

Online Teaching of Passive Voice in an Indonesian Vocational School Amid Covid-19: Insights from a Novice English Teacher

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Abstract

The shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic required English teachers to adopt digital media capable of sustaining instructional effectiveness and student engagement. This study investigated how a novice English teacher utilized videos in teaching students to write passive voice sentences in an online vocational school classroom and examined students' responses to its implementation. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, involving one English teacher and 20 twelfth-grade vocational students. Data were collected through online-classroom observation, questionnaires, and interviews, and subsequently analyzed qualitatively. The findings reveal that the novice teacher successfully implemented video-assisted instruction to support structured grammar teaching in the online classroom. By integrating multimedia with guiding questions, the ability to replay instructional videos, and continuous corrective feedback, the teacher enhanced students' conceptual understanding of passive voice and encouraged active participation while facilitating self-paced learning. Moreover, students perceived the video as engaging and helpful. However, some experienced difficulties due to a limited vocabulary. This suggests that multimedia resources should be complemented with appropriate scaffolding to optimize learning outcomes. Thus, while video can foster more adaptive and engaging learning environments, effective teacher facilitation remains essential for successful online language learning.

Keywords: Novice English Teacher; Online Grammar Teaching; Passive Voice Instruction; Video-Assisted Learning; Vocational School

INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as a fundamental skill in second language learning due to its central role in academic achievement, professional communication, and knowledge construction. The ability to produce coherent written texts is essential for success in educational and workplace contexts, where written communication functions as a primary medium for conveying ideas and documenting knowledge (Hyland, 2019). Despite its importance, writing remains one of the most challenging skills for second language learners because it requires the integration of linguistic competence, cognitive processing, and rhetorical awareness (Brown, 2004; Richards, 2002). Within school settings, writing instruction functions not only as a component of literacy development but also as an indicator of instructional effectiveness. Traditional approaches that rely heavily on written assignments with limited classroom interaction may reduce students' engagement and motivation (Harmer, 2001; Hyland, 2019). Consequently, teachers play a critical role in fostering supportive learning environments, encouraging idea generation, and guiding learners through recursive writing processes. The development of functional writing competence, therefore, requires sustained pedagogical support beginning in early education and continuing across levels of schooling (Richards, 2002). In vocational education, however, although English writing competence is widely recognized as essential for students' professional readiness, it often remains insufficiently

integrated with specific vocational domains, leading it to function as a peripheral rather than core professional skill. At the same time, globalization has intensified the demand for functional English proficiency across occupational fields (Richards, 2015). Many vocational students continue to experience difficulty expressing ideas in written English, which negatively affects both motivation and achievement, and teachers may therefore struggle to implement instructional strategies that effectively promote idea development, grammatical awareness, and meaningful engagement. One promising response to these challenges is video-based instruction, which can provide authentic language models, contextualized input, and multimodal support for comprehension; research in multimedia learning further suggests that well-designed audiovisual materials stimulate active cognitive processing and facilitate retention (Mayer, 2001).

The rapid expansion of digital learning tools including instructional video has transformed writing instruction by enabling multimodal input, flexible access, and interactive engagement (Mayer, 2001; Richards, 2015). This transformation became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, when emergency remote teaching required accessible and cognitively supportive instructional media for language learners (Hodges et al., 2020). Previous studies have documented the pedagogical value of multimedia and digital communication in language learning, particularly in enhancing cognitive engagement and supporting writing development (Kern & Warschauer, 2000; Mayer, 2001; Richards, 2015). However, several gaps remain. First, limited research specifically investigates how instructional video supports the teaching of grammatical writing features, particularly passive voice construction, in fully online vocational classrooms. Second, few qualitative studies explore this instructional practice from the perspective of novice English teachers who were required to adapt rapidly during the COVID-19 emergency remote teaching period (Hodges et al., 2020). Consequently, context-sensitive insights into technology-assisted grammar instruction in vocational secondary education remain underexplored.

Addressing this gap is important because grammatical accuracy such as appropriate passive voice use constitutes a key component of effective written communication (Hyland, 2019). Writing instruction should therefore emphasize not only text length but also appropriate generic structures and linguistic features (Depdiknas, 2004). Moreover, differences between learners' first language and English highlight the need for authentic instructional input supported by meaningful media (Brown, 2004).

Accordingly, this qualitative study investigates a new English teacher's use of video in teaching Indonesian EFL (English as a foreign language) students to write passive-voice sentences in an online vocational high school classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aims to examine the implementation of video-based instruction and explore students' responses to this learning approach. The research is guided by the following questions:

1. How does a novice English teacher teach to write passive voice sentences in an online vocational school classroom by utilizing videos amid the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How do students respond to the use of video in learning to write passive voice sentences in the online learning context?

This study provides context-specific qualitative evidence on the implementation of video-assisted grammar instruction in a vocational high school setting, which remains underrepresented in ELT (English Language Teaching) research. It also offers pedagogical insight into the use of structured video-mediated learning stages pre-watching, while-watching, and post-watching to support students' grammatical writing development in online environments. By situating the investigation within emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, the study further highlights the continuing relevance of accessible digital video for flexible and blended language learning in vocational education. Collectively, these

findings contribute to the growing studies on multimedia-supported grammar instruction and provide practical guidance for teachers in comparable contexts.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore the implementation of teaching passive voice sentences to Indonesian EFL vocational school students using video by a novice English teacher and to examine students' responses to the instructional process. Qualitative description was chosen because the study sought to understand participants' perceptions and experiences and to present the findings in the form of descriptive interpretations of the collected data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2016; Richards, 2009).

The research was conducted amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a period in which educational institutions worldwide shifted from face-to-face instruction to emergency remote teaching delivered through online platforms (Hodges et al., 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2020). Within this context, the teaching and learning process in the present study was implemented through the WhatsApp application, which has been widely utilized in educational and language-learning environments to facilitate communication, material distribution, and learner interaction in mobile-mediated settings (Amry, 2014; Bouhnik & Deshen, 2014). The participants consisted of a novice English teacher and twelfth-grade students majoring in pharmacy at a private vocational high school in West Java, Indonesia. The student participants included 20 learners, comprising three males and seventeen females. Providing detailed descriptions of research participants and settings aligns with qualitative research conventions in applied linguistics that emphasize contextualized understanding of educational phenomena and participants' experiences (Mackey & Gass, 2016). Data were collected through online classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. Classroom observations were employed to examine how the teacher implemented video in teaching the passive voice within the online learning environment, with the researcher acting as an observer during the instructional process. Observation in qualitative research enables researchers to document naturally occurring instructional practices and classroom interactions in context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mackey & Gass, 2016). Meanwhile, interviews and questionnaires were administered to explore students' responses to the use of video in learning the passive voice, as these instruments are commonly used to capture participants' perceptions, attitudes, and learning experiences in applied linguistics research (Dörnyei, 2007; Richards, 2009). Data were analyzed qualitatively using Miles and Huberman's (1994) concept. It emphasizes a cyclical and continuous analytical process in which researchers systematically organize, interpret, and validate qualitative data to generate credible and meaningful findings throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the data analysis, several key findings were identified concerning teacher activities, learning materials, instructional media, student participation, and students' responses to the use of video in learning passive voice online.

1. A Novice EFL Teacher's Utilization of Video in Teaching Students to write passive voice sentences in an online vocational school classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - a. Teaching Procedures

In general, the instructional steps implemented by the teacher were consistent across meetings. At the beginning of each session, the teacher introduced the lesson topic and activated students' prior knowledge by relating the material to daily activities. The teacher then explained passive

voice concepts, including sentence patterns, verb transformations, and differences between active and passive constructions, followed by example sentences.

After the explanation, the teacher asked guiding questions to check students' understanding. Most students were able to respond appropriately. The teacher also introduced verb forms (Verb 1, Verb 2, and Verb 3) relevant to the lesson and provided opportunities for students to ask questions and clarify difficulties. At the end of each session, students were encouraged to raise further questions related to the material.

b. Learning Materials

The materials used in the writing class were aligned with the 2013 national curriculum, particularly competencies requiring students to identify social functions, text structures, and linguistic features of relevant texts. The selected materials were also adjusted to students' interests, which supported their active participation during online learning.

c. Instructional Media

Video media created using the PowToon application were employed to deliver the lesson content. In the context of pandemic-driven distance learning, video provided clearer explanations than text-only materials. Students were able to replay the video, when necessary, which helped maintain attention and supported comprehension. This indicates that video-assisted instruction can enhance engagement in online grammar learning.

d. Student Activities

Students actively participated in the learning process by watching the video, responding to questions, and attempting to construct sentences. Some students answered questions directly via WhatsApp, demonstrating engagement in the online environment. However, difficulties remained, particularly in using conjunctions and organizing procedural steps in writing. To address this, the teacher provided continuous feedback on students' written work.

2. Students' Responses to Video-Assisted Passive Voice Learning

Questionnaire and interview data revealed that most students perceived the video as interesting, clear, and helpful for understanding passive voice. Some students, however, reported difficulty understanding the narrator's explanation, mainly due to limited vocabulary and unfamiliarity with passive constructions. Students frequently relied on peer assistance or translation tools to comprehend unfamiliar words. Despite these challenges, the majority agreed that video helped them transform active sentences into passive forms more effectively. Furthermore, 70% of students stated that the teacher's explanation was very clear, while 30% noted that the teacher frequently provided corrective feedback. This feedback supported students in improving their written responses.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the pedagogical relevance of video-assisted instruction in facilitating grammar learning within an online vocational classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the abrupt shift to emergency remote teaching required educators to adopt digital tools capable of sustaining instructional clarity and student engagement, effective learning depended not merely on technology but on its pedagogical integration. In this context, the present study supports previous research emphasizing the importance of multimedia integration in online English language teaching (Garrison et al., 2000; Hodges et al., 2020).

1. Utilization of Video in Teaching Students to write passive voice sentences in an online vocational school classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic

Overall, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of video-assisted grammar instruction lies not in the technology itself but in its pedagogical integration. Structured teaching procedures,

relevant materials, interactive questioning, and consistent feedback collectively created a supportive online learning environment. For vocational school contexts, where students often require practical and accessible instruction, such integration may contribute to more engaging and effective grammar learning. Importantly, these findings reinforce the growing consensus that teacher presence remains a decisive factor in successful online learning environments (Garrison et al., 2000).

a. Teaching Procedures

The teacher consistently began each session by activating students' prior knowledge before introducing new grammatical concepts. This practice aligns with constructivist learning theory, which posits that learners develop new understanding by connecting incoming information with existing cognitive structures (Bruner, 1966). By relating passive voice to daily activities, the teacher reduced the abstract nature of grammar, making it more accessible for learners in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The use of guiding questions further functioned as formative assessment, enabling the teacher to monitor comprehension while fostering interaction in the online classroom. Interaction is particularly critical in remote learning environments, where limited physical presence may hinder spontaneous communication (Garrison et al., 2000).

b. Learning Materials

The alignment of learning materials with the national curriculum also contributed to instructional effectiveness. Teaching grammar within meaningful communicative contexts helps learners understand not only linguistic forms but also their functional use in real communication (Richards & Reppen, 2014). Moreover, adapting materials to students' interests appeared to enhance participation, supporting the view that relevant content can strengthen learners' motivation and engagement, particularly in digitally mediated settings (Dörnyei, 2001).

c. Instructional Media

The structured sequence of pre-watching, while-watching, and post-watching activities positioned video viewing as an active learning process supported by questioning, clarification, and corrective feedback (Richards, 2015; Stempleski & Tomalin, 2001). From a multimedia learning perspective, combining visual and auditory input facilitates deeper cognitive processing and reduces the difficulty of complex grammatical explanations (Mayer, 2009). The ability to replay videos also promotes self-paced learning, an important feature of effective online education in which learner autonomy varies (Zimmerman, 2002). In addition, engaging audiovisual materials helps sustain attention and cognitive presence in virtual classrooms (Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

d. Student Activities

Students' participation in watching videos, responding to questions, and constructing passive sentences reflects active learning processes associated with improved understanding and retention (Prince, 2004). Interaction through WhatsApp further maintained teaching presence despite physical separation during emergency remote learning (Hodges et al., 2020). Nevertheless, persistent writing difficulties highlight the importance of continuous corrective feedback in helping learners recognize errors and refine language production (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). These findings confirm that while video enhances conceptual understanding, effective teacher facilitation remains essential in guiding accurate language use in online settings (Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021).

Consistent with prior COVID-19 research, clear instructional design and structured scaffolding are crucial for sustaining language learning continuity in online environments (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Multimedia support contributes to comprehension and engagement when pedagogically mediated, reducing transactional distance and

supporting conceptual understanding (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Mpungose, 2021). However, technological support alone cannot eliminate learners' linguistic challenges. Difficulties in vocabulary, sentence construction, and comprehension of narration indicate that multimedia effectiveness depends on prior knowledge and instructional scaffolding (Mayer, 2009; Nation, 2013). In other words, video-based instruction must be complemented by explicit explanation, vocabulary support, and formative feedback to optimize learning outcomes in online ELT contexts.

2. Students' response to the use of video in learning to write passive voice sentences in the online learning context

Students' positive perceptions of video-mediated learning reinforce the pedagogical value of video in supporting engagement and comprehension during pandemic-driven online learning (Hodges et al., 2020). Their sustained attention, emotional involvement, and active participation (as parts of motivation and engagement) are key predictors of learning success in second language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Fredricks et al., 2004). In technology-enhanced environments, video-based instruction can foster behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement through multimodal input and meaningful interaction (Zhang et al., 2006; Trust & Whalen, 2020).

Positive student attitudes toward digital learning tools in Indonesian contexts have also been reported in previous studies, particularly when materials are visually engaging and interactive (Fauzi & Khusuma, 2020; Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021). Increased attention, participation, and ability to transform active into passive sentences observed in this study further demonstrate that video-supported instruction can sustain interaction and comprehension in remote learning environments (Rapanta et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, some students experienced difficulty understanding the narration because of their limited vocabulary proficiency, suggesting that multimedia accessibility alone does not fully address underlying linguistic barriers. This finding also indicates that the effectiveness of multimedia learning depends not only on technological access but also on the linguistic demands of the instructional input. Research suggests that shorter videos with clear narration and manageable speech rates significantly improve comprehension in technology-mediated learning (Guo et al., 2014). Moreover, students' reliance on peer collaboration and translation tools reflects emerging self-regulated and adaptive learning behaviors characteristic of digital learning contexts (Zimmerman, 2002).

Taken together, these findings suggest that video-assisted grammar instruction is particularly beneficial in vocational secondary education, a context that remains underrepresented in the literature. Importantly, the observed benefits should not be attributed solely to technology but to the teacher's pedagogical orchestration of multimedia resources, interaction, and feedback—reinforcing the central role of teacher presence in successful online learning environments (Garrison et al., 2000).

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implementation of video-assisted instruction for teaching passive voice in an online vocational classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic and examined students' learning responses. The findings show that a novice teacher was able to design structured lessons, integrate multimedia meaningfully, and sustain interactive learning despite emergency remote teaching constraints. Instructional success depended primarily on pedagogical decision-making – particularly the use of guiding questions, corrective feedback, and vocabulary scaffolding – rather than on technology itself.

The study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that novice teachers can enact effective technology-mediated grammar instruction when supported by reflective pedagogy and structured instructional design. It also extends limited qualitative research on video-assisted grammar learning in vocational secondary education during crisis-driven online learning. However, the findings are bounded by the small sample size, single-site context, short instructional duration, and qualitative descriptive design, which limit generalizability and causal inference. Future studies should therefore involve larger samples, longitudinal designs, and mixed-methods or experimental approaches to examine long-term impacts on writing proficiency. Despite these limitations, the study offers context-sensitive insight into multimedia-supported grammar instruction and highlights the continuing relevance of accessible digital video for flexible and blended language learning beyond pandemic conditions.

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