

# PECULIARITIES OF USING ACTIVE, PASSIVE AND MIDDLE VOICES IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

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**Abstract:** the article investigates the peculiarities of using active, passive and middle voice in the English language. The author gives the definition of voice in general, explains the existence of voice subdivisions. Moreover, the author gives the definition of each voice form, shows and explains how to form, use and operate with it.

**Keywords:** English language, grammar, voice, passive voice, active voice, middle voice, definitions, translation, using of voice, examples of active, passive and middle voice and its formation.

Distinguishing and examination of voice categories is a very controversial question. Difficulties which are concerned with the distinguishing of voice categories first of all are determined with the point that a grammatical meaning of this category is found to be very close to a lexical meaning of the verb by its content (meaning).

Difficulty of voice categories is also bound with the point that voice differences often intersect with such notions as transitivity and intransitivity.

In the system of English language voices are defined as a verbal category, in which the relation to its subject is denoted in the verbal form. The verb form can show whether a person or an object, is playing a role of subject, is the doer of an action or not, i.e. where this action takes its beginning: from the subject or to the subject. For example, in the sentences "He walked slowly", "He told me a story" the verb form points, that the action is directed from the subject, presented as a subject. In the sentences "He was helped", "I was told a story" the verb form points, that the action is directed to the object, presented as a subject.

A lot of native scientists dedicated their researches to the development of the universal voice theory. Right after A.A. Holodovich the new notion of "voice diathesis" was introduced.

Diathesis is determined as a scheme of correspondence between syntactical level units and semantical level units, and the voice as a regular designation of correspondence in the verb between units of syntactical level and semantical level (i.e. between the object and object on the one hand, and between the subject and object on the other hand), otherwise as grammatically marked diathesis in the verb.

Classical definitions of the voice either ignore the correspondence concept or deny it. In this definitions three units maximum were accepted – either subject, object and verb-predicate (syntactical level units) or subject, object and action. However, according to this kind of understanding of voice the relationship between diathesis and voice is not denominated specifically enough.

In the modern English language 3 categories of voice – active, middle and passive were distinguished. But some scientists, who study the theory of the English language, affirm that there are more than 3 categories of voice. Nowadays they are working on this issue and the question about existence of new categories is still open.

In English grammar, the voice (also called diathesis) of a verb describes the relationship between the action (or state) that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments (subject, object, etc.) (Блюх, 2000).

The active voice is the most commonly used in many languages and represents the "normal" case, in which the subject of the verb is the agent.

The man must have eaten five hamburgers The <b>man</b> (subject) is doing the <b>eating</b> (verb).
Marilyn mailed the letter. <b>Marilyn</b> (subject) is doing the <b>mailing</b> (verb).
Colorful parrots live in the rainforests. <b>Parrots</b> (subject) are doing the <b>living</b> (verb).

Because the subject does or "acts upon" the verb in such sentences, the sentences are said to be in the active voice.

The active voice names an 'actor' which/who is the subject of the verb; the actor does the verb. Who/What does the verb? If the answer is clear, the sentence is active. Note that often, there is a direct object (DO) 'receiving' the action.

Part of speech	Subject	Verb	
Sentence	The students	tested	the samples.
	The samples	failed.	

Who/What is the verb done to? This is the direct object.

Part of speech	Subject	Verb	Direct Object
Sentence	The students	tested	the samples.

Where possible, use the active voice. It is direct, brief, and easy to understand (Блюх, 1999).

Some languages (such as Albanian, Bengali, Fula, Tamil, Sanskrit, Icelandic, Swedish and Ancient Greek) have a middle voice. This is a set of inflections or constructions, which is to some extent different from both the active and passive voices. The middle voice is said to be in the middle between the active and the passive voices because the subject often cannot be categorized as either agent or patient but may have elements of both. For example it may express what would be an intransitive verb in English. For example, in "The casserole cooked in the oven", cooked is syntactically active but semantically passive. In Classical Greek, the middle voice often has a reflexive sense: the subject acts on or for itself, such as "The boy washes himself", or "The boy washes". It can be transitive or intransitive. It can occasionally be used in a causative sense, such as "The father causes his son to be set free", or "The father ransoms his son".

In English there is no longer a verb form for the middle voice, though some uses may be classified as a middle voice, often resolved via a reflexive pronoun, as in "Fred shaved", which may be expanded to "Fred shaved himself" – contrast with active "Fred shaved John" or passive "John was shaved by Fred". This doesn't need to be reflexive, as in "my clothes soaked in detergent overnight". The English language used to have a distinct form, called the passival, which was displaced over the early 19th century by the passive progressive (progressive passive), and is no longer used in English. In the passival, one would say "the house is building", which is today instead "the house is being built"; likewise "the meal is eating", which is now "the meal is being eaten". Note that the similar "Fred is shaving" and "the clothes are soaking" remain grammatical. It is suggested that the progressive passive was popularized by the Romantic poets, and is connected with Bristol usage.

Many deponent verbs in Latin are survivals of the Proto-Indo-European middle voice (Иванова, Чахоян и др., 1999).

The Spanish language and the English language use a *periphrastic* passive voice; that is, it is not a single word form, but rather a construction making use of other word forms. Specifically, it is made up of a form of the auxiliary verb *to be* and a past participle of the main verb. In other languages, such as Latin, the passive voice is simply marked on the verb by inflection: "He reads the book"; "The book is read".

One can change the normal word order of many active sentences (those with a direct object) so that the subject is no longer *active*, but is, instead, being *acted upon* by the verb - or *passive*.

Note: in these examples how the subject-verb relationship has changed.

Five hamburgers must have been eaten by the man.  
**Hamburgers** (subject) *are being eaten* (verb).

The letter was mailed by Marilyn.  
The **letter** (subject) *was being mailed* (verb).

Because the subject is being "acted upon" (or is passive), such sentences are said to be in the passive voice.

Note: "Colorful parrots live in the rainforests" cannot be changed to passive voice because the sentence does not have a direct object (Качалова, Израилевич, 2001).

<b>Formation of the passive</b>		
<b>The passive can use any tense of the verb to be</b>		<b>+ a Past participle</b>
The load/s	is/are was/were	calculated
The report/s	has been have been	presented
The sample/s	will be can be	tested
The result/s	is/are being (should) have been (could) have been	compared

Practically we face the English language every day during our life. It's very important to know the peculiarities of the English language, its grammar and usage rules. Nowadays English and British people use different categories of voice in their every day speech. This paper will help to know the peculiarities of each category, how to form them and how to translate sentences including the voice category.

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