

Transformation of Sentences: Syntax & Pragmatics

Mr. Mohit Saini

Department of English, Compucom Institute of Technology & Management, Jaipur, India

Abstract—Sentences are utmost vital to intensify communication, creating the foundation upon which notions and thoughts are conveyed and narratives are constructed. However, their fundamental structure encompasses and contains an ample of possibilities for transformation and variation. Language is always changing and developing, influenced by how people implement it every day. By studying how sentences are joined together and changed, this can be understood how people communicate and all the multiple ways which can be utilized to express our thoughts and notions. Through a comparative analysis, we investigate different types of sentence transformations, such as active to passive voice and direct to indirect speech. Each one of the transformations is analyzed from both syntactic and pragmatic perspectives, demonstrating how these dimensions interact in order to shape meaning. This paper aims to contribute to the field of linguistics and English grammar by providing a comprehensive analysis of sentence transformation, highlighting the roles of syntax and pragmatics.

Keywords: Active & Passive voice, Sentence Transformation and variation, Syntax. Pragmatics, Reported speech

I. INTRODUCTION

In the field of linguistics, the study of sentence transformation plays a crucial role in understanding how information is conveyed and perceived in different forms (Belcher & Zangwill, 2017). Syntactic theory, a fundamental pillar of linguistics, examines the rules and structures that dictate how sentences are formed. Syntax in formal languages is used to create and analyze well-formed sentences. (Justin K. McCurry). Essential to this theory are concepts such as phrase structure, grammar rules, and syntactic trees. Phrase structure explains how words come together to form larger units called phrases. Pragmatics, a major field in linguistics, focuses on how context affects the interpretation of sentences. Fundamental principles and standards of pragmatics include context, which encompasses situational factors and background information influencing meaning; speech acts, which

are actions performed through language such as statements, questions, and commands; implicature, which involves implied meanings drawn from context and shared knowledge; and presupposition, which contains background assumptions required for a sentence to be understood. The syntactic rules govern this process, which give an understanding about how words and phrases can be rearranged to form a sentence which is grammatically correct. For example, transforming a sentence with an active voice like "The boss appreciated the employee" into its passive form "The employee was appreciated by the boss" involves a systematic interchange of sentence elements. Beyond syntax, pragmatics plays an important role in sentence transformation by considering the context in which a sentence is used. The interpretation of a transformed sentence can be changed depending on factors such as speaker intention, listener perception, and situational context.

II. INTERACTION OF SYNTAX AND PRAGMATICS

In the interplay between syntax and pragmatics, it is evident that pragmatic factors have a significant impact on syntactic choices, shaping how language users form and interpret sentences in communication. Speaker intention, as a vital element in pragmatics, has a significant effect on the syntactic structure of utterances and speech. For instance, see the difference between a direct statement ("I want to leave now") and a polite request ("Could I leave now?"). "What makes interactional pragmatics a particularly important area of research is that this area devotes special attention to the sequential relationship between utterances, hence moving beyond more conventional takes on language use." (Naoko Taguchi and Dániel Z. Kádár, 2024). When exploring the intricate connection between syntax and pragmatics, it is clear that syntactic rules and structures can both limit and direct pragmatic interpretation. Syntactic constraints creates and impose boundaries on the potential interpretations of

utterances, influencing how language users extract meaning from linguistic expressions.

III. ANALYSIS AND EXAMPLES

Active voice sentences typically have the subject performing the action, while passive voice sentences depict the subject as receiving the action (Ramoroka, 2014). When transforming sentences containing possessive pronoun 'Her' 'his' along with object, the possessive pronoun will be removed, this helps avoid confusion about the ownership of the action as elaborated in example below-

Original Sentence (Active): "Jenny has completed her work."

Transformed Sentence (Passive): "The work has been completed by Jenny"

Syntactic Analysis:

Subject-Object Inversion:

Active Voice: "Jenny" is the subject, performing the action.

Passive Voice: "The work" becomes the subject, receiving the action as the possessive pronoun 'Her' needs to be removed to convey the proper meaning. In case the possessive pronoun 'Her' is used along with the object as in 'Her work has been completed by Jenny' shall create confusion whether the work belongs to Jenny or somebody else that has been done by Jenny.

Verb Change:

Active Voice: "has completed" (present perfect tense).

Passive Voice: "has been completed" (present perfect passive).

Agent Introduction:

Active Voice: The subject "Jenny" is the agent of the action.

Passive Voice: The agent "by Jenny" is introduced using a prepositional phrase.

Auxiliary Addition:

Active Voice: Uses the auxiliary verb "has" for present perfect tense.

Passive Voice: Adds the auxiliary verb "been" to form the present perfect passive ("has been completed").

Object to Subject:

Active Voice: "her work" is the object of the sentence.

Passive Voice: "The work" becomes the subject of the sentence.

Pragmatic Analysis

Focus Shift:

Active Voice: Emphasizes "Jenny" as the doer of the action.

Passive Voice: Emphasizes "the work" as the recipient of the action. This can be useful when the work is the main focus of the discourse.

Information Structure:

Active Voice: The sentence structure follows the typical Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order, making it straightforward and direct.

Passive Voice: The sentence structure follows Subject (which was originally the object) - Verb - Agent (optional), which can highlight different aspects of the information.

Contextual Appropriateness:

Active Voice: Often used when the agent ("Jenny") is important or needs to be highlighted.

Passive Voice: Useful when the action ("completion of the work") or the object ("the work") is more relevant than the agent. This structure can also be used to omit the agent when it is unknown, irrelevant, or implied.

Formality and Objectivity:

Active Voice: Generally, more direct and dynamic, suitable for casual or straightforward contexts.

Passive Voice: Can lend a sense of formality or objectivity. It is often used in academic, technical, or formal writing to focus on the action or the result rather than the performer.

Agent Omission:

Active Voice: The agent ("Jenny") is explicitly mentioned.

Passive Voice: The agent can be omitted if it is not necessary for the understanding of the sentence. For

example, "The work has been completed" can stand alone without specifying "by Jenny," especially if the context has already established who completed the work or if the identity of the agent is not important. It is found during the study that while converting

sentences to passive voice as given above most of the students make grammatical errors which convey a different meaning instead of actual meaning of the sentence.

This table represents the correct transformation of sentences that have a possessive pronoun 'His' or 'Her' along with object-

Active Voice	Incorrect Transformation	Correct Transformation
Raman is doing his work diligently.	His work is being done diligently by Raman.	The work is being done diligently by Raman.
Shelly finished her assignment yesterday.	Her assignment was finished by Shelly yesterday.	The assignment was finished by Shelly yesterday.
John will fulfill his responsibility.	His responsibility will be fulfilled by John.	The responsibility will be fulfilled by John.

Sentences That Are Grammatically Correct Only in Passive Voice:

In English, certain sentences can only be correctly constructed in the passive voice due to their grammatical and contextual requirements. These sentences often involve processes or actions where the agent (the performer of the action) is either unknown, irrelevant, or implied as illustrated below-

Ongoing Processes:

Incorrect (Active): "Book is printing."

Correct (Passive): "The book is being printed."

Syntactic Analysis:

The active form "Book is printing" lacks an agent and a proper verb construction. The verb "printing" needs to be part of a passive structure to accurately describe the process being carried out on the book.

The correct passive form "The book is being printed" uses the structure "is being" + past participle ("printed") to indicate an ongoing process executed by an unspecified agent.

Pragmatic Analysis:

The emphasis is on the ongoing state of the book, not on who is printing it. This makes the passive voice more appropriate as it accurately conveys the intended meaning without needing to specify the printer.

Formal Statements:

Incorrect (Active): "Results will announce tomorrow."

Correct (Passive): "The results will be announced tomorrow."

Syntactic Analysis:

The active form is grammatically incorrect because "announce" needs a subject.

The passive form "The results will be announced" correctly uses the future passive construction "will be" + past participle ("announced").

Pragmatic Analysis:

The passive voice provides a formal tone appropriate for official statements, focusing on the event (the announcement of results) rather than the announcer.

The table below illustrates correct construction of sentences that cannot be formed in active voice-

Sentence	Incorrect Formation	Correct Formation
घर बन रहा है।	The house is building.	The house is being built.
कमरा साफ़ हो रहा है।	The room is cleaning.	The Room is being cleaned.
केक बन रहा है।	The cake is baking.	The Cake is being baked.
रिपोर्ट बन रही है।	The report is preparing.	The Report is being prepared.

There are some sentences that are grammatically correct when formed in passive voice for instance 'The house is building' the given sentence is not grammatically correct as 'House' is not building itself rather it is being built by someone.

IV. REAL LIFE EXAMPLES: REPORTED SPEECH IN PRACTICE

Reported Speech in Educational Settings

Context and Scenario:

A university professor gives a lecture on the implications of climate change, and students must communicate and cite this information in their group discussions and assignments. During the lecture, the professor presents key statistics and focuses on the urgent need for policy changes to address climate change.

Direct Speech:

Professor: "Recent studies suggest that sea levels could potentially rise by 1 meter by the year 2100 if we do not take an immediate action"

Reported Speech Examples:

Student to Group During Discussion:

Direct: "Recent studies suggest that sea levels could potentially rise by 1 meter by the year 2100 if we do not take an immediate action."

Reported: "The professor said that recent studies suggest that sea levels could potentially rise by 1 meter by the year 2100 if we do not take an immediate action."

Student in Assignment:

Direct: "Recent studies suggest that sea levels could potentially rise by 1 meter by the year 2100 if we do not take an action"

Reported: "The professor noted that recent studies indicate a potential rise in sea levels by 1 meter by the year 2100 if immediate action is not taken."

Syntactic Changes and Pragmatic Considerations: The conditional "could rise" is kept to accurately convey the uncertainty and prediction aspect of the statement. The phrase "recent studies suggest" remains unchanged to maintain the source of the information. The student-to-group discussion report maintains the original sense of urgency and content to enable an informed discussion. In the assignment, the student uses "noted" and "indicate" to present the information formally and academically, aligning with the tone typically expected in written assignments.

Reported Speech in Corporate Communication

Context and Scenario:

The CEO of a multinational corporation addresses the employees during a global town hall meeting, announcing a new corporate strategy to improve environmental impact. The CEO of the company outlines specific changes in company policy, emphasizing the decrease of energy consumption and the use of renewable sources.

Direct Speech:

CEO: "Beginning next year, we will cut energy consumption by 25% and increase the use of renewable energy sources to enhance our environmental impact."

Reported Speech Examples:

Manager to Team in Weekly Meeting:

Direct: "Beginning next year, we will cut energy consumption by 25% and increase our use of renewable energy sources to enhance our environmental impact."

Reported: "The CEO announced that beginning next year, we will cut energy consumption by 25% and increase our use of renewable energy sources to enhance our environmental impact."

Internal Memo to Employees:

Direct: "Beginning next year, we will cut energy consumption by 25% and increase our use of renewable energy sources to enhance our environmental impact."

Reported: "The CEO stated that the company will cut energy consumption by 25% and increase use of renewable energy beginning next year to enhance its environmental impact."

Syntactic Changes and Pragmatic Considerations: The future tense "will cut" and "will increase" are maintained to reflect the upcoming changes. The pronoun "we" changes to "the company" in the memo for clarity and formality. In the team meeting, the manager retains the direct and motivational tone to inspire the team. In the internal memo, the language is formalized to provide a clear and official record of the CEO's announcement, suitable for wide dissemination.

Reported Speech in Media Coverage

Context and Scenario:

A government spokesperson holds a press conference on new health regulations intended to manage a pandemic. The spokesperson explains the regulations and their expected impact on public health.

Direct Speech:

Spokesperson: "Updated guidelines require all employees to work remotely and avoid non-essential travel to reduce the risk of virus spread."

Reported Speech Examples:

News Article:

Direct: "Updated guidelines require all employees to work remotely and avoid non-essential travel to reduce the risk of virus spread."

Reported: "The government spokesperson announced that Updated guidelines require all employees to work remotely and avoid non-essential travel to reduce the risk of virus spread."

Television Broadcast:

Direct: " Updated guidelines require all employees to work remotely and avoid non-essential travel to reduce the risk of virus spread."

Reported: "A government spokesperson stated that all employees are required to work remotely and avoid non-essential travel under updated guidelines designed to reduce virus' spread."

Syntactic Changes and Pragmatic Considerations: The verbs "require" and "avoid" remain in the present tense to indicate ongoing rules. The subject "updated guidelines" is kept to maintain the focus on the policy change. In the news article, the direct reporting maintains the authority and urgency of the announcement. The television broadcast uses slightly varied wording to match the medium's need for clarity and immediate understanding by a broad audience.

V. CONCLUSION

This research paper has explored the complicated processes involved in transforming sentences from active to passive voice and converting direct to indirect speech, emphasizing the intricate interplay between syntax and pragmatics, rectification of

grammatical errors while converting into passive form, and real word application. The analysis shows that these transformations are fundamentally based on syntactic structures, such as the identification of the object, verb form adjustments, and pronoun changes, which ensure grammatical accuracy and correctness. Pragmatic considerations also hold significant importance, as the selection between active and passive voice often depends on the desired focus of the sentence, while reported speech requires adapting the original message to suit a different context. This study underscores the significance of comprehending both syntactic rules and pragmatic contexts, as they together ensure communication effectiveness.

VI. REFERENCES

- [1] Hamza Jamal Jassim and Prof. Jagdish S. Joshi, The Pragmatics of Language Use: Understanding the Role of Context and Intentions, June 2023
- [2] Erdoğan Bada and Ömer Gökhan Ulum, Utilization of active and passive constructions in English academic writing, 2018, ISSN:2458-9489
- [3] Safarova L., The dynamics of active and passive voice in English grammar, January 2023..
- [4] Andras Kertesz, Edith Moravcsik & Csilla Rakosi (eds.).Current approaches to syntax. A comparative handbook, 2019
- [5] Annamaria Cacchione, Reported Speech: Towards a Definition as a Communicative and Linguistic Universal, March 2006.
- [6] Naoko Taguchi and Dániel Z. Kádár, Pragmatics: An overview, April 2024
- [7] Rakesh Pandey and H.S. Dhami.,Some Mathematical Models for Transformation of Sentences from One Form to Other, January 2011, , pp. 9-18
- [8] Belcher, D., & Zangwill, C. 2017. Sentence Transformation: Exploring the Dynamics of Information Conveyance in Linguistics. Journal of Linguistic Studies, 14(2), 123-138.
- [9] Ramoroka, B. 2014. Understanding Active and Passive Voice in Linguistics. Journal of Language Studies, 8(1), 45-59.