

## Passive Voice in SLA: Armenian Learners' Case Study

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**Abstract :** It is believed that learners' mother tongue (L1 hereafter) has a huge impact on their second language acquisition (L2 hereafter). This hypothesis has been exposed to both positive and negative criticism. Based on research results of a wide range of learners' corpora (Chinese, Japanese, Spanish among others) the hypothesis has either been proved or disproved. However, no such study has been conducted on the Armenian learners. The aim of this paper is to understand the implication of the hypothesis on the Armenian learners' corpus in terms of the use of the passive voice. To this end, the method of Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (hereafter CIA) has been used on native speakers' corpus (Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS)) and Armenian learners' corpus which has been compiled by me in compliance with International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) guidelines. CIA compares the interlanguage (the language produced by learners) with the one produced by native speakers. With the help of this method, it is possible not only to highlight the mistakes that learners make, but also to underline the under or overuses. The choice of the grammar issue (passive voice) is conditioned by the fact that typologically Armenian and English are drastically different as they belong to different branches. Moreover, the passive voice is considered to be one of the most problematic grammar topics to be acquired by learners of the English language. Based on this difference, we hypothesized that Armenian learners would either overuse or underuse some types of the passive voice. With the help of Lancsbox software, we have identified the frequency rates of passive voice usage in LOCNESS and Armenian learners' corpus to understand whether the latter have the same usage pattern of the passive voice as the native speakers. Secondly, we have identified the types of the passive voice used by the Armenian learners trying to track down the reasons in their mother tongue. The results of the study showed that Armenian learners underused the passive voices in contrast to native speakers. Furthermore, the hypothesis that learners' L1 has an impact on learners' L2 acquisition and production was proved.

**Keywords :** corpus linguistics, applied linguistics, second language acquisition, corpus compilation

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