguistics methodology. The collocation pattern of passive voice + passive voice + passive voice occurs at 32.69 percent. Passive voice colligated with transitive complements on the left side and the right sight were reported at 28.84 percent. The collocation pattern of transitive complement + passive voice + passive voice was reported at 13.46 percent. The empirical evidence of these patterns is given in the following section.

Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Passive Voice

The collocation pattern of passive voice + passive voice + passive voice occurred frequently in this study. This pattern was always found in the section of methodology in applied linguistics research articles, such as 4a-4c.

> (4a) Approval for the study was obtained from the principal of the school. **The data were collected using a printed survey, which was sent to the participating school by postal service.** Before performing the surveys, the students were informed that participation was voluntary (Hirosawa, Kono & Oga-Baldwin, 2024, p. 4).
>
> (4b) "A mixed-methods design was applied in this study. **All data were analyzed using SPSS software, version 25.0.** First, means and standard deviations were calculated to assess the willingness to communicate (WTC) levels and provide an overall description of the data (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 6).
>
> (4c) An initial questionnaire was structured to measure three main constructs: intensity of engagement, perceived usefulness of their engagement and satisfaction of

> engagement. **Each of these were measured in relation to an object, a key aspect of the learning process and environment.** Four aspects were chosen for the questionnaire: teachers, peers, activities, and teaching content used in the classroom (Teravainen-Goff, 2023, p. 4).

Passive voice and the vicinity of passive voice in applied linguistics research articles were found in the section of research methodology. They were used to report the process of data collection, data analysis, ethical consideration.

Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement

The second frequent collocation pattern in this study was the vicinity of transitive complement + passive voice + transitive complement as in 5a-5b.

> (5a) The students' age ranged from 13 to 15 years old […]. **All students were raised in Japan, with Japanese as their mother tongue and cultural background**. The school's focus on test performance mirrors the heavy educational focus found in many Japanese secondary schools (Hirosawa, Kono & Oga-Baldwin, 2024, p. 4).

> (5b) A total of 65 students participated in the study. **They were enrolled in an elementary-level Korean language elective at a higher education institution […]**. According to the internal guidelines, each language class accommodates 20 to 25 students (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 3).

The collocation pattern of transitive complement + passive voice + transitive complement was used to report methods in applied linguistics research articles. The first transitive complement provided factual information of the participants either numerical data or experimental process. The passive voice explains further about the participants or the activity they were doing in the study.

Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Passive Voice

Another collocation pattern was transitive complement+ passive voice + passive voice which was usually found in the section of methodology.

> (6a) Its limitation becomes evident when there are potential hierarchical factors, sub-scales, and items associated with constructs other than their primary target factor. **This scenario is frequently encountered in psychology and education research, including the scales in this study.** Researchers are often faced with unintended cross-loadings due to the inclusion of multiple related factors within the study (Hirosawa, Kono & Oga-Baldwin, 2024, p. 5).

> (6b) None of the participants reported pronunciation training and more than one month of immersion experience in an English-speaking country. **Given that the participants were in China, the opportunities to communicate with other native and non-native speakers of English were highly limited.** After the pre-tests, the participants were randomly assigned to the experimental (Ruan & Saito, 2023, p. 4).

The collocation pattern of transitive complement + passive voice + passive voice is used mostly in the section of methodology. It indicated the challenges the researcher encountered and how they resolved them.

Passive Voice + Passive Voice+ Transitive Complement

The collocation pattern of passive voice+ passive voice + transitive complement was usually found in the section of methodology.

> (7a) […] the Perceived Competence Scale (PCS) were collected. **Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, […]**. Each point indicated the degree to which the students agreed with the statements (Hirosawa, Kono & Oga-Baldwin, 2024, p. 4).
>
> (7b) The chatbots developed by the researchers with the Danbee AI platform were employed as a learning tool in this study. **The selection and development of the chatbots were done based on two considerations.** First, previous research underlined the need for well-prepared materials appropriate for the levels and requirements […] (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 4).

The passive voice in this pattern was used to report data collection or how the data was employed to be used. On the other hand, transitive complements were used for data interpretation and support from previous studies.

Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Noun Clause Complement

Although the collocation pattern of passive voice + passive voice + noun clause complement was often found, there was no specific use in any particular section.

> (8a) The three orientations have been discussed in a continuum from different. **However, the distinction in this linear progression is challenged by scholars advocating for the use of translanguaging practices to fulfill their pedagogical goals for L2 students in EMI classrooms that may intimidate them into English-only orientations.** To be more specific, studies have demonstrated that translanguaging performed beyond the classroom can create multiple translanguaging spaces for L2 students (Mu, Lee & Choe, 2023, p. 3).
>
> (8b) First, AI chatbots can be integrated into the KFL classroom as a feasible approach to strengthening WTC and ultimately facilitating students' L2 communication. **Based on the argument that L2 WTC can be more precisely conceptualized as a process rather than just personality traits of individual learners, researchers regard L2 WTC as a dynamic, temporal, and contextual phenomenon.** Consequently, they have been arguing that it can be demonstrated at a comprehensive level […] (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 10).

Example 8a was written in the section of literature review. Example 8b was written in the section of discussion.

Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Subjective Complement

Although the collocation pattern of passive voice + passive voice + subjective complement was also found twice, there was no specific use in any particular section.

> (9a) It can also be called an "intelligent personal assistant." **The earliest intelligent chatbots, ELIZA and PARRY, were developed by Joseph Weizenbaum and Kenneth Colby in 1966 and 1972, respectively.** These chatbots were text-based systems that mimicked human communication (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 3).

Example 9a was written in the section of literature review. Example 9b was written in the method section.

Phase 2

While phase 1 is the results of passive voice and their syntactic vicinities in Q1 SCOPUS applied linguistics methodology, phase 2 examines the use of passive voice and their syntactic vicinities as written by Thai writers. The data collection was derived from 15 applied linguistics methodologies as indexed in TCI 1 from 2021 to 2024. There were 40 tokens of passive voice and their vicinities to study. The results of the study were compared with the results in phase 1 to seek correlation. If the data of applied linguistics methodology in TCI 1 (Journal of Studies in the English Language (jSEL), Thoughts and NIDA Journal of Language and Communication) are the same with the vicinity as reported in Table 2, code 1 was given, if not it was code 2. The data were coded into the inferential statistical analysis SPSS29 to seek a significant relationship.

Table 4 . Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities

Passive Constructions and their Syntactic Vicinities	**Ranking**
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	1
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	2
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	3
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	4
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Noun Clause Complement	5

Table 5. Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities in Tier 1 Applied Linguistics Research Articles

Correlations			
		Tokens	Compliance with Q1
Passive Voice and their Vicinities	Pearson Correlation	1	-.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)		**.405**
	N	40	40

According to Table 5, although 80 percent of passive voice and their Syntactic Vicinities in Tier 1 applied linguistics methodology were similar to the patterns in Q1 SCOPUS applied linguistics methodology, there was no statistically significant relationship between the two variables where the p-value was reported at .405.

> Regarding their similarities, the pattern "passive voice + passive voice + passive voice" occurred frequently in TCI 1 applied linguistics methodology, such as (10).
>
> (10) Results were reported in percentages. **To maintain accuracy, the results were cross-checked by the three of us regularly during and after the analysis.** Contradictions were discussed and consensus won out (Pupipat, Rungkaew & Meeparp, 2022, p. 10).

Passive voice is used to report the mean of data analysis, data validation and the consensus after the data validation. In addition, passive voice was used to describe the whole process of data collection.

> (11) A questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were employed in order to explore how Thai university undergraduates perceived mother tongue-based language teaching in English classrooms. **The questionnaire was adapted from the study of Korean students' and teachers' attitudes regarding use of their L1 in English classrooms.** The questionnaire and the interview questions were translated into Thai to ensure that the participants clearly understood the items in the questionnaire (Bunmak, 2023, p. 49).

Example 11 shows the use of passive voice to denote the use of instrument. The instrument was adapted to make it particularly suitable for the participants in the study. Another similar pattern between the two datasets is passive voice that was used with the vicinities of transitive complement.

> (12) Private university undergraduates in Chiang Mai, Thailand participated in this study. **The participants were selected via the purposive sampling method.** The students […] responded to the questionnaire and took part in the semi-structured interview (Bunmak, 2024, p. 48).

The first sentence is a transitive complement which is used to address the participants in the study. The second sentence is passive voice, which is the syntactic structure to denote the selection of the sampling method. The third sentence is a transitive complement which is used to denote the format of the research.

Despite having similarities, some differences were also found. The syntactic structure of existential "there" constructions was found in TCI 1 applied linguistics methodology.

> (13) In this study, there are 414 clauses which consist of the victims or the perpetrators from three Thai news agencies. Each clause was analysed according to Halliday's […] view on Transitivity analysis. At first, the process type was determined and then the elements of the clause were analysed and identified […] (Suebklin & Vungthong, 2022, p. 41).

Normally, the sentence to report data collection is a passive construction, as in "the data collection in this study is 414 clauses". The researcher in example 13 reported the data collection with existential "there" constructions to mean something exists. The syntactic structures of subjective complements were used around passive voice as in 14.

> (14) The overarching research site is Thailand where rape crimes are quite prevalent […]. **Our purposively selected data was taken from three Thai news agencies.** Bangkok Post is an English-language daily newspaper published in broadsheet and digital platforms […] (Suebklin & Vungthong, 2022, p. 40).

Normally, the data collection in the methodology is used with passive voice. For example, "the data in this study was collected from Bangkok Post, which is an English newspaper". This section is asked to provide the data collection rather than the factual information of Bangkok Post. So, the readers needed to understand that the researcher collected the data from the Bangkok Post.

Phase 3

For phase 3, due to limited data collection, using inferential statistical calculation might not be appropriate to gain validity. Descriptive statistical analysis via percentage was, therefore, employed to calculate the data collection. The results of the third phase involved undergraduate students' IS papers in the field of applied linguistics. Approximately 250,000 words, or 26 applied linguistics research methodologies, provided 7 tokens that were used with passive voice with different syntactic vicinities. 85.72 percent appeared similar to the Q1 Scopus database. The examples are given below.

(15a) Twenty-two were female, and 8 were male. Most of them were 26-30 years of age. **The sampling group was assigned through the convenience sampling technique.** The data were collected in the academic year 2023. (ST20)

(15b) The Thai language version of the questionnaire was made to prevent any misunderstanding, and it was administered to the students through the platform Google Forms. **The quantitative data were then analyzed by mean, SD, and percentage.** Regarding the quantitative data, they were analyzed through a thematic approach. (ST20)

(15c) The samples in the analysis were 15 utterances produced by Woody. **These utterances were collected from dialogues between characters in the movie.** Woody was selected because of his kindness and bravery." (ST13)

(15d) This research collected the content analysis to analyze data and classified the utterances performing an illocutionary act. **The data were analyzed by using Searle's (1976) theory.** They proceeded by classifying the types of illocutionary speech acts. (ST13)

(15e) This part sought to investigate students' attitudes about the usage of the Metaverse in the learning of English. After identifying these categories, **the students were interviewed using a series of closed-ended questions.** The data was evaluated yielding frequency, percentage, and mean values. (ST11)

(15f) Each song includes a list of words used in Avril Lavigne's 39 songs. **The singer's songs are classified as Pop-Punk.** In the music industry in Europe and today, she is still a famous artist with outstanding works. (ST06)

(15g) First, the descriptive method is used to analyze Sky's utterances, which uses the classification of illocutionary acts proposed by Searle. **Second, the statistical method is used to count the number of utterances from the type of speech acts and to calculate the percentage from the data.** Last, the interpretative method explains the intention of the meaning of Sky's utterances. (ST02)

In 15a, the passive voice in the second sentence is not necessary. The writer could have used a subjective complement to mean the same thing as in *the sampling group was convenience sampling technique.* The passive voice in 15b is arbitrary, where it is unreasonable and unexplainable as to why the writer used it. There is no link between the subject and the quantitative data in the passive voice with the information in the previous discourse. The passive voice in 15e is arbitrary, which is unreasonable and unexplainable. There is no link between the subject the students in passive voice with the information in the previous discourse.

Table 6. Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities between Q1 SCOPUS and Students' IS

Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities	**Freq. Q1**	**Freq. IS**
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	17	1
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	15	4
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	7	0
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	6	1
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Noun Clause Complement	5	0
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Subjective Complement	2	0
Subjective Complement + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	0	1
Total	52	7

The fourth-year undergraduate students, majoring in English at a Thai private university had a very limited ability to use passive voice and their vicinities when compared with Q1 SCOPUS international writers. The one that undergraduate students, majoring in English, produced the most was the colligation of transitive complement + passive voice and transitive complement. However, this complies with the literature review in that passive voice is a difficult structure among EFL learners.

Discussion

The uses of passive voice between professional writers and non-professional writers are the same. However, the differences between the two groups of writers are pragmatic aspects of the DP movement.

DP Deletion

Despite there being differences, the similarity between professional writers and non-professional writers is that they use passive voice to omit the agent. According to Swan (2015), passive voice is used for several agentless reasons, such as concealed agents, unknown agents, and widely known agents. However, this study found that passive constructions are commonly used for the reason of widely known agents. It is not necessary to spell out the researchers repetitively as the readers know who conducted the research studies (Djuwari, Saputri & Authar, 2022).

(16a) Approval for the study was obtained from the principal of the school. **The data were collected using a printed survey, which was sent to the participating school by postal service.** Before performing the surveys, the students were informed that participation was voluntary (Hirosawa, Kono & Oga-Baldwin, 2024, p. 4).

(16b) A mixed-methods design was applied in this study. **All data were analyzed using SPSS software, version 25.0.** First, means and standard deviations were calculated to assess the WTC levels […] (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 6).

(c) "An initial questionnaire was structured to measure three main constructs […]. **Each of these were measured in relation to an object, a key aspect of the learning process and environment.** Four aspects were chosen for the questionnaire […]" (Teravainen-Goff, 2023, p. 4)

Passive voice allowed the writer to omit the agent, referring to the one who instigated the action. It is widely known who conducts the processes of data collection, data analysis, and data validation. The use of passive voice to report experimental processes also helps avoid subjectivity via the use of the pronouns I and we (Traugott, 2010). Similarly, undergraduate students knew that the by-agents are able to be omitted, such as 17a and 17b.

(17a) Twenty-two were female, and 8 were male. Most of them were 26-30 years of age. **The sampling group was assigned through the convenience sampling technique.** The data were collected in the academic year 2023.

(17b) The Thai language version of the questionnaire was made to prevent any misunderstanding […]. T**he quantitative data were then analyzed by mean, SD, and percentage.** Regarding the quantitative data, they were analyzed through a thematic approach.

The agents of passive voice in these examples are the researchers. This is widely known, and it is not necessary to be spelt out.

DP movement

One of the differences between passive voice and their vicinities between professional writers and non-professional writers is explained by the theory of pragmatic discourse of givenness. The pragmatic discourse of givenness refers to providing the given information first before giving the new piece of information (Smolka, 2011; Smolka, 2017). Passive voice in applied linguistics methodology is used to comply with this theory.

(18a) A total of 65 students participated in the study. **They** were enrolled in an elementary-level Korean language elective at a higher education institution in Guangdong Province, China (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 3).

(18b) "The testing materials included both trained and untrained items. **The untrained words** were used to check the extent to which the effects of instruction can be generalized to novel words (Ruan & Saito, 2023, p. 4).

Example 18 shows that the researcher employed passive voice to link information with other constructions, such as transitive complements in 18a-18b. Although most researchers in Q1 SCOPUS and TCI 1 used passive voice with the reason of cohesion to comply with pragmatic discourse of givenness, passive voice with their vicinities written by Thai undergraduate students is sometimes inconsistent, arbitrary and not systemic as in 19.

(19) The Thai language version of the questionnaire was made to prevent any misunderstanding […]. **The quantitative data were then analyzed by mean, SD and percentage.** Regarding the quantitative data, they were analyzed through thematic approach.

Even though they knew to use the collocation of "passive voice + passive voice + passive voice", the function of language use deviated from the prototypical member as shown in Q1 SCOPUS and TCI 1. The results seem to comply with the explanations of passive voice in grammar texts (Swan, 2015) explaining that passive voice is the interchangeable structure of active voice. In addition, the vicinity of the passive voice to the right is the sentence to give justification about why the data collection and the data analysis were selected accordingly. In the research method, the researchers used their justification to back up the decision to use certain data collection and data analysis to make their research studies valid and reliable (Widdowson, 2011), such as 20.

(20a) **They were enrolled in an elementary-level Korean language elective at a higher education institution in Guangdong Province, China.** According to the internal guidelines, each language class accommodates 20 to 25 students (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 3).

(20b) **In the present study this activity was mainly used as an exercise for student recognition of compliments and CRs, but its results were not part of the quantitative analysis presented in section 4.1.** After this, students practiced producing compliments and CRs (step d) through a closed learner-learner role." (Iraheta, 2024, p. 4).

(20c) **Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, suggested by Hirosawa and Quint Oga-Baldwin (2022) to match the cognitive level of younger learners.** Each point indicated the degree to which the students agreed with the statements (1 = disagree very much, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree very much) (Hirosawa, Kono & Oga-Baldwin, 2024, p. 4).

(20d) **The selection and development of the chatbots were done based on two considerations.** First, previous research underlined the need for well-prepared materials appropriate for the levels and requirements of the learners (Kim & Su, 2024, p. 4).

The justifications in research methodology were given via the syntactic structures of transitive complements and subjective complements. These justifications

include the interpretations of scores, the advantages of certain tools, and a supporting reason given by other reliable sources. However, the semantic denotation of justifications is different as the unprofessional writer did not justify why certain data collection and analysis were applicable to the study as in 21.

> (21a) The Thai language version of the questionnaire was made to prevent any misunderstanding, and it was administered to the students through the platform Google Forms. **The quantitative data were then analyzed by mean, SD, and percentage.** Regarding the quantitative data, they were analyzed through a thematic approach.
>
> (21b) This part sought to investigate students' attitudes about the usage of the Metaverse in the learning of English. After identifying these categories, **the students were interviewed using a series of closed-ended questions.** The data were evaluated yielding frequency, percentage, and mean values.

Unlike professional writers, where the vicinities of passive voice are used for the reason for employing a certain data analysis method, unprofessional writers only report factual information. The vicinities of transitive complements, noun clause complements and subjective complements were rarely found in the work of unprofessional writers as they used the vicinities of justification as reproduced in Table 7.

Table 7. Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities between Q1 SCOPUS and Students' IS

Passive Voice and their Syntactic Vicinities	**Freq. Q1**	**Freq. IS**
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	17	1
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	15	4
Transitive Complement + Passive Voice + Passive Voice	7	0
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Transitive Complement	6	1
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Noun Clause Complement	5	0
Passive Voice + Passive Voice + Subjective Complement	2	0

The slot of semantic denotations of justification is semi-fixed. Reasons can be justified with various syntactic structures, such as noun clause complements, transitive complements and subjective complements. Justifications are factual. These syntactic structures are the structures to report facts.

Conclusion

The current study examined passive voice with syntactic vicinities in applied linguistics research methodology from different datasets to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the syntactic reasons of the DP by-phrase agent deletion in passive voice in applied linguistics methodology?

2. What are the pragmatic reasons of the DP movement in passive voice via their syntactic vicinities in applied linguistics methodology?

Passive voice was found to be colligated with various syntactic structures, such as passive voice, transitive complements, subjective complements, and noun clause complements. The most frequent colligation was *passive voice + passive voice + passive voice*. This pattern was used to connect data collection, data analysis, and data validation. When passive constructions were used with transitive complements, they were used to link information together to create cohesion in the methodology. However, transitive complements, subjective complements, and noun clause complements used after passive voice were the syntactic structures to give reasons as to why the researchers selected certain data, instruments, and data analysis in their study. The DP by-phrase agents in passive voice are omitted due to widely known agents as the ones who conducted the research methodology are the researchers themselves. The pragmatic reasons for the DP movement to the Spec T are due to the pragmatic discourse of givenness to link an old piece of information with the previous discourse.

Regarding the new knowledge of this research paper, the idea of passive voice and active voice as interchange structures could be counteracted by the results of this study. Even though they are the same semantically, they are different in terms of their pragmatic aspects focusing on their movement. The DP movement of the theme towards the Spec T in passive voice leads to sentential cohesion and coherences that most EFL learners have been faced with the problem of linking one sentence to the other seamlessly. Therefore, the results of this paper finally offer a possible solution.

The results of this study could provide EFL learners with concrete examples for writing the research methodology section more effectively. Specifically, the findings illustrate how form, meaning, and use can be integrated, helping learners apply these linguistic elements simultaneously in their applied linguistics research. By doing so, students are likely to enhance cohesion and coherence in their writing, as they are encouraged to master different syntactic structures in related areas simultaneously. This, in turn, fosters the development of more professional writing skills among EFL learners. However, a limitation of this paper is the restricted data set used in the study. If possible, future research should employ a corpus-based approach. This would

enhance the generalizability and external validity of the findings. The study of passive constructions and their vicinities in this study was limited to only the materials of applied linguistics research articles. Applying the results of this study to other materials such as news articles and other types of texts may not be applicable to the optimal level.

Pedagogical Implications

When EFL teachers teach the subject of academic writing in English, they may shed light on the language features that frequently occur in the section of research methodology. For example, not only are passive constructions used due to the omission of the subject, but the object is also raised to link with the information in the previous discourse. Learners can apply either noun clause complements or transitive complements as the following sentence to explain why a certain method is selected. Therefore, the learners could learn the right research method and the right language patterns at the same time. For example, the teachers may recommend several sampling methods, including simple sampling method, convenience sampling method, and purposive sampling method. Then, the teachers can teach the syntactic structures of passive voice, transitive complements, and subjective complements. Finally, the learners can be instructed to fill in their information into the syntactic structures taught. For example, "the data collection in this study is convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling method was applied for the data collection in this study. This research study follows a convenience sampling method". Language teachers can facilitate the learners' practical knowledge by narrowing down the language features that are authentically used in the section of methodology.

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