Kurdish EFL Learners' Awareness of Passivization in English and Kurdish

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Abstract. Passivization is the grammatical process in which the structures of the whole sentence, and specifically the verb phrase, change. This process is one of the main syntactic needs in any academic writing. Therefore, any English learner needs to know enough about it by the end of undergraduate studies. This paper, being an empirical one, tests Kurdish learners' awareness of the process by providing an instrument. The data and the scope of the study are sentences from English and Kurdish. A cohort of eighty-eight senior students in the English departments in Iraqi Kurdistan universities were selected randomly to participate in the study. As for the Kurdish variety, the Central Kurdish has been chosen which is spoken in Erbil and Sulaymania. On this basis, the setting of the research incudes only the universities situated in this geographical area. A mixed method has been adopted in doing the paper. The aim of the study is to indicate and compare the learners' awareness in passivizing and recognizing certain sentence structures in both languages. One of the main conclusions of the study is that there is a positive correlation between the EFL learners' awareness in English and Central Kurdish (CK) in relation to passivization.

Keywords: *awareness, Central Kurdish, EFL, passive, sentence structure*

A. INTRODUCTION

Passivization, being a syntactic process, is the transformation of a sentence from its D-structure form to an S-structure form. Passivization is also regarded as a type of fronting in that the object of the active sentence is fronted and becomes the subject of the corresponding passive sentence. In doing so, the moved element takes a greater role and the whole sentence may describe it as it draws the reader's/addressee's attention. It is obvious that the original subject can also be optionally mentioned in the passive sentence in the form of a prepositional phrase (by + NP). Not only does the object of the active sentence involve in the process, the transitive verb phrase is also affected in that the passive sentence always has an additional auxiliary, invariably a form of *be*, as compared to its counterpart in the active form. In addition to this change within the verb phrase, the

main verb must appear in its –ed participle (or passive participle, by some people) form in the passive sentence (see Burton-Roberts, 2016; Greenbaum & Nelson, 2016; Hornsby, 2014; Tallerman, 2015). Let us consider the example sentence below.

(1) a. John repaired the car.

　　b. The car was repaired (by John).
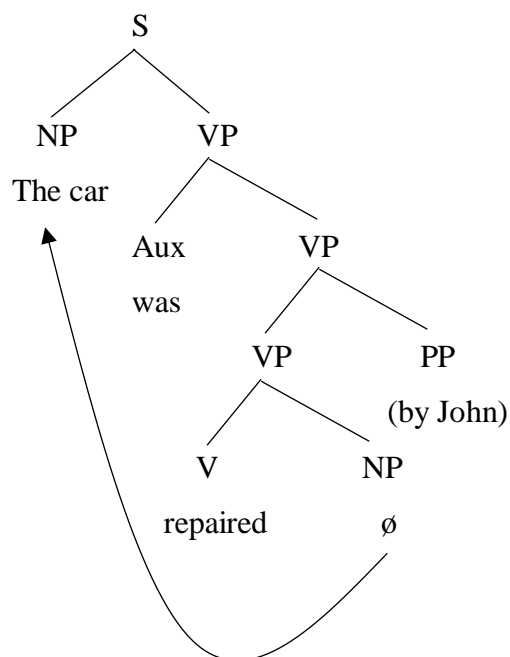
We mentioned in the previous paragraph that the verb must be transitive to have an object and eventually to be passivized, albeit there are certain transitive verbs whose object cannot be the subject of a passive sentence, meaning that the sentence cannot be passivized. Examples of such verbs are *have* (in the sense of *own*), *belong*, *resemble*, *etc*. In English, transitive verbs can be classified into three categories: mono-transitive, di-transitive, and complex transitive. These three categories of transitive verbs appear in four different sentence structures: SVO, SVOO, SVOC, and SVOA. These structures are instantiated in the following sentences:

(2) a. The students submitted the assignments yesterday.　(SVO)

　　b. The assignments were submitted yesterday.

(3) a. My friends gave me a splendid book.　　　　　(SVOO)

　　b. I was given a splendid book.

　　c. A splendid book was given to me.

(4) a. We elected Adam our delegate.   (SVOC)

    b. Adam was elected our delegate.

(5) a. I've put my coat on the sofa.   (SVOA)

    b. My coat has been put on the sofa.

In addition to the sentence structure of English, one must take a good account of the tense-aspect system of English sentences whenever dealing with passivization. It follows that the past and present tenses as well as simple, continuous, and perfect aspects are essential criteria when passivizing a sentence. It is worth mentioning that a sentence with the perfect continuous aspect cannot be passivized.

There exist certain structures that behave somewhat differently from the normal structures indicated above. Examples of these structures are sentences whose object (or verb complement) is a to-infinitive clause and sentences whose verb element is a prepositional verb, which is a sub-type of multi-word verbs. In the former, the object of the to-infinitive (subordinate) clause, rather than the object of the whole sentence, moves and becomes the grammatical subject of the passive sentence. Unlike other passive structures, this kind of passive sentence does not have the same core meaning as its active counterpart (as can be seen in 6 a&b). As for the latter, the object which undergoes movement is a prepositional object, meaning that it is the object of a preposition (Huddleston & Pullum, 2005).

(6) a. James wanted to persuade Kate.

    b. Kate wanted to be persuaded (by James).

(7) a. I looked after your children.

    b. Your children were looked after.

The sentence (6a) is indicative of a control structure in which the subject of the subordinate clause is the same as the subject of the main clause. It follows that 'James' controls 'PRO' and they are co-indexed. Hence, the subordinate clause implicitly contains a subject which is phonologically null. On this basis, the clause cannot be the subject of the passive sentence while its object can (see Ahmed 2015). In (6a), we do not know whether Kate wanted to be persuaded or not while we are certain that she wanted in its passive counterpart. As for (7b), the preposition is left stranded and its object functions as the subject of the passive sentence. This is because the preposition is originally part of

the verb constituent, not the NP it precedes in the active sentence (see Greenbaum & Nelson, 2016).

It is well-known that one of the most remarkable uses of passive can be seen in the field of academic writing. Therefore, I think it is necessary to consider this issue. Nowadays, use and non-use of active voice is open to dispute in academic writing, even one feels some sort of fear in the use of the active in academic papers. In this regard, depending on the literature, we can state that both active and passive can be used, each under certain conditions and in the acceptable framework. Whenever the identity of the author or the researcher matters, especially with respect to personal contributions or presenting contrasting ideas to others' views, the active voice is more preferred. It is also said that when direct and concise sentences are used, it is advisable to use the active voice. However, passive is more preferable in talking about established and standard procedures of focusing on the recipient of the action (see Alvin, 2014; APA's Publication Manual, 2020; Banks, 2017; Ferreira, 2021; Minton, 2015; Van Geyte, 2013).

Concerning CK, there exist three sentence structures that can be passivized: SOV, SOCV, SOAV. One may notice that a sentence structure with two objects is missing in CK. In fact, the indirect object in CK sentences cannot appear alone without the aid of a preposition, i.e. it must be preceded by a preposition. The preposition, in such a case, makes the object an adverbial because it changes the NP to a PP. Henceforth, the corresponding CK structure of English SVOO becomes an SOAV structure. Both languages differ in some syntactic respects, for example the word order and the pro-drop parameters. Unlike English, CK is a pro-drop language and its verb constituent usually comes at the end of the sentence, although it comes after the subject in certain cases, for instance in the SVA structure.

In passivizing CK sentences, no movement happens and the elements remain in-situ since the object in the active sentence precedes the verb. Hence, the process is restricted in removing the subject and its co-indexed clitic together. A remarkable parametric feature of CK is lack of auxiliaries, at least in a free form as in English. On this ground, passivization in CK comes into existence through a bound morpheme, namely 'r'. The bound morpheme is inserted within the verb constituent, exactly between the root and the

tense marker. The tense marker of the past is the bound morpheme 'a' and that of present is 'é'. Like any other pro-drop language, the subject pronoun can be dropped regardless of the tense. In such a case, the internal argument in the active sentence appears initially, and the external argument is phonologically null. Thus, the subject occurs in the form of a clitic attached to the internal argument in the past and to the verb constituent in the present. It is worth noting that the clitic can have three different functions and appears in various positions; therefore, it is crucial not to confuse between its uses and occurrences. What we need here is the subject function, but it can also have a possessive as well as object functions. Movement, or Copy + Delete in the minimalist terms, happens when the clitic functions as object or possessive (see Ahmed, 2018, 2020). The following examples can be illustrative:

(8) a. Azad séwékî xwarid.   (SOV)

     Azad apple-INDEF-NOM ate.

     Azad ate an apple.

  b. Séwék xura.

    apple-INDEF eaten-BE

    An apple was eaten.

(9) a. (Min) Sîrwan be kesékî baş dadeném.   (SOCV)

   (I)   Sîrwan as person-INDEF-a good regard-NOM

    I regard Sirwan as a good person.

  b. Sîrwan be kesékî baş dadenrét.

    Sîrwan as person-INDEF-a good regarded-BE-OBJ

    Sirwan is regarded as a good person.

(10) a. (Ew) kitébekey bo min narid.   (SOAV)

  (He/She) book-DEF-NOM to me sent

  He/She sent me the book   (alternatively: He/She sent the book to me)

  b. Kitébeke bo min nérdira.

  book-DEF to me sent-BE

  The book was sent to me.

  c. (Min) kitébekem bo nérdira.

   (I)   book-DEF-OBJ to sent-BE

I was sent the book.

Like English, a sentence containing a three-place predicate, i.e. a di-transitive verb, can be passivized in two ways (as in 10 b&c above). However, different from English, the direct object always remains in-situ and undergoes no movement; it means that only the indirect object is deleted and copied in another position. As mentioned above, in passivizing sentences with a three-place predicate the indirect object is always preceded by a preposition (as in 10a). When passivizing the sentence, the preposition is left stranded as it does not move with the indirect object.

The problem that the paper aims to address is that no research has been done on comparing Kurdish EFL learners' abilities, in the framework of the passive voice, between CK and English, the former as their mother tongue and the latter as a foreign language. The purpose of the paper is to reveal the university students' awareness of recognizing and producing passive sentences in both languages. It is intended to show the differences in their awareness concerning the above mentioned sentence structures in each language, meaning that which structure is easier and which one is more difficult. The scope of the paper is limited to deal only with simple sentences, not composite (compound and complex) ones. It is worth mentioning that students from the English departments in Iraqi Kurdistan universities take 2-3 compulsory grammar courses to have enough knowledge of the structures, the tense-aspect system, and the passivization process. They also study passivization in CK in the high school, i.e. before their coming to university. The major limitation of the study was that I could not have a good access to the participants during the test; therefore, some other instructors invigilated instead of me. Another limitation is the difficulty of getting enough resources on awareness for the purpose of literature review. One of the hypotheses of the paper was that the fourth-years had similar awareness of passivization in both languages. Also, their awareness was higher in the sentence recognition than in the production of passive sentences. The research questions are the following:

1. To what extent do the English department seniors have correlative awareness of passivization in English (as a foreign language) and CK (as their mother tongue)?
2. How is the EFL learners' awareness different between the sentence recognition and passive sentence production?

Literature Review

It is obvious that a large number of researchers and scholars have dealt with passivization from across the globe, but only a handful of studies have concentrated on the learners' awareness of the process. Among those works, there exist weak papers which scholars avoid using in their academic works. What follows is a brief review of several works carried out in the past decade. The review of the literature here is put chronologically.

The influence of L1 transfer on L2 processing of English passive sentences by Korean high school students has been reported by Kim and Kim (2013). Seventy-five participants from two different high schools took part in the study: 25 from a public high school and 50 from a renowned foreign high school in Seoul. The participants were divided into three groups depending on a cloze test to know their level of proficiency. All the students of the public high school situated in the low-level group, and the other fifty in medium-level and high-level groups. There were also thirteen more native English students as a control group. One month prior to the main test, they set a norming test to evaluate the level of the participants. The results of the study, as expected, indicated that a remarkable L1 intervention could be felt for the low-level group while it is very rare in the high-level group. In addition to L1 effect, frequency of the verb use has its own role in processing English passive sentences by the participants.

Sulaiman and Muhammad (2014) did a research on the problems university students face in terms of passivization. The population of their research was 164 third-year English department students at Salahaddin university-Erbil. Among the total number of the population, they randomly selected 118 students as the sample of the study. They set a two-level test as the tool of their study. The first test, which consisted of twenty-four multiple-choice items, was designed to assess the participants' ability of recognizing passive sentences. The second one was a production test which consisted of twenty-five active sentences; the participants were asked to change them into passive. The results of the study indicated that the majority of the students had certain types of problems with respect to the recognition and production of passive sentences due to common factors such as interlingual, intralingual, and learning context. It is worth mentioning that the results of the study parallel the hypotheses as the majority of the participants had

problems in performing passivization. Moreover, they had more problems in the production than in the recognition.

Banks (2017) carried out a research on thirty-two scientific articles over a span of thirty years (1985-2015). The aim of his research was to make sure of the claim that the use of passive had declined during the aforementioned era. Of the scientific articles published during that time span, the corpus of his study was based on the articles published in four specific years: 1985, 1995, 2005, and 2015. Ease of access was his main strategy in choosing the articles. He believed that the choice of the active or passive with the first person pronoun subject heavily depended on the process type. In this regard, he used a system of five process types, namely material, mental, relational, verbal, and existential. The hypothesis of his research was that when the process is mental, there is tendency to use active with the first person pronoun subject. The result of the study was in line with its hypothesis in that a shift had occurred in the use of mental and verbal processes in the active and passive had been preferred with material processes. For him, mental processes are more personal than material ones. That is why the former has a wider use than the latter when the subject is the first person pronoun in the active. Hence, the claim made him carry out the research was supported by some evidence as there was an increase in the active usage at the expense of the passive.

Thompson et al. (2018) carried out an experimental research about the language users' tendency to use sentences including a transitive event, namely active voice sentences, be-passive, and get-passive. Following Thomson et al. (2013), they believe that the choice of each of the mentioned structures depends on whether the patient is prominent or important. The focus of their study was on understating the participants' mental representation of each structure. One of the hypotheses of their study was that be-passive rated as more acceptable than get-passive. To carry out their research, they did three experiments. In the first one, sixteen material sets were provided; eighteen were provided in the second one; the very material sets of the first experiment were used again in the third one, but this time to show naturalness rather than preference of use. There were two groups of participants: undergraduate students and people who were recruited through the database of the universities in which they did the research. Eighty participants (mean age

28, 50% females) took part in the first experiment, sixty participants (mean age 28, 32% males) in the second, and forty-seven (mean age 19, 13% males) in the third one. The results of the study confirmed the hypotheses to a great extent. Taking all the three experiments into consideration together, the participants preferred to change get-passive to be-passive, and be-passive to active voice; so is the case with respect to naturalness. As such, the changes happened step by step: from the least common to the most common, in a continuum, on the basis of their frequency in the corpus. Also, truncated passive was preferred over full passive.

Garraffa et al. (2021) did a research on the effects of producing passive sentences on thirty-three monolingual children whose mean age was (5.2). They divided the children into two groups both of whom were exposed to seven stories based on fairy tales: six of them were used at the training phase, and the other one at the post-training phase. The first group exposed in an active voice condition and the other one in the passive. After that, all were tested: the second group, who had a three-week exposure to the passive condition, managed to generate more than three times as many passive sentences as the first group did. Here we can conclude that exposure to a phenomenon, being input, has direct influence on the participants' production, i.e. output (see also Bakhshandeh & Jafari, 2018). What they focused upon was syntactic priming which is the tendency to reproduce certain syntactic structures by language users after being exposed to a certain phenomenon (see also Bock, 1986). The main hypothesis of their study was that more exposure to passive corresponds to more passive production, hence the result of the study supported the hypothesis. It is worth noting that, according to the study, the length of the sentence and pre-training language ability had no effect on the students' passive production.

Duklim and Maneechote (2021) carried out a research on 58 first-year university students to investigate their problems in learning the passive voice. They used two tools for collecting the data: a questionnaire and an interview. They divided the participants into two groups. The results indicated that the first-year students in both groups had problems in learning the passive voice. Their problems were of various types such as structure, verb

form, tense, and some more problems related to the learners themselves, their teachers, and the material.

B. Research Method

Participants

Eighty-eight participants were randomly selected who were senior students from the English departments of the universities situated in Erbil and Sulaymania, Iraqi Kurdistan. The rationale behind determining this geographical area was that CK is spoken there. Concerning the choice of the above mentioned level of participants, it was because they must have covered any issues related to the syntax of passivization in English as a foreign language. Also, they are very close to be future teachers or translators in a recent future, or even maybe language scholars in a distant future. The gender of the participants was not taken into account since their awareness of passivization is a syntactic matter, not a sociocultural perspective.

Instrument

To test the participants' awareness, a researcher-made instrument, which consisted of two parts, was provided. The first part (12 sentences in both languages) tested their awareness to decide whether a given active sentence was passivized or not. The second part was devoted to test the learners' abilities to passivize twelve active sentences (in both languages) in that they were required to change them into passive. Grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, verb form and verb type were considered in the structure of the sentences. Before sending to the participants, the instrument used in the paper had been sent to three external evaluators whose specialty was linguistics. Their comments and views were taken into account to achieve validity and reliability of the data.

Procedure

After preparing the test items, they were sent to three external evaluators for the purpose of enhancing them and amending their shortcomings. Then a number of students were asked to take part voluntarily in a pilot test in order to make the instrument as well as the research reliable and to be sure about its feasibility with respect to the items and the allotted time to answer the questions. Of those who were asked, eight students accepted

the request of participation. In the final stage, eighty-eight English department senior students from five different universities participated in the study. Each group of students were given forty-five minutes, which is a normal class duration in Iraqi universities, to answer the questions; a university lecturer invigilated in the halls in which the test was taken. Following the process of data collection, the test papers were scored for the purpose of the data analysis, which was done manually using some tables and a formula as shown in the next section (Results).

C. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the data indicated that the majority of the learners were aware of the process of passivization in both languages. All the results concerning the participants' awareness and the study's two-part test can be seen in the tables below.

Findings

Table 1. The number of the learners from each university and their responses concerning two introductory questions

Universities	No. of participants	Questions	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Raparin	20	1	4	14	2
		2	14	5	1
Sulaimani	18	1	6	8	4
		2	9	6	3
Garmian	20	1	5	10	5
		2	11	7	2
Koya	15	1	7	7	1
		2	5	9	1
Salahaddin-Erbil	15	1	7	8	0
		2	6	6	3
Total	88	1	29 (32.95%)	47 (53.41%)	12 (13.64%)
		2	45 (51.14%)	33 (37.50%)	10 (11.36%)

This table shows the number of the participants in each university and their responses concerning two introductory questions (see the appendix) regarding their interest in English language and their intuition in CK. These two questions were just a sort of warm-up for the learners before answering the main questions of the test.

Table 2. The learners' awareness of the sentence recognition (active vs. passive) in part (1)

Items	The number (and percentage) of correct answers (showing awareness)	The number (and percentage) of incorrect answers (showing unawareness)
1	69 (78.4%)	19 (21.6%)
2	54 (61.3%)	34 (38.7%)
3	72 (81.8 %)	16 (18.2%)
4	76 (86.3%)	12 (13.7%)
5	57 (64.7%)	31 (35.3%)
6	60 (68.1%)	28 (31.9%)
7	60 (68.1%)	28 (31.9%)
8	62 (70.4%)	26 (29.6%)
9	76 (86.3%)	12 (13.7%)
10	71 (80.6%)	17 (19.4%)
11	36 (40.9%)	52 (59.1%)
12	46 (52.3%)	42 (47.7)

In this test (items 1-6 English sentences and 7-12 CK sentences), the learners just answered a yes-no question for purpose of testing their recognition of the sentences in both languages. As seen in the table, the learners' awareness can be felt in both languages except for item 11 (the reason will be discussed in the discussion section).

Table 3. The learners' awareness of producing passive sentences in part (2)

Items	Awareness	Unawareness (structure)	Unawareness (tense-aspect system)	Unawareness (verb form)
1	11 (12.5)	20 (22.73%)	49 (55.68%)	8 (9.09%)
2	25 (28.41%)	56 (63.64%)	7 (7.95%)	0 (0%)
3	23 (26.14%)	34 (38.64%)	29 (32.95%)	2 (2.27%)
4	30 (34.09%)	29 (32.95%)	17 (19.32%)	12 (13.64%)
5	7 (7.95%)	41 (46.59%)	13 (14.77%)	27 (30.68%)
6	4 (4.55%)	80 (90.91%)	4 (4.55%)	0 (0%)

7	23 (26.14%)	38 (43.18%)	27 (30.68%)	0 (0%)
8	17 (19.32%)	31 (35.23%)	40 (45.45%)	0 (0%)
9	16 (18.18%)	43 (48.86%)	29 (32.95%)	0 (0%)
10	30 (34.09%)	31 (35.23%)	27 (30.68%)	0 (0%)
11	52 (59.09%)	36 (40.91%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
12	25 (28.41%)	34 (38.64%)	29 (32.95%)	0 (0%)

Surprisingly, the results in table 3 contrast with those of table 2. As the table shows, a minority of the learners are fully aware of the process in the production of passive sentences. Of all the items, the learners are only aware in item (11), which is a CK sentence.

Table 4. The learners' results in English and CK items separately

Languages	The number of the learners who passed in part (1)	The number of the learners who passed in part (2)	The number of the learners who passed in both parts together
English	82 (93.18%)	19 (21.59%)	47 (53.41%)
CK	73 (82.95%)	32 (36.36%)	50 (56.82%)

In the above table, the digits represent the number of the learners who have got six out of twelve, i.e. the passing grade, in each part. Also, it shows the total number of the learners who passed in the English items as well as CK items separately. It is worth suggesting that getting six or more indicates that, potentially, the learner is relatively aware of the process.

Taking tables 2, 3, and 4 into account, the unanswered items by any participant have been regarded as wrong answers indicating unawareness.

Table 5. The mean of the correct answers in English and CK items separately

Languages	The mean of the correct answers in part (1)	The mean of the correct answers in part (2)	The mean of the correct answers in the whole test
English	4.397	1.329	5.7
CK	4	1.954	6

After all, the below mathematical formula was used to see whether a positive correlation or a negative one exists between the learners' awareness in relation to the process of passivization in both languages.

X = awareness in CK

Y = awareness in English

$\Sigma(x-x^-) (y-y^-) = 255.7$

$\Sigma(x-x^-)^2 = 681$

$\Sigma(y-y^-)^2 = 543.2$

$$r = \frac{\sum(x-\bar{x})(y-\bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2 \sum(y-\bar{y})^2}}$$

$r = 0.42$

The above result indicates the existence of a positive correlation between the two variables.

Discussion

After analyzing the data**,** we see that the hypotheses are supported by the results of the collected data. The following is a thorough discussion of the obtained results in both parts of the test.

Part (1)

In this part, the participants were asked to determine whether a given list of active sentences are passivized or not. The fundamental condition of passivizing a sentence is having an object in the sentence, meaning that any sentence without object cannot be passivized. However, there exist certain active sentences containing the object, but they cannot be passivized. This part, which focuses on the sentence recognition, consists of twelve sentences (1-6 English and 7-12 CK). The results of this part (table 2) indicate that the majority of the learners are generally aware of recognizing sentences whether or not are passivized, albeit there are some unanswered items which have been regarded as wrong answers. Each item has been designed purposefully, namely there is something in the item, such as the structure of the sentence or its main verb, which needs to be taken into consideration when answering. Hence, this part examines the learners' recognition awareness in terms of the sentence structure and the main verb. Throughout all the items,

there exist some sorts of mistakes in both languages. Let us first consider the items in which the EFL learners have showed a great deal of awareness.

Items 3, 4, 9, and 10 are the ones of which the learners have most awareness. Items 3 and 10 contain an adjective in both languages (meaning that they have SVC/SCV structure); items 4 and 9 have the SVO/SOV structure, respectively. As seen in the results of table (2), more than 80% of the participants are aware of sentence recognition in these four items. On this basis, it can be concluded that a great majority of the learners know that the SVC/SCV structure is one which cannot be passivized. It can also be noticed that the SVO structure (whose counterpart is SOV in CK) is the easiest one of which English department senior students are aware with respect to passivization. It is worth mentioning that items 9 and 10 are CK sentences. Item (1) is another case in which we can find the learners' awareness. Its verb is *have* in the sense of 'ownership' which is followed by an object that cannot be the subject of a passive sentence. Here, 78.4% of the learners showed awareness in that they marked the item as one which cannot be passivized.

Item (2) was designed on the basis of SVOC structure. A large number of the learners failed in their decisions concerning this item. It follows that this structure is not an easy one for learners in that only 61.3% of them were aware in their responses to the item. As far as the researcher is concerned, the point which needs to be paid attention here is having a complement in the structure that misled 38.7% of the learners in their responses.

In item (5), 64.7% of the learners were aware in their responses. The verb of the sentence is 'learn' which is somewhat tricky in that it can be followed by an object which can become the subject of a passive sentence. Another reason that can be regarded as misleading for the learners is that the word 'all', which had been used for the purpose of emphasis, comes after the subject.

The last English item in the first part is item (6) whose verb is a prepositional one 'call for'. Here 68.1% of the learners were aware of the sentence recognition although the structure, which is SVO, is easily recognized as seen above in items (4 and 9). Thus, the difference which is noticed in their awareness with respect to these items is because of the main verb of the sentence: the main verb in item (4) is a single-word verb while that

of item (6) is a multi-word verb. The latter is usually problematic and complicated for learners. The object which follows this kind of verb is known as the 'prepositional object' (see Greenbaum & Nelson, 2016).

Now turning to the four remaining CK items, we see somewhat similar results to the English ones in items (7 and 8) whereas it is not the case in items (11 and 12). The structure of item (7) is the same as the structure of item (9), but they differ in the number of words and the form of the subject and the object. The subject in item (9) is a proper name; it comes initially and it is followed by the object, which is a common noun. As such, a vast majority of the learners were aware of the item. Conversely, the subject in item (7) is a clitic pronoun (man = we), which is very common in CK, and it has attached to the object, being an independent personal pronoun, coming in the initial position of the sentence (Ewan = Them). The percentage of the learners' awareness in this item is 68.1 %, which is lower than that of item (9). It follows that the form and the position of the subject and/or object influence Kurdish EFL learners' awareness in determining the status of the sentence. It is crucial to point out that CK active sentences can appear in different forms in that the sentence elements are not fixed in the same position as it is the case in English language. As for item (8), which corresponds to item (1) in terms of having the same verb (*have* in the sense of ownership), 70.4% of the learners answered the question correctly. It is obvious that the percentage here is lower than that of item (1).

The most problematic item of all the items in the first part is item (11) in which the percentage of the learners' awareness is only 40.9%. Thus, it is the only item, different from the rest, in which the majority of the participants failed. This item corresponds to item (5) since the verb here is 'férbun = learn'. The misleading point can be that the verb 'learn' in English is a transitive one and it is followed by an object that can become the subject of a passive sentence whereas its CK counterpart is intransitive and the sentence always remains active.

Finally, item (12) is the second most problematic one in the first part as only 52.3% of the learners were aware that the sentence can be passivized. The verb in this sentence is 'wîstin = want'. In this regard, one can suggest that the verb in question is one of which the learners have a low awareness.

Surprisingly, as seen in table (5), the Kurdish EFL learners did better in the English part than in the CK part as the mean of the correct answers in English items (1-6) is 4.397 while the mean of CK part is 4. Therefore, we can conclude that, taking sentence recognition into account, Kurdish EFL learners are more aware in the English language than in their mother tongue, namely CK.

Part (2):

In this part, as compared to part (1), the learners' awareness decreases significantly. It is well known that production is always more difficult than recognition, that is why this mirrors the learners' awareness in this paper. This part, like the first one, consists of twelve items (1-6 English sentences and 7-12 CK sentences) that the participants are required to passivize the given active sentences. As indicated in table (3), the highest percentage of the learners' awareness is 59.09% (item 11) while the lowest percentage of their awareness is 4.55% (item 6). Due to the fact that in all the items, except for item (11), the learners' awareness is quite low (see table 3), the researcher prefers to discuss the mistakes and the problems that the learners encountered in producing passive sentences. Generally speaking, they made mistakes in one of the following: structure, tense-aspect system, and occasionally the main verb form. In Duklim and Maneechote (2021), it was also confirmed that these three criteria are the most problematic for EFL learners. A great difference is seen in the learners' awareness concerning the verb form in the current paper and their paper in that the learners' awareness in the current paper was so much better than those in theirs. The reason is that their participants were first-year students while the participants here were seniors. This is a clear indication that input enhancement to passive structures raised their awareness (see Bakhshandeh & Jafari, 2018).

In addition to referring the percentage of the learners who were aware in each item, we only discuss the point at which they have made mistakes most. As table (3) shows, the main verb form is the criterion which is the easiest for the learners in that the least number of mistakes are seen in this part, especially in the CK sentences in which the percentage of making mistakes is 0%. When talking about the verb form in English, we mean changing the verb to its –ed participle form in the passive version of the sentence. Before

discussing the items, it is important to point out that there exist some cases that one learner has made more than one mistake in a given item, for example a mistake in the structure and another in the tense-aspect system or in the verb form. Let us now consider the items of this part.

Item (1), among all the items, indicates the largest number of mistakes made by the learners in the tense-aspect system which is the present continuous. Forty-nine (55.68%) mistakes were made in the tense-aspect system. Only 12.5% of the learners were successful, i.e. aware, in passivizing this sentence. It is worth noting that the learners' problem is usually in the aspect, not the tense, but we mention them together as they intertwine in the sentence. This result indicates that the learners encountered most problems with the continuous aspect when passivizing sentences. A similar result can be seen in Maulida (2015).

In item (2), 28.41% of the learners changed the sentence correctly. The majority of the mistakes in relation to this item are in the structure in that 56 (63.64%) learners failed to passivize the sentence correctly. The number of the mistakes in the structure of this item is the second largest among all the twelve items of this part. The structure of the active sentence is SVOC. As we saw in part (1), this structure was also a source of making mistakes and caused the learners lose their awareness in determining the sentence whether it was passivized or not. On this basis, it is implied that SVOC is one of the most difficult structures among the seven English sentence structures. As for the tense-aspect system, which is a past simple sentence, only 7 (7.95%) learners made mistakes in this item. The simple aspect in the other items was also the safest in which the least number of the learners made mistakes. Thus, it is concluded that the simple aspect is one of which the learners are aware most.

Item (3) has been designed in the present perfect structure. 26.14% of the learners showed awareness in passivizing this item; 34 (38.64%) learners made mistakes in the structure (SVOA). This indicates that SVOA is another problematic structure for the learners' awareness in passivization. There were also 29 (32.95%) learners who made mistakes in the tense-aspect system. The sentence is present perfect; as a result, one can posit that the

perfect aspect is also problematic for EFL learners in passivizing sentences. However, it is not as difficult as the continuous aspect.

Concerning item (4), its structure is SVOO. Again, the largest number of mistakes were made in the structure. The percentage of the learners' awareness is 34.09%; the number of the mistakes in the structure is 29 (32.95%). Taking the above mentioned items into account, we can confirm that the structures consisting of four constituents are more problematic for learners than SVO, as seen in part (1), too.

In item (5), although the structure is SVO, we see a large number of mistakes in the structure which are 41 (46.59%) mistakes. The reason behind making this large number of mistakes in an easy structure is the main verb of the sentence which is a multi-word verb (prepositional verb). Another point is using the reflexive pronoun (themselves) after the subject for the purpose of emphasis. On such grounds, other criteria affect the learners' awareness in the SVO structure. Twenty-seven mistakes (30.68%) were made in dealing with this verb when passivizing the sentence. Only 7 (7.95%) learners answered the item correctly. As we saw in part (1), the learners had problems with this kind of verb. Thus, the mistakes in item (5) further confirm the fact that the verb form in question is problematic for Kurdish EFL learners.

The last English item (6) is a sentence which contains a control verb (want). In this kind of sentence, the subject of the main clause controls an empty element, namely PRO, in the lower clause. In passivizing such a sentence, no additional auxiliary (be) is needed; this is a distinctive feature of the sentence. Surprisingly, only 4 (4.55%) leaners were aware of the details related to passivizing the sentence while 80 (90.91%) learners made mistakes in the structure of the sentence in that they did not know how to passivize the sentence. The concluding point here is that the control structure is the most difficult one for Kurdish EFL learners to passivize.

Now, tuning to all the CK items together, as shown in table (3), we notice that the percentage of the learners' awareness is generally similar to the English items except for item (11) in which the majority of the participants (59.09%) had no problems in passivizing the sentence. Thus, item (11) is the only one in which we can find the learners'

awareness, taking the majority into account. As for the verb form, no mistakes can be found (0%) because when a mistakes is made in the structure, it simultaneously covers the mistake in the verb form. The mistakes that they have can be seen in the structure and the tense-aspect system (see table 3). Interestingly, we see no mistakes in the tense-aspect system in the past simple (item 11). This coincides with the learners' awareness concerning the past simple in English.

Different from part (1), the mean of the correct answers in the English items is lower than the mean of the CK items which are 1.329 and 1.954, respectively. On this ground, we can conclude that Kurdish EFL learners are more aware in the production of CK passive sentences than English passive sentences.

Summarizing, and taking the whole test (both parts) into account, the mean of the correct answers in English sentences is 5.7 and that of CK sentences is 6. After collecting and analyzing the data, I concluded that there is a positive correlation ($r = 0.42$) between the learners' awareness in both languages in relation to the process of passivization. It is worth indicating that the results of the current study are similar to those of Sulaiman and Muhammad (2014). Hence, the results from the study are in line with previous research. The difference between this paper and theirs is that their data and scope were only English sentences. Since a large number of seniors took part in the study, we can suggest that the accessed sample is a perfect representative of the whole population. The major limitation of the study was that the researcher could not have a possible access to all the participants; therefore, some other instructors were requested to invigilate during the test. Another limitation was the lack of sources on awareness for the literature review.

D. Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

After analyzing the data and discussing the results, we conclude that the awareness level of the Kurdish EFL learners in English and CK is moderate. With respect to sentence recognition, Kurdish EFL learners' awareness in English was higher than their awareness in CK, although CK is their mother tongue. As for producing passive sentences, the opposite was the case in that they did better in the CK sentences. Generally speaking, the

majority of Kurdish EFL learners were able to determine whether a given sentence (in both languages) was passivized or not, but when it came to the production of the passive sentence, their awareness sharply decreased in that they made various types of mistakes: structure, tense-aspect system, and verb form. Another concluding remark is that Kurdish EFL learners' awareness in CK is because of the stored linguistic knowledge in mind, i.e. the intuition, they have. Finally, and importantly, there was a positive correlation between the learners' awareness, with respect to the process of passivization, in English and CK.

Suggestion

Despite having certain types of limitations, it is suggested for future research that the students' interest should be taken into consideration to test their awareness concerning passivization.

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Appendix
The questions directed the participants

I kindly request you to answer the questions below which have been designed for the purpose of an academic research. I do assure you that everything related to your privacy such as age, gender, etc. will be kept confidential and the data are used only for research purpose. The title of the study is '*Kurdish EFL learners' awareness of passivization in English and Kurdish'*.

Thank you in advance

University: College:
Year: Fourth

Tick the one which suits you best:

Items	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1. I like English grammar; therefore, I am good at passivization.			
2. I know about passivization in Kurdish because it is my mother tongue, not because of studying Kurdish grammar.			

Part 1/ Indicate whether the following sentences are passivized or not.
1. Thomas has too many books.
2. I always regard you polite.
3. She seems very happy.
4. I found a large sum of money.
5. We all learn English.
6. The journal is now calling for papers.
7. Ewaniman wek péşengî xoman wéna kirdwe.
8. Arî komełék hawŕéy başî heye.
9. Karwan seyarekey çak kird.
10. Şîrîn kiçékî jîre.
11. Ewan férî înglîzî debin.
12. Demewét kareke tewaw bikem.

Part 2/ Change the following into passive:
1. We are choosing the correct options.
2. The committee considered him their representative.
3. I've put your book on the table.
4. The driver gave the police his driving license.
5. They themselves looked into the problem.
6. John wanted to persuade Kane.
7. Kitébekey mint bo ew nardibu.

8. Ew hewałekanî dexiwéndewe.
9. Mintan be diłsoz hisab kirdwe.
10. Min ɍiwekekan polén dekem.
11. Namekemanyan sutand.
12. Azad dyaryeke be Asoda denérét.