# ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS BY *DHOLUO* SPEAKING PUPILS

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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## DEDICATION

To my precious children Beverly Senda, Maxine Joan, Tessie Ann, and Richard Aiden for bringing great joy, learning and healing in my life while on this voyage. I am so proud of each of you and have an immense love for you all - always and forever.

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## Operational Definition of Terms

For the purposes of the current study, the following terms are used as defined below:

**Avoidance:** A situation in which the learner avoids problematic structures and forms in the target language by substituting them with already learned forms.

**Cross-Linguistic Influence**: Any form of influence of an already acquired language on the acquisition of another (other) language (s).

**First Language:** The language that a child learns to speak first, usually also the home language.

**Language Acquisition:** The process by which pupils consciously or unconsciously learn the structures and the vocabulary of a target language.

**Learnability:** A theory of learning that accounts for what is learnt, how it is learnt and how it can be assessed.

**Non-transfer**: A situation where there is no influence between a learners's L1 and the Target Language.

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| **Passive Voice** | A grammatical construction (a "voice") in which the subject of a sentence or clause denotes the recipient of the action (the patient) rather than the performer (the agent). |
| **Pseudo-Passive:** | A passive-like construction which does not exhibit the properties of a true passive. |
| **Target Language:** | Any other language, apart from the first language, that the child is acquiring or learning. |
| **Transfer in reverse:** | The influence of a new language on a Previously established one |
| **Transfer:** | A process by which individuals tend to carry over the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the target language and culture. |

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

The following abbreviations and acronyms are used in this proposal with the meanings indicated:

**ACC:** Accusative
**ACT:** Active
**CLI:** Cross-Linguistic Influence
**COMP:** Complementiser
**CPH:** Critical Period Hypothesis
**DET:** Definite
**DF:** Degree of Freedom
**ESL:** English as a Second Language
**EXPL:** Expletive Agreement
**F:** Frequency
**GEN:** Genitive
**HUM:** Human
**INF:** Infinite
**IL:** Inter Language
**KNEC:** The Kenya National Examinations Council
**KIE:** Kenya Institute of Education
**L1:** First Language
**L2**: Second Language
**M:** Matched
**MM:** MisMatched
**MP:** Malformed Passives
**MT:** Mother Tongue
**NL:** Native Language
**NP:** Noun Phrase
**NOM:** Nominative
**OTH:** Other Constructions

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|---|---|
| **P:** | Picture |
| **PL:** | Plural |
| **PP:** | Prepositional Phrase |
| **PST:** | Past |
| **SG:** | Singular |
| **PASS:** | Passive |
| **N:** | Neuter |
| **LOC:** | Locative |
| **M:** | Masculine |
| **PPP:** | Possible Pseudo-Passives |
| **R:** | Realis |
| **SLA:** | Second Language Acquisition |
| **TL:** | Target Language |
| **UG:** | Universal Grammar |
| **WFP:** | Wellformed passives |

## ABSTRACT

The current study investigated the processes by which *Dholuo* speaking pupils acquire the English language passive constructions. Assuming that such pupils would have already mastered the *Dholuo* passive, the study focused on the cross linguistic effects of the *Dholuo* passive on the acquisition of the English passive constructions. The study also investigated the role of gender and age in the acquisition of the English passive constructions. An eclectic theoretical paradigm involving Learnability and Interlanguage theories was used. The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional design which involves respondents in different groups according to their respective levels of development. The cohorts were pupils aged 6-8; 9-11 and 12-14 years. The design enabled the study to compare peers or cohorts as they successively reached a given age or points of development. It also allowed for child cohort comparison. Data was collected using research instruments that consisted of receptive and production tasks which were administered to the pupils. Data was analysed and interpreted qualitatively in terms of percentage scores in pie-charts and bar graphs, and quantitatively in prose form.

The study found out that whereas gender had no significant influence on the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils, the age of the pupils had a significant influence. Pupil's interlanguage is characteristic of most linguistic systems in the sense that it has properties of both the *Dholuo* passive and the English passive constructions. It emerged that pupils use a number

of strategies as they come to terms with the target English passive structures. The pupils displayed adult like behaviour in their construction of the English passives and had problems only with the by-constructions.

The findings of this study have implications not only on the acquisition of English grammatical structures, but also on the cross-linguistic influence in Second Language Acquisition and recommends as follows; syllabus designers and material developers should take due cognisance of the cross linguistic influence while designing syllabi and developing instructional materials for lower primary classes, and teachers handling English language in the corresponding grades to be made aware of the potential effects of the L1 on the acquisition of English target structures. The study also creates an opportunity for further research in other aspects namely: the interaction of *Dholuo* with the acquisition of other aspects of English grammar; interaction of other languages with English during the acquisition process; focus on adult learners so that any differences attributable to age of the learners could be noted and lastly, focus on child language acquisition within the African background so that inherent differences can be noted and accounted for.

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background to the Study

This chapter provides a brief background to the present study by situating it within the context of similar or related previous studies. It also provides the reader with a brief background to language acquisition studies in general and the acquisition of passive constructions in particular. The chapter also presents the problem addressed by the study, the research questions, objectives, rationale and the scope of the study.

Kenya, like many African countries, is multilingual, with approximately over 68 individual languages being spoken by her inhabitants. As listed for Kenya in an Ethnologue- languages of the world. The report shows that, of these 68 languages, 67 are living and 1 is extinct. Of the living languages, 12 are institutional, 34 are developing, 15 are vigorous, 2 are in trouble, and 4 are dying (Lewis, Gary, and Fennig, 2015).

Apart from European and Asian languages such as English, French, German, Japanese and Chinese, these languages fall mainly into three language sub-families namely Nilotic, Cushitic, and Bantu. *Dholuo*, also known as *Luo*, is a Western Nilotic language spoken by approximately three million people in south-western Kenya (GoK, 2009) census and north central Tanzania east of Lake Victoria. The particular dialect used in this study is spoken in Bondo District, Kenya. Closely

related languages include Acholi and Lango, spoken in Uganda (See Tucker, 1994; Okombo, 1997; Storch, 2005 and Orwenjo, 2009).

Hamlaoui (2013:2) has described *Dholuo* as "a rigidly Subject Verb Object (SVO) Nilo-Saharan language". This implies that like all other SVO languages, the canonical clause structure is such that the verbs usually precede the subject and is followed by the object. Descriptive grammars of *Dholuo* (The St Joseph's Society, 1921; Omondi, 1982; Tucker, 1994) as well as a recent syntactic study like Ochola (1999) describe active sentences with an indefinite subject proclitic. These sentences constitute 'pseudo-passives' or 'passive equivalents' in that they function as passives, i.e. they are the closest translation to the English passive, without actually displaying passive marking. To the best of our knowledge, these studies make no mention of an actual passive/voice marking of the verb. According to The St Joseph's Society (1921: 54), *Dholuo* expresses passive voice by means of 'the root of the transitive verb and prefixing of '*o*' as an impersonal pronoun' in perfect tenses and 'when one indicates an action still going on the '*o*' is dropped and an '*i*' is employed with the active verb'.

Ochola (1999:15) has argued that *Dholuo* lacks central passive constructions but has 'a pseudo-passive construction in which a fronted Noun Phrase (NP) has very interesting properties'. She goes on to argue:

Through the use of a null subject construction, a patient NP can be emphasized. Moreover, movement of the patient is an optional additional focusing property of the construction, since the "passive" reading obtains even without the fronting of

the patient. In addition, *Dholuo* exhibits at least four distinctions of terms of identification of agency. In the active, the agent is clearly identified. In the pseudo-passive, the agent may be optionally identified, but without being focused. Moreover, in this pseudo-passive, the agent can also be omitted. Finally, in the generic subject construction, the agent is marked as understood by context, but it is neither suppressed nor less focused than the passive agent in a *gi*-phrase. (p.18)

Ochola (1999:20) further notes that 'unlike languages such as English, the only difference between the *Dholuo* passive and its counterpart active construction is tone placement on the verbal morphology' and that more interestingly, the *Dholuo* passive has more properties in common with a true passive in English than pseudo-passives in other languages (e.g., the impersonal passives in Lingala). She provides an example of the '*gi'* 'by' phrase in the Prepositional Phrase position in the *Dholuo* passive as a common characteristic of a true passive in languages such as English.

The debate on the process of second language acquisition has drawn a great deal of interest from a number of second language acquisition scholars. Most such scholars argue that pupils who are proficient in their first language (L1) should not experience any problem in acquiring a second language. For instance, Pérez and Torres-Guzmán (1996:96) state that "Pupils who develop proficiency in using their native language to communicate, to gain information, to solve problems, and to think can easily learn to use a second language in similar ways".

According to Tabors (1997), young pupils who are learning a second language bring all of the knowledge about language learning they have acquired through developing their first language. He goes on to argue that for these pupils, second-language acquisition is not a process of discovering 'what language *is*, but rather of discovering what *this* language is'. Krashen (1982) argues that when a child learns a first language, whatever is learnt sticks and the same applies when that child starts to learn a second language. Cummins (1991), while writing on bilingualism, also opines that when a child is able to learn first language, he or she will be able to learn the second language in the same way the first language was learnt. The present study sought to contribute to this debate by focusing specifically on how the acquisition of the English passive form occurs in pupils who already have an established first language which is *Dholuo*.

Active voice is by far more common, but there is considerable variation among individual text types. Active constructions have been found to be as much as ten times more frequent in one text than in another (Quirk, et al. 1985). The passive voice is a grammatical construction (a voice) in which the subject of a sentence or clause denotes the recipient of the action (the patient) rather than the performer (the agent). In the English language, the English passive voice is formed with an auxiliary verb (usually *be* or *get*) plus a participle (usually the past participle) of a transitive verb. For example, '*Adhiambo was kissed by Jared'* uses the passive voice. The subject denotes the person '*Adhiambo*' affected by the action of the verb. The counterpart to this in active voice is, '*Jared kissed Adhiambo*', in which

the subject denotes the doer, or agent, *Jared.* A sentence featuring the passive voice is sometimes called a *passive sentence,* and a verb phrase in passive voice is sometimes called a *passive verb*. English differs from languages in which voice is indicated through a simple inflection, since the English passive is periphrastic, composed of an auxiliary verb plus the past participle of the transitive verb (Sierwieska, 2010).

It has been claimed in the literature on acquisition of English as a second language that pupils, whether acquiring a first or a second language, do not have the ability to use passive voice until about age 4 or 5. This is despite the fact that they control the morphology (the auxiliary verb 'be' and the participial form of the verb) by this age (Pinker, 1984). It has also been claimed that the delay is due to the fact that pupils have a maturational delay (which is universal) which prevents them from connecting the patient role to the subject position in passives (Pinker, 1984). Moreover, it has been claimed that under age 3 pupils do not generalize the construction and therefore cannot extend it to nonce verbs if not exposed to a passive nonce frame (Tomasello and Brooks 1999), indicating that pupils under age 3 have not formed a general passive construction. The Passive is used as one of the main arguments that a certain number of verbs of a given type must be individually learned before the child can generalize a more abstract pattern. The present study focuses on the acquisition of English passive constructions by second language learners of English, namely *Dholuo* speaking pupils who have undergone about six years of English instruction. Given that the above debates

and predictions have centered on English as acquired by English speakers, a study that focuses on the acquisition of English passive by second language learners of English is bound to reveal critical and theoretical relevant insights.

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ochola (1999) has argued that the NP movement illustrated in the *Dholuo* passive is a characteristic of a true passive. She concludes that "these peculiar properties of the *Dholuo* passive present an interesting phenomenon for further grammatical investigation" (p. 21). Of particular interest to the present study was the issue stated by Ochola (1999) that unlike languages such as English, the only difference between the *Dholuo* passive and its counterpart active construction is tone placement on the verbal morphology and that *Dholuo* passive has more properties in common with a true passive in English than pseudo-passives in other languages. The study, therefore, sought to establish how the already acquired structure of the *Dholuo* passive affects the acquisition of the English passive in terms of the cross linguistic influence of the properties of *Dholuo* passive on the acquisition of English passive given that both have shared properties. Chomsky (1969:1) observes that "a common assumption among pupils of child language has been that the child has mastered the syntax of his native language by about age 5".

Additionally, the passive construction is one of the marked linguistic structures in the languages in which they occur. Contrasting the active and passive voices, Quirk et al. (1985) suggest that there is a notable difference in the frequency with which they are used in spoken and written discourse. Consequently, it can be

postulated that it would also be the most difficult to acquire. For instance, Berman (1985) argues that passive construction seems to be learned very late in English, as well as in many other languages, including most European languages. Furthermore, pupils' learning English as a second language find active sentences such as '*Atieno ate the banana* much easier to understand and produce than passive sentences such as '*The banana was eaten by Atieno*'. Even when passives are acquired, they are likely to be truncated (lacking the 'by phrase'; (Berman, 1985).Thus, the study deemed it insightful to investigate its English Passive acquisition by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

There is a paucity of research on the acquisition of other aspects of English syntax by Kenyan pupils. Indeed, Onditi (1994) has recommended further research on the acquisition of various aspects of English grammar by Kenyan pupils: hence the present study.

### 1.3. Objectives of the study

In order to answer the research questions below, the study was guided by the following objectives:

a) To establish the role of gender and age in the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

b) To describe the syntactic properties of English passive constructions form by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

c) To determine the acquisition profile of English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

d) To investigate the effect of cross linguistic influences of the properties of *Dholuo* passive on the acquisition of the English passive.

### 1.4. Research Questions

The current study was guided by the following research questions:

a) How does gender and age affect the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils?

b) What are the syntactic properties of English passive constructions form by *Dholuo* speaking pupils?

c) What is the acquisition profile of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils?

d) How does the cross linguistic influence of the properties of *Dholuo* passive affects the acquisition English passive?

### 1.5. Research Assumptions

To attain the aforementioned objectives, the study proceeded on the following assumptions:

a) That gender and age have certain influences on the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

b) That the *Dholuo* pupils' English passive constructions have certain syntactic properties.

c) That the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils follows a discernible profile.

d) That there are certain cross linguistic influences on the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

### 1.6. Justification of the Study

The findings of the present study contribute to language acquisition research by confirming or refuting the above assertions. It was particularly interesting to find out whether the *Dholuo* passive which the pupils shall have already mastered would enhance or inhibit their acquisition of the English passive.

Given that *Dholuo* and English do not demonstrate any documented genetic or typological relatedness, the nature of this cross-linguistic influence was linguistically significant in contributing to the theory and debate within this area in general. Other studies that have grappled with the nature of cross-linguistic influence have claimed that it occurs in the form of transfer (Lado, 1957), non-transfer (Sharwood, 1983), transfer in reverse (Odlin, 2003), or avoidance (Kellerman, 1979). Related studies using data drawn from local African languages are not readily available, hence the present study.

Another rationale for the study is in the fact that the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) in its annual report noted that the passive is one of the most problematic areas for pupils in both the primary and the secondary examinations (KNEC, 2009). This is yet another motivation for the present study. On a more practical level, the findings of this study contribute to linguistic theory by providing more data and furthering the already existing discourse on passive, pseudo-passive and cross-linguistic influences in second language acquisition.

Curriculum developers and syllabus designers in Kenya are also likely to benefit from the insights of the study as they prepare instructional materials for *Dholuo* and the English syllabus.

### 1.7. Scope and Limitations of the Study

*Dholuo* and English, just like any other languages, have several syntactic elements that define them. The present study focused only on the English passive and how *Dholuo* speaking pupils acquire it. The study also restricted itself to *Dholuo* pupils between the ages of 9-14, a period during which the acquisition process is still in place, and at the same time, for these pupils, the learning of English grammar is on-going. This is the age at which the pupils are being taught elements of English grammar, including passive constructions.

### 1.8. Summary

This chapter strives to situate the study within the existing studies in passives. It gives the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions and assumptions, rationale and scope.

The chapter begins by indicating that Kenya, like many African countries, is multilingual, with approximately over 68 individual languages being spoken by her inhabitants. These languages fall mainly into three language sub-families namely Nilotic, Cushitic, and Bantu. *Dholuo* language also known as *Luo* – which is the focus of the study is one of these languages and falls under the Western Nilotic language spoken by approximately three million people in south-western Kenya (GoK, 2009 census) and north central Tanzania east of Lake Victoria.

The problem of the study is derived from arguments raised by (KNEC, 2009), (Ochola, 1999), (Onditi, 1994), (Quirk, 1985) and (Chomsky, 1969). It is indicated that the study sought to establish how the already acquired structure of the *Dholuo* passive affects the acquisition of the English passive in terms of the cross linguistic influence of the properties of *Dholuo* passive given that both have shared properties.

The chapter contains the objectives of the study which are four fold namely: To establish the role of gender and age in the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils; to describe the syntactic properties of English passive constructions form by *Dholuo* speaking pupils; to determine the acquisition profile of English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils and to investigate the effect of cross linguistic influences of the properties of *Dholuo* passive on the acquisition of the English passive. These objectives led to formulation of four (4) research questions as follows: Firstly, how does gender and age affect the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils? Secondly, what are the syntactic properties of English passive constructions form by *Dholuo* speaking pupils? Thirdly, what is the acquisition profile of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils? Fourthly, how does the cross linguistic influence of the properties of *Dholuo* passive affects the acquisition English passive?

The chapter justifies the study by arguing that *Dholuo* and English do not demonstrate any documented genetic or typological relatedness, therefore, the findings of the study shall contribute to linguistic theory by providing more data

on the already existing discourse on passive, pseudo-passive and cross-linguistic influences in second language acquisition. It expresses that curriculum developers and syllabus designers in Kenya shall benefit from the insights of the study as they prepare instructional materials for *Dholuo* and the English syllabus. Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) in its annual report supports the need for this study by stating that passive is one of the most problematic areas for pupils in both the primary and the secondary examinations (KNEC, 2009). The next chapter is the literature review and theoretical framework.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 2.1. Introduction

In this Chapter, literature related to the present study is reviewed and discussed with a view to situating the study within the milieu of previous and on-going studies on language acquisition in general and second language acquisition of grammatical structures in particular, and identifying any gaps therein. Consequently, the chapter addresses itself to studies on language acquisition, especially child language acquisition, second language acquisition, and acquisition of grammatical structures. The theoretical framework within which the present study is situated is finally presented and discussed.

## 2.2. Literature Review on Child Second Language Acquisition: a theoretical Perspective

The field of pupils' language acquisition is one that encompasses a range of distinct theoretical perspectives. The theoretical issue that has predominated over all the others in this area for the last few decades is that of the extent to which pupils are pre-programmed for the specific task of language learning. A related issue is that of whether language is independent of other areas of cognition, or is it dependent upon more general cognitive abilities. A number of distinct theoretical positions have been identified: Chomsky (1986), who believes that a child is born with specific linguistic knowledge; Skinner (1957), portrayed as believing that language is entirely a matter of conditioning; Piaget (1971) who sees language

development as an outgrowth of general cognitive development; and Bruner (1975), who emphasizes the importance of the social/interactional context in which language development takes place.

Traditional accounts of late L2 learning have debated whether there are constraints that limit the degree to which adults are able to fully acquire the lexicon, grammar, and phonology of the new language (Birdsong, 2005; Johnson & Newport, 1989; Lenneberg, 1967). While there is agreement that there are effects of age of acquisition (AoA), with better performance for younger than for older L2 learners, there is little agreement about its basis. Some have proposed that there are cognitive factors that account for diminished L2 performance (McDonald, 2006), others that it depends on the maintenance of the L1, with high L1 maintenance inversely related to L2 performance (Jia & Aaronson, 2003), and others that it is a matter of proficiency rather than age (Steinhauer, White, & Drury, 2009).

The terms in which the positions identified above are couched emphasize their differences. However, a reading of the original works of any of these authors reveals that matters are not so simple. Chomsky (1986), for example, has never claimed that all of language is innate: not only has he always accepted that vocabulary has to be learned, but also that certain aspects of grammar are the product of interaction between the child's innate knowledge and the evidence drawn from Universal Grammar and provided by the language to which the child is sufficiently exposed. To Morillas (2011), much of the issues related with morphology and syntax are related to Universal Grammar. In other words, a

child’s grammar is influenced by Universal Grammar; this claim that UG has a role in language acquisition is undeniable. In the current version of Chomsky's theory, known as "Government-Binding Theory", the child's innate knowledge is characterized as a set of principles which, taken together, define the form of a human language. Associated with these principles are parameters (or switches) which need to be set on the basis of exposure to the particular language of the community into which the child is born (Chomsky, 1986). It is clear, however, that Chomsky (1986) sees the main contribution as coming from the child's genetic endowment. He frequently characterizes the 'growth' of language as analogous to physical growth and maturation: the development of secondary sexual characteristics at puberty, for example, requires certain environmental conditions (e.g. adequate nutrition) but is guided almost exclusively by internal mechanisms. Chomsky's position is thus, essentially, characterized by nativism and the belief that language constitutes a distinct area of knowledge, separate from the rest of cognition.

Rejecting Chomsky’s nativist views, Bruner (1975) emphasizes the idea that pupils learn language in order to communicate, and, at the same time, they also learn the linguistic code. He believes that meaningful language is acquired in the context of meaningful parent-infant interaction and underscores the critical importance of the social/interactional context of language learning in the young child. However, he does not claim that language can be acquired solely on the basis of information derived from the social context in which it is experienced. Rather he describes this

as a support system which backs up the child's predisposition to acquire a language system (Bruner, 1981 cited in Nyamasyo, 1985).

This position made far reaching claims about the importance of the social context for the development of many areas of language. The essential claim is that language is experienced in the context of familiar routines - shared activities which are repeated hundreds of times. It is the opportunities afforded to the child to map linguistic input onto these highly predictable activities that allow the child to "crack the code" of language. It is argued that not only could the development of vocabulary be thus assisted, but that the child's learning of grammar would be facilitated by the opportunity to map the elements of sentences (semantically defined as 'actor', 'patient', 'goal', etc.) onto actors, objects and events in the real world through joint action and joint attention with familiar adults.

Bruner's social learning theory is related to Bandura's (1977) observational learning model which also adds a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. Central to observational learning is three core concepts which are at the heart of social learning theory. First is the idea that people can learn through observation. Next is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of this process. Finally, this theory recognizes that just because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will result in a change in behavior. This very strong claim has been modified to a considerable extent in Bruner's more recent work. He does not now argue that the

child's grammar can be derived from the child's processing of extra linguistic events, but rather that the latter gives the child something to map language on to. Language is now described as an 'autonomous problem space', and one which is distinct from, and not entirely isomorphic with, event representations. The support system provided by the interactional context in which language is experienced helps the child to learn how to use language for communicative purposes. The other two theorists mentioned above, Skinner (1957) and Piaget, may now be differentiated from both Chomsky and Bruner in that neither would see language as fundamentally distinct from other aspects of human behavior (in Skinner's terms) or cognition (in Piaget's).

Since Chomsky's famous demolition of Skinner's views on language learning in his review of Skinner's (1957) Verbal Behavior, the behaviourist thinking about language lost some currency. Nevertheless language intervention programs based on behaviorist learning theory (to be carefully differentiated from recent formal approaches to language acquisition under the name of learnability theory) continue to be used with pupils whose language development is not proceeding along normal lines - an apparent paradox which will be returned to below. Piaget viewed language development as a part of the child's general cognitive development. He saw language as essentially a development of the child's ability to manipulate symbols (also manifested in such activities as symbolic play) which emerges towards the end of the sensori-motor period of development and is established at the operational stages (ages 7-11 years).

The discussion above, in summary, indicates that theorists concerned with the acquisition and development of language may be categorized along at least two dimensions: firstly, according to the emphasis they place on the genetic component in determining the course of development; and secondly, according to the extent to which they view language as a distinct cognitive domain (or behavioral category). While Chomsky and Bruner are typically placed in sharp contrast with another in terms of their respective positions on the heredity/environment dimension, they can be seen to differ less on the other dimension, both regarding language as a 'problem space' in its own right for the child. Seen in this way, it becomes apparent that the typical characterizations, while extremely useful as a shorthand way of making sense of a complex field, over sharpen the (genuine) differences between theorists. Consequently, the study integrated these varied perspectives in its bid to unravel the process by which *Dholuo* speaking pupils acquire the English passive construction.

## 2.3. Literature Review on L2 Grammar Acquisition: Theoretical Perspectives

According to Schwartz (1993), grammar building in Second Language (L2) acquisition is based on three fundamental components: (a) access to Universal Grammar (UG); (b) a learning procedure; and (c) contextualized input. She contends that the internal language source provides the L2 learner with access to UG and also provides parameters transferred from the learner's LI and argues that UG postulates a number of universal principles, which limit the types of grammars

found in languages. The principles are universal constraints on syntactic structures that a language learner uses to form possible structures in a language, for example, word order in many of the world's languages. UG leaves room, however, for variation in grammars by parameterizing principles which for instance, allows specific languages to have different patterns of word order, apart from the general universal principles that are involved in all the languages (Orwenjo, 2009).

Furthermore, a parameter may be responsible for a set of seemingly unrelated surface constructions in a particular language that are dependent on the value of the parameter and therefore create a cluster of properties that are related to that parameter. An example of a parameter with clustered properties is the null subject parameter (NSP), where some languages (e.g., English, French) require subjects and in other languages (e.g., Spanish and Italian) subjects are optional. *Dholuo*, on the other hand, requires the subject in its clause structure which may be overt in the form of a pronominal or may be implied thus leaving an empty node.

Cross-linguistic variation strongly suggests that subject omission is not an isolated property, but forms part of a cluster of properties. For languages like Spanish and Italian, it has been proposed that the presence of null subjects co-occurs with other grammatical properties like free verb-subject inversion, and lack of lexical pleonastic subjects (Chomsky, 1981; Jaeggli, 1982; Rizzi, 1982; Smith, 1994). The present study has focused on how *Dholuo* speaking pupils, in their endeavors to acquire the English passive, set the parameters already set by the *Dholuo* passive

as they approximate to the English passive and how such parameter setting is influenced by innate UG principles.

The complexity of a grammatical form has a demonstrable role in development: simpler rules and forms appear in speech before more complex ones, all other things being equal (Brown, 1973; see also Chomsky, (1969). For example, the plural marker -s in English (e.g. cats), which requires knowing only whether the number of referents is singular or plural, is used consistently before the present tense marker -s (he walks), which requires knowing whether the subject is singular or plural, whether it is a first, second, or third person and whether the event is in the present tense (Brown, 1973). Similarly, complex syntactic forms are sometimes first used in simpler approximations. Russian, for instance, contains one case marker for masculine nominative (i.e., a suffix on a masculine noun indicating that it is the subject of the sentence), one for feminine nominative, one for masculine accusative (used to indicate that a noun is a direct object), and one for feminine accusative (Brown, 1973).

Pupils, cross-linguistically, often use each marker with the correct case, never using a nominative marker for accusative nouns or vice-versa, however, pupils hardly use the masculine and feminine variants with masculine and feminine nouns appropriately (Slobin, 1985). This relationship between grammatical complexity and the acquisition profile relates to the study's fourth objective. To this end, the study sought to examine how the complexities of the English passive

transformation came to bear on how *Dholuo* pupils learning English would acquire various aspects of the English passive construction.

## 2.4. Acquisition of Passive Constructions

Borer and Wexler (1987) have claimed that a child's ability to form an A-chain (involving an A-binding relation between the subject and the object) undergoes maturation. Before the maturation occurs, the adjectival analysis of passives is all that is available to the child. In the adjectival passives like "*The island was uninhabited*", no NP movement is invoked. They propose that the derivation of verbal passives become available after A-chain maturation. Hence, their main claim, therefore, is that the constructions in which A-chain is involved are acquired later than those that do not invoke NP movement. It is clear that in this case, the study of *Dholuo* throws more light into the issue.

On the contrary, in several experiments conducted by Okabe and Sano (2002) it was observed that pupils' difficulty in understanding full passives lies in the process of discharging the external theta-role from passives affixed to the *by*-phrase. Furthermore, it was noted by Okabe & Sano (2002) examined pupils' comprehension of both passives and accusatives with the same verb. Okabe & Sano (2002) also report that Japanese mono-lingual pupils distinguished passives and accusatives quite well in terms of the existence of agent, which shows that the external theta-role is successfully absorbed by the passive affix. Based on the experimental data, Okabe and Sano (2002) conclude that the pupils can understand the constructions that involve A-chain, thus, rejecting Borer and Wexler's (1987)

hypothesis. Further, they claim that difficulty in comprehending full passives lies in this process. The present study, being quasi-experimental in nature, also contributes to the above argument using data from *Dholuo* speaking pupils who are in the process of acquiring English as a second language.

### 2.4.1. Theoretical Perspectives on the Passive Construction: A Cross-linguistic Survey

Before we delve into the nature of the English passive constructions and that of the *Dholuo* passive, a look at the passive cross-linguistically is necessary. One of the languages in which the passive has been extensively studied, apart from the Indo-European languages, is Japanese. Although extensively studied, questions about a modular analysis of the different types of passive constructions in Japanese remain. Literature (Ishizuka, 2008) distinguishes two types of passives: "direct passives" and "indirect passives'. According to "Japanese Verbs at a Glance" by Chino (2001, p.81-82), the structure of a direct passive sentence in the Japanese language is "Subject + wa + agent + ni + transitive verb in passive form" whereas indirect or suffering passives follow the structure of "Subject + wa + agent + ni + direct object + wo + transitive verb in passive form" or "Subject + wa + agent + ni + intransitive verb in passive form.". Both types contain the same passive morpheme *–rare-* but show different clusters of properties. In English, only transitive verbs (verbs that require objects) can be converted into a passive form. Thus, there are no passive forms for verbs like "go", "sneeze", and 'die'. For example, '*the car was repaired by the Mechanic'*. There is also another 'form' of

the passive in Japanese, called the indirect passive. This can also accommodate intransitive verbs, and has no direct equivalent in English. It is used to denote an action that was done by someone on the subject that is out of the subject's control. For example, *That dog bit (my) leg; (I) was bitten in the leg by that dog*. In this case, the agent responsible for the inconvenience is followed '*by'*. A unified analysis of both types of passives is superficially untenable since direct passives have corresponding active counterparts, while 'indirect passives' are assumed to lack one (Ishizuka, 2008). According to Siewierska (2010), a linguistic construction may be classified as passive if it displays the following five properties:

a) It contrasts with another construction, the active

b) The subject of the active corresponds to a non-obligatory oblique phrase of the passive or is not overtly expressed

c) The subject of the passive, if there is one, corresponds to the direct object of the active

d) The construction is pragmatically restricted relative to the active

e) The construction displays some special morphological marking of the verb.

These criteria are crucial for the present study in as far as the distinction between the *Dholuo* and the English passives are made. It further came into play in explaining how the cross-linguistic variations between *Dholuo* passives and English passive come to bear in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) of the

English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. Ashton (1947:224) provided prototypical example of the passive, as defined below:

1. Kiswahili:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | *Hamisi* | *a-li-pik-a* | *Chakula* | |
| | Hamisi | 3sg-pst-cook-ing | Food | |
| | 'Hamisi cooked the/some food.' | | | |
| b. | *Chakula* | *ki-li-pik-w-a* | *(na* | *Hamisi)* |
| | Food | 3sg-pst-cook-pass-ind | by | Hamisi |
| | 'The food was cooked (by Hamisi).' | | | |

Siewierska (2010) also provides taxonomy of passive constructions across languages. She for instance, makes a distinction between synthetic passives, where the lexical verb exhibits some form of marking, like in the Kiswahili example above, and periphrastic or analytical passives, in which the special verbal morphology involves the use of a participle form of the lexical verb and an additional auxiliary verb. The following Polish example illustrates the periphrastic or analytical passive:

2. Polish (Siewierska, 2010:38)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | *Intensywne* | *Deszcze* | *Zniszczyły* | *Żniwa* | | |
| | Intensive | Rain | Destroyed | Harvest | | |
| | 'Intensive rain destroyed the harvest.' | | | | | |
| b. | *Żniwa* | *Zostały* | *Zniszczone* | *(przez* | *intensywne* | *descze)* |
| | harvest | remained | destroyed | by | intensive | rain |
| | 'The harvest was destroyed by intensive rain.' | | | | | |

In Swahili, Polish and English, the subject of the active may be expressed in the form of an oblique constituent or remain unexpressed. In many languages only the latter is possible: the subject of the active cannot be overtly present in the passive (Siewierska, 2010).

Another distinction can be made between the personal and impersonal passives (Siewierska, 2010). Personal passives are typically seen as involving a process of agent demotion (from subject to oblique role or total suppression) and a process of patient promotion (from direct object to subject). Impersonal passives, on the other hand, involve only agent demotion. An example of an impersonal passive from Kannada, a Dravidian language spoken in southern India is given in (3b) (Sridhar, 1990:215).

3. Kannada

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | *ya:ro:* | *i:* | *nirNayav-annu* | *KhaNDisidaru* |
| | someone | this | resolution-acc | denounce.pst.3pl.hum |
| | ‘Someone denounced this resolution.’ | | | |
| b. | *i:* | *nirNayav-annu* | *khaNDisala:yitu* | |
| | This | resolution-acc | denounce.inf.become.3n | |
| | ‘This resolution was denounced.’ | | | |

It can be seen that the accusatively case-marked direct object *nirNayavannu* of the active (3a) retains its accusative case marking in the passive (3b). Moreover, the passive auxiliary *a: gu* ‘become’ is always in the third person singular neuter and thus shows no agreement with *nirNayavannu*. The direct object is thus not promoted to subject. This becomes even clearer when we compare the impersonal passive in (3b) with the Kannada personal passive in (4b), in which the direct object of the active appears in the nominative case and controls agreement with the passive auxiliary.

4. Kannada (Sridhar 1990: 214)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. | *HuDugaru* | *ba:vuT-annu* | *ha:risidaru* |
| | Boys | flag-acc | fly.pst.3pl.hum |
| | 'The boys flew the flag.' | | |
| b. | *huDugar-inda* | *ba:vuTa* | *ha:risalpaTTitu* |
| | boys-instr | flag.nom | fly.inf.pass.pst.3sg.n |
| | 'The flag was flown by the boys.' | | |

It is also important to note that in the Kannada impersonal passive, unlike the personal passive, it is not possible to express an overt agent. This, however, is not an integral feature of the impersonal passive (Siewierska, 2010). For instance, in Lithuanian, which also has both a personal and an impersonal passive, an overt agent can be expressed in both constructions. Ambrazas et al. (1997: 282) give the following example of the impersonal passive with an overt agent as shown in (5b).

5. Lithuanian

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | *Vaikaĩ* | *Miegójo* | *Sodè* | |
| | pupils.nom | slept.3pl | garden.loc | |
| | 'The pupils slept in the garden.' | | | |
| b. | *vaikų̃* | *Bùvo* | *Miẽgama* | *Sodè* |
| | pupils.gen | Be | sleep.pres.part.n | garden.loc |
| | 'The pupils slept in the garden.' (Lit. By the pupils was being slept in the garden.) | | | |

Ambrazas et al. (1997) observe that in both Kannada and Lithuanian the impersonal passive co-exists with the personal passive. They note that this is also the case in Dutch, German, Hindi, Icelandic, Spanish and Turkish but that there are languages which have only an impersonal passive, such as Kolami( Dravidian; Andhra Pradesh;India) Ute ( Numic, Uto-Aztecan; Colarado) Tukang Besi (Western Malayo-Polynesian, Sulawesi; Sulawesi, Indonesia ) and Zuni (isolate; New Mexico). Languages with only impersonal passives have been classified as exhibiting a passive on a par with languages with personal passives.

In languages which have no a passive construction, agent demotion or suppression can be achieved by other means. Some languages simply allow the subject to be omitted. As shown in (6b), Awtuw (Sepik; Papua New Guinea) is such a language.

6. Awtuw (Feldman 1986: 95)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. | *Rey* | *Æye* | *rokra-kay* |
| | 3sg.m | Food | cook-perf |
| | 'He has cooked food.' | | |
| b. | *Æye* | *rokra-kay* | |
| | Food | cook-perf | |
| | 'Someone has cooked food.' | | |

In other languages, what would be expressed in English by an agentless passive is rendered by the use of an explicit impersonal or indefinite subject, such as the German*man* or French*on*, or simply the word for 'persons' or 'people' as in, for instance, Gude (Chadic, Afro-Asiatic; Nigeria and Cameroon).

7. Gude (Hoskison, 1983:107)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *kə* | *digə* | *ənji* | *tə* | *Ci* |
| Comp | beat.up | People | def | He |
| 'He was beaten up.' | | | | |

Still other languages achieve the same end by using the third person singular or plural form of the verb.

### 2.5. Passivization in English

The English passive verbal phrase consists of some forms of the verb "to be" followed by a past participle. The verbal category of voice affects both the verbal phrase and the relationship between the subject and its verb and the verb and its object. Verbs mostly take the passive form when the agent of the action and the object of the same action are not or cannot be separated from each other Klammer, Schulz & Volpe (2004). The passive voice is a grammatical device for bringing the object of a transitive verb into prominence by making it the subject of the sentence and getting rid of the necessity of naming the subject of a transitive verb. In a passive sentence, the action – i.e. *what happened* is emphasized rather than *whom* or *what performs the action*. The subject is placed after the verb or is omitted from the sentence. Therefore, a passive sentence often sounds impersonal and objective. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) describe passive voice as a focus construction that exists to put the patient, i.e. the undergoer of an action, in subject position. The subject is acted upon and is thus "passive". Active and passive sentences often have similar meanings but different focuses.

Briefly, passive voice in English is generally used:

a) When the doer of the action is unknown or not important.

b) When the action itself is more important than who does it.

c) When the doer of the action is clear from the context.

In passive voice, the agent is not mentioned at all; however, if the agent is mentioned, it appears in a prepositional phrase marked with the preposition '*by*'. Passive voice interacts with the elements in the auxiliary such as modals, simple present, present perfect, present progressive, simple past, etc.

Bryant (1960) studied the frequency of the passive construction by basing on the data on Harvard Business Review and New York Times and found out that the passive occurs more often in expository prose than in narrative writing. Also, some researchers such as Izumi (2003) studied the comprehension and production processes of the passive construction. To illustrate this, Fraser, C. & Bellugi, U. & Brown, R. (1963), cited in Baldie (1976) conducted a study aiming to report the procedures followed and the data obtained from pupils' ability to comprehend, imitate and produce passive constructions. They found out that in their sample group of twelve three-year-old pupils, imitation precedes comprehension which in turn precedes production for passive constructions. Likewise, Baldie (1976) carried out a similar study with 100 pupils aged 3 years to 8 years and found out that imitation of the passive form is acquired by the mean age of 4 years to 9 years. Comprehension follows with nearly perfect performance being achieved in the age range of 6 years to 7 years when production is acquired.

All these processes occur for pupils from 3 to 8 years old. In addition, Fox & Grodzinsky (1998) conducted a study with 3 to 5yearsYear-old pupils' acquisition of passive construction and showed that pupils both comprehend and produce non truncated get-passives, actional non truncated be-passives and non actional

truncated be-passives. Also they claimed that pupils' difficulty with passive constructions might sometimes be related to properties of by-phrase. However, Crain (1991, cited in Fox & Grodzinsky (1998) stated that 3 and 4 years old pupils produce passive sentences with by phrase as a consequence of his study. On the same area, Maratsos, Fox, Becker and Chalkley (1985, cited in Fox & Grodzinsky, 1998) conducted another study with 4-year-old pupils and found out that those pupils are able to understand passive sentences that contain actional verbs.

Debrowska and Street (2005) tested sentence comprehension and speaker's ability to interpret passive sentences. Participants were asked to identify the agent in four types of sentences: plausible active, implausible active, plausible passive and implausible passive. They found that both of the highly educated groups and the less- educated nonnative group outperformed in all conditions. The less educated native group was the best on the plausible sentences, but had difficulty with implausible actives and passives. These findings suggested considerable differences in level of attainment among native speakers and the researchers suggested that processing implausible non-canonical sentences depends to some extent on metalinguistic skills, which may be enhanced by explicit L2 instruction. The above studies inform the present study since they focus on pupils of more or less the same age group. The study is however bound to offer new perspectives due to the fact that it will be focusing on the cross linguistic influence between English and an African language whereas, previous studies have focused on a singular western language.

### 2.5.1. The Use of Passivization in English

The English passive is used in many ways as follows.

a. The passive form of the present simple tense is am / is / are + past participle form of the verb e.g.: Many accidents *are caused* by dangerous driving.

b. When the verb in the active voice takes two objects, it is more common in English to make the personal object the subject of the passive voice. Some of these verbs are send, show lend, pay, give, tell, etc.

8. John *gave* me some money.

9. I *was given* some money.

10. Some money *was given* to me

The form "some money was given to me" would be used when we need to stress this new subject. When a verb + preposition + object combination is in passive, the preposition will remain immediately after the verb e.g.

11. The evidence *was meddled with* easily

12. The old newspapers *were thrown* away.

c. After some verbs, the direct object is written in object complement to explain the object with a noun or an adjective, e.g.

13. They *elected* her principal.

14. The professor *considered* him a genius.

These sentences can become passive as demonstrated in (15), (16) and (17)

15. She *was declared* the winner.

16. He *was considered* a genius. (by the professor)

17. He *was called* stupid

d. The verbs that indicate the finished result of an action are called perfect verbs. For instance; *cut, close,* and build are perfect verbs. Past participles and perfective verbs and their passive forms have two meanings. They show the action and the result. For example, the theatre was closed. Its first meaning is: The theatre was closed by the police on the orders of the mayor (Swan, 1980:465). In this sentence, *closed* shows action.

Its second meaning is: When I got to the theatre, I found that it was closed. In this sentence, *closed* shows a state, not an action.

e. Sometimes**,** *get* can be used instead of ***be*** in the passive, e.g.

18. Otieno and Apiyo got lost in the forest

19. Did Otieno get offered the job? = Was Otieno offered the job?

Also, *get* can be used in the passive to say that something happens to someone or something. Often the action is not planned, but happens by chance e.g.: The dog got run over by a car. *'Get'* is commonly used in spoken English whereas '*be'* can be used in all situations (Murphy, 1985; Berk, 1999).

f. *Be born* are a passive verb and is usually past e.g.

20. Where were you born? (Past simple)

21. How many babies are born in the hospital every day? (Present simple)

To make a verb in the passive voice negative, *not* is placed after the first auxiliary (Pollock, 1982, p.172, cited in Şahinel, 1988) in 22.

22. He was not elected president

The *by*- prepositional phrase itself functions as an adverb of agency. Agency in this sense refers to 'performing the action', what the subject of a transitive verb normally does Morenberg (2002).

The agent is expressed in passive voice in the following instances:

a. It is more interesting or important to emphasize what happened rather than who or what performed the action. e.g. there was a terrible storm last night. Hundreds of houses were destroyed. (Here '*by*' is unnecessary.)

b. The doer of the action is unknown. The subjects of such sentences in the active voice are words like '*they*', '*people*' '*somebody*,' e.t.c, for example:

e) Someone stole my car last night.

f) My car was stolen last night. (Here, "by" cannot be used because the doer is unknown.)

c. The doer of the action is known, but the speaker/ writer does not want to name the person who did something wrong or made a statement e.g.

i. The teacher ruined the top of this desk accidentally (Şahinel, 1988).

ii. The top of this desk was ruined accidentally. (Here, *by* is unnecessary)

Sometimes the doer of the action is necessary to complete the meaning of the sentence. e.g. The police officer is seen as an enemy by some; looked to for aid and protection by others, and taken for granted by most ( Şahinel, 1988).

d. The doer of the action is obvious. e.g. The letter will be picked up after 2.00. (Here *by* is unnecessary.)

*e.* When the subject of the sentence is a material then preposition '*with'* is used before the material. The material is helpful to the agent to do the action.e.g. The lock was covered with paint (Pollock, 1982, p.166, cited in Şahinel, 1988

## 2.6. The *Dholuo* Passive

Commenting on the question as to whether the passive exists in *Dholuo*, Ochola (1999:45) makes the following observation:

> Although Burzio's (1996) generalization regarding the role of case assignment motivat*i*ng NP-movement in passives works for languages such as English, the characterization of passive constructions in terms of linear order, case marking, and verbal morphology relates more to language-specific tendencies than to universal grammar.

The above claim is consistent with the claims of Perlmutter (1983). She proceeds to observe while the *Dholuo* passive construction appears superficially to be a passive construction, "NP movement in this construction is not motivated by case assignment-instead, and the fronted NP receives accusative case-and therefore cannot be termed a true passive (in the terms of Burzio (1986)". Ochola (p.48) then outlines a number of properties as being characteristic of the Dholuo passive: A pronominal object is fronted and the fronted NP co-occurs with an object clitic on the verb. Because the fronted NP is co-indexed with either an object clitic or a null marker in object position, it inherits accusative case from the right most member of its chain [Aoun, 1979].

*Ne-gi-tedo rabuonde kama* (*gi mon).

PST -3P-cook potatoes like this (*by women)

'They cooked potatoes like this (*by the women).'

e.g. Nende-o- tedi-rabuon-kama

PST 3rd - OBJ CLITIC- cook -- potatoes like this

*The potatoes were cooked like this*

*Tedi Rabuondi kama*

The fronted NP moves to a different place from a topicalized or WH-moved element-hence, the construction is not a case of topicalization-because, in these constructions, the tense can occur before the subject.

Nende o-riemb dhok

PST 3rd - OBJ CLITIC -chase – cows

*The cows were chased*

Under head-to-head movement, we can assume that the fronted tense moves under COMP or If the fronted NP moves outside of IP, as a topicalized NP or WH-moved NP does, tense should be able to move along with it and the full form of the past marker should occur, not just the contracted form with the expletive agreement inflection, *n-o* (PST-EXPL). But this does not happen. These facts suggest that the fronted NP in the *Dholuo* passive remains within the IP, and adjoins to Specifier of IP position, and that the Specifier position itself is filled by the base-generated non thematic null pronominal, controlling subject-verb agreement. However, the fronted NP is not base-generated because it can also occur post-verbally. The patient NP need not be fronted.

She concludes that there is the pseudo-passive construction in which a fronted NP has very interesting properties. Through the use of a null subject construction, a patient NP can be emphasized. Moreover, movement of the patient is an optional additional focusing property of the construction, since the 'passive' reading obtains even without the fronting of the patient. In addition, *Dholuo* exhibits at least four distinctions of terms of identification of agency. In the active, the agent is clearly identified. In the pseudo-passive, the agent may be optionally identified, but without being focused. Moreover, in this pseudo-passive, the agent can also be omitted.

Finally, in the generic subject construction, the agent is marked as understood by context, but it is neither suppressed nor less focused than the passive agent in *gi*-phrase. Unlike languages such as English, the only difference between the *Dholuo* passive and its counterpart active construction is tone placement on the verbal morphology. The *Dholuo* passive has more properties in common with a true passive in English than pseudo-passives in other languages (e.g., the impersonal passives in Lingala). For instance, the *gi* 'by' phrase in the Prepositional Phrase (PP) position in the *Dholuo* passive is a common characteristic of a true passive in languages such as English. Moreover, the NP movement illustrated in the *Dholuo* passive is another characteristic of a true passive. These peculiar properties of the *Dholuo* passive present an interesting phenomenon for further grammatical investigation.

## 2.7. Theoretical Perspectives on Age and Second Language Acquisition

One of the central questions that SLA has tried to answer since its establishment as an independent field of study within applied linguistics is why learners of a non-native language (L2) evince such a high degree of inter-individual variation in their final attainment of L2 proficiency relative to the L2 components and skills they have acquired. In order to offer a satisfactory response to this key issue, SLA researchers have posited the existence of a set of individual factors of a very different nature, such as aptitude, motivation, attitude, personality, and intelligence, among others, that might explain such variation. However, one of the most obvious potential explanations for the lack of success of L2 learners compared to L1 learners is that the acquisition of a foreign language begins at a later age than that of the mother tongue (cf. Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 153). Thus, it has been prevalently assumed that age itself is a predictor of second language proficiency. The influence of age is actually assessed to be not only significant but even decisive on the degree of L2 competence and performance attained (cf. Abello-Contesse et al. (2006). But what exactly do researchers mean when they talk about age in language acquisition? Orwenjo (2009: 246) makes the following clarification on this issue:

> When talking about age in reference to language acquisition studies, reference is normally made to two related but distinct concepts: age of acquisition and age at acquisition. "Age of acquisition" is interpreted as identifying a critical period, a period beyond which effects of increasing age are not manifested in the acquisition profile. "Age at acquisition" on the other hand, is used to refer to the age at which a child or a group of pupils actually acquire specific linguistic units and structures.

The present study adopts the latter reading of the concept of age as used in acquisition studies because of the nature of the research questions it seeks to answer. Yet certain fundamental questions have continued to persist around the discourses of age and SLA. One of such questions has been that of optimality. If age indeed is a factor which determines success in SLA – is there an optimal age to start learning another language? It is often (see for instance Scovel, 2000 & Johnstone, 2002) claimed that pupils are superior to adults, that is, the younger the learner of a foreign language, the more effective the learning process and the better the outcome obtained. This assumption often derives from a distinctive element in the study of the age factor, called Critical Period Hypothesis Lenneberg (1967). CPH predicts that if the acquisition of a foreign language starts between the age of 2 and 12- 14 (i.e., puberty), the process will be straightforward and the product will be complete (which is usually claimed to be the case in the acquisition of the L1). Individuals who begin their learning after this point – a kind of biological border – will find the process considerably difficult and the final outcome will be incomplete. Even though the CPH constitutes a strong and recurrent research line

within the SLA, at the same time it is a changing and controversial area in practice since it tends to generate antagonistic positions among the SLA researchers.

Thus, there exist more studies which dispute the assumption that pupils are superior to adults in learning an additional language and maintain the exact contrary. Likewise, the explanations for the critical period as well as their empirical foundations have been questioned by different researchers. Is there indeed evidence for a critical period in SLA? Are there really age-related differences between young pupils, older pupils, and adults? And does the age of onset of learning L2 constitute a source of personal variation that is powerful enough to account for the varying levels of achievement that learners eventually reach? Since educators are interested in knowing what the best time is to start their instructions and how far older pupils can progress, the age factor is not only of great significance for SLA theory but also for language teaching practice. An important question which arises in this context is whether there is sufficient conceptual and empirical reason to justify making educational decisions on the basis of SLA research concerning the age factor.

Accordingly, the present study delved into the role of age in the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils, borrowing the ideas already advanced on CPH.

### 2.7.1. The Age Factor in Second Language Acquisition

In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), how specific aspects of learning a non-native language (L2) may be affected by when the process begins is referred

to as the ‘age factor’. Because of the way age intersects with a range of social, affective, educational, and experiential variables, clarifying its relationship with learning rate and/or success is a major challenge.

There is a popular belief that pupils as L2 learners are ‘superior’ to adults Scovel (2000), that is, the younger the learner, the quicker the learning process and the better the outcomes. Nevertheless, a closer examination of the ways in which age combines with other variables reveals a more complex picture, with both favourable and unfavourable age-related differences being associated with early and late-starting L2 learners (Johnstone, 2002).

Few aspects in first language or second language learning have engendered more controversy than the age factor. Differences in interpretation of the role of age are nothing new in any research area, of course. Here, however, disagreements as to both the facts and their explanation are very pronounced. The views on the age factor range from the position that pupils are in all respects more efficient and effective second language learners than adults to the complete contrary position that adolescents and adults are more efficient and effective second language learners than pupils (cf. Singleton, 1995: 11.). According to Singleton, at least four divergent opinions among the SLA researchers can be listed: In the first place, the ‘younger = better’ position, secondly, the straightforward counter-proposal, namely the ‘older = better’ position, thirdly, the ‘younger = better in some respects’ position, and fourthly, the ‘younger = better in the long run’ position.

Among the wide range of studies, there is evidence relevant to each of the four positions on age-related differences in second language learning efficiency.

Such studies include those of Tahta, Wood and Loewenthal (1981) who found that American pupils' ability to replicate intonational patterns in French and Armenian diminished after the age of 8 as cited in Gass and Selinker, (2001, p. 336). Pinker reported on an experiment by psychologist Elissa Newport at the University of Illinois in which Korean and Chinese-born pupils and faculty who had spent at least 10 years in the U.S. were given 276 simple English sentences, half of which contained minor grammar errors, and asked to identify and/or correct the error. The results were not surprising:

> The immigrants who came to the United States between the ages of three and seven performed identically to American-born pupils. Those who arrived between the ages of eight and fifteen did increasingly worse the later they arrived, and those who arrived between 17 and 39 did the worst of all… (Pinker, 1994, p. 296)

In another study designed to assess differences in the acquisition of syntax, Johnson and Newport (1989) investigated learners' proficiency based on their age of arrival (from 3 to 39) in the target language country. It was " who found that learners' performance on a test intended to measure second language syntactic knowledge was linearly related to age of arrival only up to puberty" (Gass and Selinker, 2001, p. 337). Lastly, Johnson and Newport (1991) investigated language properties associated with UG and determined "that there was a steady decrease in performance according to age of arrival, extending past puberty and with the steepest decline at ages 14-16" (Gass & Selinker, 2001: 339). Such studies

"suggest that there is a critical period for language acquisition and that learner' capabilities for acquiring the syntax of a language decline with age" (Gass & Selinker, 2001: 339). One hypothesis that has been developed from this wide range of studies is the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967).

#### 2.7.1.1. The Critical Period Hypothesis

The original formulation of the CPH is based upon the work of the German-born American neurologist Eric Lenneberg (1967). The hypothesis implies that pupils have a special innate propensity for acquiring language that is determined by biological factors – so to speak a biological clock that limits the period during which natural language acquisition can take place. This assumption is based on the biological observation that the brain of a child is plastic whereas the brain of an adult is rigid and set. According to Lenneberg, during early childhood language appears to be more spread out across both brain hemispheres, but as the child grows older and the two hemispheres become increasingly specialized for certain functions, language gradually relocates, settling in the left one. The CPH holds that primary language acquisition must occur during a critical period which starts at about the age of 2 years and ends at puberty (around the age of 12 or 13) with the establishment of lateralization of the language function.

Lenneberg argues that language acquisition before the age of 2 is impossible because the brain has not developed the capacities it needs. After puberty the natural acquisition of language is blocked because the brain has lost its cerebral plasticity. Of course, Lenneberg does not deny that language learning is possible

after puberty. However, “automatic” acquisition from mere exposure to a second language seems to disappear: “Most individuals of average intelligence are able to learn an L2 after the beginning of their second decade, although the incidence of ‘language-learning blocks’ rapidly increases after puberty” (Lenneberg, 1967: 176). Moreover, he notes that foreign accents cannot be overcome easily after the end of the critical period. According to the neurosurgeon Penfield, an adult cannot learn a language as a child does because the adult learns through structures that have lost their flexibility. The child, on the other hand, can acquire one or more languages with ease because the corticothalamic speech mechanism in the child is still in the process of development (cf. Penfield & Roberts, 1959, in Marshall, 2000:39).

As medical science has progressed, some points in Lenneberg (1967) are under criticism. Firstly, his claim that the CPH could be supported by the study of Down's syndrome cases is attacked. According to his argument, the development of pupils with Down’s syndrome is so slow that they pass their critical period for language learning. However, one disputes his claim because pupils with Down's syndrome have a build-in endpoint to their ability (Gleitman et al., 1984). Secondly, the theory of the brain's lateralization at the age of two, with the critical period set by Lenneberg (1967) cited in Morillas (2011:7-12), is also criticized. He claimed that pupils before their critical period were less severely impaired by brain damage. However, Krashen (1973 and 1981) in Shakouri & Saligheh (2012:3) re-examined the data used in Lenneberg (1967) and found all the cases of complete

recovery from aphasia were under the age of five. Surprisingly, the number of cases of recovery at the age of more than five or over was nearly the same number as the adults'. Kinsbourne (1975) pointed out the difficulty in deciding whether only half of the hemisphere was injured or not.

Another piece of counter evidence is seen in MacKain et al. (1983). Their experiment with babies of six months or less shows that lateralization begins much earlier than two years. If so, lateralization cannot be the evidence of the critical period. Reports of dichotic listening, experiments in which different stimuli are presented simultaneously to the two ears, also show that language functions are lateralized much earlier than the critical period. Regrettably, no conclusive evidence for right ear advantage based on the lateralization has been reported. Thirdly, the case studies of three linguistically isolated pupils have some problems. Because the early research in Isabelle's case was not written by a specialist in language (Aitchson, 1989:86), her speech may have been less sufficient than reported. There is also a report that Genie's left hemisphere was atrophied because of the brain damage. This implies that she used only the right hemisphere of the brain, the part which is said to have little function in language processing. Curtiss et al. (1974) writes:

> The result of the dichotic tests using environmental sounds also show a left-ear advantage, but only to a degree found in normal subjects. This 'normal' result shows that Genie is not simply one of those rare individuals with reversed dominance, but instead is one in whom all auditory processing currently appears to be taking place in the right hemisphere' (Curtiss, Fromkin, Krashen, Rigler, and Rigler 1974:542).

Isabelle was deaf and Chelsea had hearing problems too (Aitchson 1989:87). A difference between deaf and normal pupils should have been taken into consideration in the case studies. Since no further case of feral pupils will be reported, the data have been reanalysed. All of these criticisms of the past studies show how difficult it is to connect brain functions and language acquisition.

Furthermore, although the age factor is an uncontroversial research variable extending from birth to death ( Cook, 1995) and the CPH is a narrowly focused proposal subject to recurrent debate, ironically, it is the latter that tends to dominate SLA discussions García Lecumberri and Gallardo, 2003), resulting in a number of competing conceptualizations. Thus, in the current literature on the subject ( Bialystok 1997; Richards and Schmidt 2002; Abello-Contesse et al. 2006), references can be found to (i) multiple critical periods (each based on a specific language component, such as age six for L2 phonology), (ii) the non-existence of one or more critical periods for L2 versus L1 acquisition, (iii) a 'sensitive' yet not 'critical' period, and (iv) a gradual and continual decline from childhood to adulthood.

It therefore needs to be recognized that there is a marked contrast between the CPH as an issue of continuing dispute in SLA, on the one hand, and, on the other, the popular view that it is an invariable 'law', equally applicable to any L2 acquisition context or situation. In fact, research indicates that age effects of all kinds depend largely on the actual opportunities for learning which are available within overall contexts of L2 acquisition and particular learning situations, notably

the extent to which initial exposure is substantial and sustained Lightbrown, (2000).

Thus, most classroom-based studies have shown not only a lack of direct correlation between an earlier start and more successful/rapid L2 development but also a strong tendency for older pupils and teenagers to be more efficient learners. For example, in research conducted in the context of conventional school programmes, Cenoz (2003) and MunÕz (2006) have shown that learners whose exposure to the L2 began at age 11 consistently displayed higher levels of proficiency than those for whom it began at 4 or 8. Furthermore, comparable limitations have been reported for young learners in school settings involving innovative, immersion-type programmes, where exposure to the target language is significantly increased through subject-matter teaching in the L2 ( Genesee, 1992; Abello-Contesse et al. 2006). In sum, as Harley and Wang 1997; Bley-vroman,1989) have argued, more mature learners are usually capable of making faster initial progress in acquiring the grammatical and lexical components of an L2 due to their higher level of cognitive development and greater analytical abilities.

In terms of language pedagogy, it can therefore be concluded that (i) there is no single ‘magic’ age for L2 learning, (ii) both older and younger learners are able to achieve advanced levels of proficiency in an L2, and (iii) the general and specific characteristics of the learning environment are also likely to be variables of equal or greater importance.

The CPH is under criticism, with a large quantity of counter evidence. Nevertheless, no other hypothesis will explain the truth better that language learning by matured pupils and the brain damaged patients' recovery of language become more difficult with aging. Because it is difficult to fix the exact span of years during which language learning can take place naturally, some researchers have presented a revised version of the CPH. They use the term 'sensitive period,' rather than 'critical period,' for second language acquisition. The distinction between the CPH and the sensitive period hypothesis is whether acquisition is 'possible only within the definite span of age' or 'easier within the period.' Oyama (1979:88) says that sensitive periods are preceded and followed by less responsive periods. Selinger's proposal (1978) is that there may be multiple critical or sensitive periods for different aspects of language. The period 'during which a native accent is easily acquirable' appears to end earlier than the period governing the acquisition of a native grammar.

Taking due cognisance of the controversy surrounding CPH, the present study investigated the effect of age on the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils without recusing this hypothesis. This was done by dividing the pupils into three cohorts on the basis of age as laid out in the methodology section.

### 2.8. Gender and Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition is a complex process which involves several factors and of particularly interest to this study is the influence of gender on child language acquisition. Recently, the topic of the role of gender in second language

acquisition has been of great interest to English as a Second Language (ESL) and language specialists (Holmes, 1995). However, contradictions and counter contradictions have arisen in analyzing the role of gender. This study believes that this has somewhat been caused by not understanding that while talking about gender, it is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do or perform as explained by West and Zimmerman, (1987).

For instance, a closer look at the historical development of the general influence of gender on language acquisition shows various interpretations. Ellis (1994) claims that there was nothing conclusive in studies of gender differences in SLA in achievement, attitudes and strategy use at that time. Accordingly, Ellis (1994) holds:

> Sex is, of course, likely to interact with other variables in determining L2 proficiency. It will not always be the case, therefore, that females outperform males. Asian men in Britain generally attain higher levels of proficiency in L2 English than do Asian women for the simple reason that their jobs bring them into contact with the majority English speaking group, while women are often "enclosed" in the home. Sex interacts with such factors as age, ethnicity, and, in particular social class (p. 204).

Ellis (1994) position is supported by Kassaian (2011) who showed in his study that gender is not a significant factor regarding perception and production of English sounds and therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no difference between pupils and adults regarding perception and production of speech sounds were also accepted. This outcome contradicts that of Stolten and Engstrand (2002)

who judged younger women as less dialectal than men of the same generation. Within group individual differences can nevertheless, be depicted. Orwenjo (2009) in his study of lexical innovations by *Dholuo* speaking pupils also reported that gender had no significant influence on the production of lexical innovations by *Dholuo* speaking pupils aged 3 to 9 years old.

However, to the contrary, the study by Green and Oxford (1995) intended to build on previous studies by examining the use of individual strategies as well as strategy categories and overall strategy use in second language learners. It also attempts to analyse patterns of variation by gender while at the same time looking for patterns of variation by proficiency level. The researchers used the SILL test scores of 374 pupils from all levels studying English at the University of Puerto Rico. The pupils were asked to take the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), a self-scoring survey that asks about their learning process and the learning strategies they frequently use in second language learning. The test classifies learning strategies into six groups: affective, social, metacognitive, memory-related, cognitive, and compensatory strategies.

The study showed greater use of learning strategies by females than by males. The pupils' use of fifty individual learning strategies was evaluated on the test. Men and women used almost a third of the total fifteen strategies differently. Females used fourteen strategies more often than males and males used only one strategy more often than females. Females used significantly more memory, metacognitive, affective, and social learning strategies than their male classmates. Males and

females used cognitive and compensation learning skills about equally in this study.

The one strategy that males used more significantly than females was the use of English movies and TV programs to help develop language skills. This difference can be explained by the fact that in Puerto Rico where the study took place, Spanish programming is dominated by soap operas that appeal more strongly to females while English language television often includes sporting events, movies, and music videos. Females on the other hand, showed a much higher use of global strategies, incorporating the big picture into learning, as women are more often than males classified as global learners. Females also used more introspective and affective strategies, aspects where females are known to pay more attention to in learning. Several other strategies can also be linked to the way that women converse and use language such as sociability, a tendency to elicit comment, and a wish to build a relationship with those involved in the conversation. Women also tended to review material more often than men, which may be contributed to their desire to follow rules and be compliant as well as women's desire to be in control of their learning in a metacognitive sense.

Shehadeh (1999) in his study emphasises the outcome of the study of Green and Oxford (1995) and concludes that gender influences second language acquisition and that it is as a result of socio-cultural influences. He relates this to the fact that "it is more acceptable in some cultures and subcultures than in others for men and women to communicate freely and casually with each other at work and in social

situation" (p. 259). Because of these variations, men and women play very different roles in conversation. Males take more of an opportunity to talk therefore producing a lot of comprehensible output. On the other hand, females utilize the conversation to develop their skills and knowledge through obtaining comprehensible input. This is important because conversation is very important in the acquisition and development of a second language. Both the input and output of the target language are important. Input allows the development of the learners listening and reading skills, while output assists their speaking and writing skills. Since both output and input are necessary for the acquisition of a second language, teachers must make sure that their pupils have the opportunity to participate in both same-gender and mixed-gender interaction and group work. Equal opportunity for learning must be given to both the male and female pupils.

Another interesting difference between men and women in the process of second language acquisition is their choice of use and preference for different learning strategies. In their study, "A Closer Look at Learning Strategies, L2 Proficiency, and Gender," Green and Oxford (1995) analyzed the role of gender on learning strategy use and choice. The results were significant, showing extensive differences between the learning strategies frequently used by male and female pupils learning a second language. Since good language learners often refer to a variety of learning strategies to help them improve their language skills, this study provides much insight to linguists and teachers who are studying the role gender has on language use and acquisition. Big variation in learning strategy choice

between males and females is one way that gender affects second language learning.

These findings are very important as they suggest that there are consistent differences in the way females learn compared to males. Significant differences between the two groups have been found in studies occurring all over the world in many different cultures. This suggests, "that biological and/or socialization-related cause for these differences might exist and that these causes might have a real, if subtle, effect in the language classroom" (Green & Oxford, 1995, p. 266).

Shenadeh (1999) describes that, "Men took greater advantage of the opportunities to use conversation in a way that allowed them to produce a greater amount of comprehensible output, whereas women utilized the conversation to obtain a greater amount of comprehensible input" (p. 258). Shenadeh (1999) argues that men dominate the conversation and often have more control than the females involved in ESL classrooms. This gives male pupils the advantage over females in mixed-gender tasks. This is similar to what occurs regularly in communication conducted in the first language. However, women did receive greater opportunities to participate and produce comprehensible output when working in pairs or groups of other females. As a result of working with other females, their opportunity for learning greatly increased. They had much better contexts to self-correct themselves and participate more freely in the conversation. The men participated more in the conversation and had more control over where the conversation was going (Shenadeh, 1999). Doughty (2003) submits that studying gender as a social

and cultural variable has produced a lot of helpful information on the subject. The current study adopts the perspective that gender may or may not play a significant role on the acquisition of English passive by *Dholuo* Speaking pupils. Consequently, this issue forms one of the objectives of the study.

### 2.9. Gender and Child Language Acquisition

Contemporary researchers such as Penelope and Sally (2003) observe that the influence of gender on language acquisition begins even before a baby is born due to the cultural behavior of the parents. For instance, newborn babies cannot easily be identified as girls or boys if they are dressed identically. Therefore, in many cultures; babies are dressed in ways to make their gender clear. Gender assigning process takes different forms, starting with the tradition of providing pink caps for girls and blue caps for boys. In addition to the visual, color-coding sign, another early attribution of gender is the linguistic event of naming the baby. Moreover, from early childhood girls and boys are interpreted and interacted with differently. People usually behave more gently with baby girls and more playfully with baby-boys. Parents and even strangers talk to them differently. Thus, while addressing girls more diminutives (doggie, sweetie etc.) are used, whereas more direct prohibitive (don't do that!) occur while talking to boys Gleason & Bernstein, (1994); Protassova (2007); Korecky-Kröll &Wolfgang (2007).

Furthermore, Penelope and Sally (2003); Karmiloff and Karmiloff (2002) argues that girls begin to talk earlier; they articulate better and acquire a more extensive vocabulary than boys of the same age. Saville-Troike (2006) claims that there

appears to be some differences in the processing and acquisition of language between the two sexes; however, there is not enough research to be certain.

Crowrord (2012) asserts that in child language development process, there are real differences in the development of language skills between boys and girls. A babbling toddler is most often a girl and the 'little boy wiggles' in school signify more than just high energy. Besides that, girls consistently have score higher on tests of verbal ability, read earlier, speak in more complex sentences and understand abstract ideas faster than boys.

Further research published in the science daily (accessed on January 23, 2012), shows that girls use different parts of the brain to process language. Girls use the abstract thinking and language areas of the brain very actively when processing language either verbally or visually. Boys, however, show increased brain activity in visual areas when seeing words and in auditory area when hearing words. The researchers found that girls still showed significantly greater activation in language areas of the brain than boys. Girls' brains develop earlier and are larger than boys'. This means better focus, better listening skills, better memory and better multitasking (Science daily, January 23, 2012).

However, in this study, the strategies more often used by girls had little overlap with the strategies used by boys. This is true within and across many different cultures and can be related to many variables including learning styles, motivations, and attitudes (Green & Oxford, 1995), socializations (Holmes, 1995) and brain development (Science daily, January 23, 2012).

## 2.10. Theoretical Framework

The study adopted an eclectic theoretical approach which catered adequately for all the research objectives. Accordingly, the study was guided by Learnability theory and Interlanguage theory.

### 2.10.1. Learnability theory

A branch of theoretical computer science, Learnability Theory attempts to answer this question, what is Language acquisition, in principle? (Gold, 1967; Osherson, Stob, & Weinstein, 1985; Pinker, 1979). Learnability theory is not an acquisition theory per se but was developed by psychologists to account for the learning process. Since the study makes no distinction between acquisition and learning due to the fact that there will be elements of classroom instruction in the pupils' acquisition of English passive constructions, the study adopts the theory to account for acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. Learnability theory has defined learning as a scenario involving four parts (the theory embraces all forms of learning):

a) A class of languages

One of them is the "target" language, to be attained by the learner, but the learner does not, of course, know which it is. In the case of pupils, the class of languages would consist of the existing and possible human languages; the target language is the one spoken in their community in this case *Dholuo* and in the target language would be English, specifically the English passive constructions.

b) An environment

This is the information in the world that the learner has to rely on in trying to acquire the language. In the case of pupils, it might include the sentences parents utter, the context in which they utter them, feedback to the child (verbal or nonverbal) in response to the child's own speech, and so on. Parental utterances can be a random sample of the language, or they might have some special properties: they might be ordered in certain ways; sentences might be repeated or only uttered once, and so on. Within the context of the present study, this would also include input from the teachers during classroom instruction and any English utterances that pupils encounter during school hours.

c) A learning strategy

The learner, using information in the environment, tries out "hypotheses" about the target language. The learning strategy is the algorithm that creates the hypotheses and determines whether they are consistent with the input information from the environment. For pupils, it is the "grammar-forming" mechanism in their brains; their "language acquisition device."

d) A success criterion

If we want to say that "learning" occurs, presumably it is because the learners' hypotheses are not random, but that by some time the hypotheses are related in some systematic way to the target language. Learners may arrive at a hypothesis identical to the target language after some fixed period of time; they may arrive at

an approximation to it; they may waiver among a set of hypotheses one of which is correct.

The study will employ the learnability theory as a means of determining the processes by which *Dholuo* speaking pupils acquire the English passive. The present study rejects the acquisition- learning distinction put forward by Krashen (1982) this distinction differentiates between learned and acquired knowledge by postulating that the latter must involve some form of formalised classroom instruction while the former occurs in naturalistic settings) and instead adopts the view espoused by Anderson (1976, 1983,1990,1993, 1997) . Anderson (1997:64) particularly points out that:

> It is feasible that the distinction between learned and acquired knowledge is in fact more properly a distinction between two stages of the learning process. We are ready to agree with Krashen that the two are distinct kinds of knowledge because we have usually forgotten how we ourselves shifted knowledge from the conscious to the unconscious domain.

Since the pupils selected for the study had undergone certain aspects of formal classroom instruction with regard to the English passive as per the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) syllabus (2005), learnability theory helped in explaining the processes of acquiring the English passive. In particular, the components of this theory that applied to the process of the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils are as follows:

i. Class of languages to be learned- English (specifically the English passive);

ii. An environment-this will be the L1 (*Dholuo* specifically the pseudo-passive);

iii. A learning strategy- forms one of the components being investigated;

iv. The correctness of their constructions.

### 2.10.2. Interlanguage Theory (IL)

Learner's language is what Selinker (1972) calls '**interlanguage**' – an evolving linguistic system that incorporates features of both the learner's L1 and L2. According to McLaughlin (1987: 60), the term was first used by Selinker in 1969 in reference to "the interim grammars constructed by second-language learners on their way to the target language". Inter language is, therefore, neither the system of the native language nor the system of the target language, but instead falls between the two; it is a system based upon the best attempt of learners to provide order and structure to the linguistic stimuli surrounding them. By a gradual process of trial and error and hypothesis testing, learners slowly and tediously succeed in establishing closer and closer approximations to the system used by native speakers of the language. Interlanguage theory basically looks at second language learning as "a creative process of constructing a system in which the learner is consciously testing hypotheses about the target language from a number of possible sources of knowledge …" (Brown 1980: 162).

Selinker (1972) coined the term 'interlanguage' to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both these learner's L1 and the target language. The term has come to be used with different but related meanings:

i. To refer to the series of interlocking systems which characterize acquisition,

ii. To refer to the system that is observed at a single stage of development ('an interlanguage'), and

iii. To refer to particular L1/L2 combinations (for example, L1 French/L2 English v. L1 Japanese/L2 English). Other terms that refer to the same basic idea are 'approximative system' (Nemser, 1971) and 'transitional competence' (Corder, 1967).

In looking at the acquisition of English passive construction by *Dholuo* speaking learners of English language, the present study took due cognisance of all the above three conceptualisations of interlanguage. Accordingly, the interlanguage theory guided the study in characterising and analysing the data in terms of the interlocking systems of both *Dholuo* passive and the English passive and to analyse particular L1/L2 combinations. This helped to generate the data on the cross-linguistic influences in the acquisition of the English passive, thereby fulfilling one of the core objectives of the study. Additionally, the theory was used to establish the learners language as a single state of development (an interlanguage) thereby charting the development profiles of the subjects of the study which is another objective of the study.

#### 2.10.2.1. Selinker's View of Interlanguage

Selinker holds the view that interlanguage is "a separate linguistic system resulting from learner's attempted production of the target language norm" (McLaughlin, 1987: 60). The system is the product of five central cognitive processes involved

in second-language learning. The processes are: language transfer, transfer of training, strategies of second-language learning, strategies of second-language communication, and overgeneralization. In addition to these, he also highlighted the processes called fossilization, the process or state when a learner's interlanguage does not develop anymore, no matter how long the learner is exposed to the target language. For example, Selinker postulates that the development of interlanguage was different from the first-language development due to "the likehood of fossilization in the second language" (McLauglin 1987: 61). From analysing pupils' speech, Selinker found a clear system in the interlanguage evidenced by the cognitive strategies of language transfer, overgeneralization of target language rules and simplification. Essentially, his view of interlanguage is an interim grammar, a single system comprising rules that have been developed through different cognitive strategies; and the interlanguage grammar, a combination of these types of rules (McLaughlin, 1987: 62-63).

In his research, Selinker, (1972) presents three main characteristics of interlanguage. The first one is permeability. As he stated, the second language learners' language system is permeable, in the sense that rules that constitute the learners' knowledge at any stage are not fixed, but are open to amendment. In many aspects, this is a general feature of native languages. All language systems are permeable. Interlanguage, therefore, differs from other language systems only in the degree of permeability. The second one is that interlanguage is dynamic, i.e., interlanguage is constantly changing. However, a learner's interlanguage does not

jump from one stage to the next, but rather slowly revises the interim systems to adapt new hypotheses to the target language system. This takes place by introduction of a new rule, first in one context and then in another, and so on. A new rule spreads in the sense that its coverage gradually extends over a range of linguistic contexts. This process of constant revision and extension of rules is a feature of the inherent instability of interlanguage and its built-in propensity for change. The third one is that interlanguage is systematic. In spite of the instability of interlanguage, it is possible to detect the rule-based nature of the learner's interlanguage. The learner does not select accidentally from his store of interlanguage rules, but in predictable ways.

Apart from the above mentioned characteristics, variability is another characteristic of interlanguage that cannot be neglected. At any one stage in his development, the learner operates according to the system of rules he has constructed up to that point. A crucial issue is why his performance is so variable. On one occasion he uses one rule, while on another he uses a different one. It has been generally accepted that interlanguage is variable (Dickerson, 1975; Huebner, 1979). This variability is evident both synchronically and diachronically. Each learner's interlanguage contains alternative rules for performing the same function. As it has been mentioned, on some occasions, one rule is used; on others, a different rule. Also, in spite of the striking uniformity in the developmental profile of different learners, there are variations in the overall course of development that learners follow. Interlanguage constitutes an unstable system and is permeable to

invasion by new linguistic forms; its dynamic quality is reflected in tremendous interlanguage variability and also in overlapping stages of development as one set of variable rules is revised in favour of another.

Language acquisition involves a series of evolving systems which comprise the interlanguage continuum. Such evolving, independent, but interlocking systems normally come into contact within the learners' mental lexicon, from time to time. Each system is considered to be initially consistent and rule-governed. Interlanguage is neither the system of the native language nor that of the target language, but instead falls between the two. Accordingly, the learner's linguistic system thus consists of three independent, rules governed, but mutually interlocking systems: the first language (L1), the Interlanguage (IL) and the Target Language (TL or L2). The interaction of these two systems is what leads to cross-linguistic influence between the various systems.

Except for Tarone who thought that inter language was not a single system, but a set of styles that can be used in different social contexts and consequently stressed the social factor involved in the use of interlanguage (McLaughlin 1987), scholars such as Corder (1976) shared Selinker's views on inter language. However, due to instability in the interlanguage, he says, "...the structures of the inter language may be 'invaded' by the first language" (McLaughlin, 1987: 63). This, precisely, is Selinker's (1972) opinion about the influence of the first language on the developing interlanguage.

According to Corder (1981), inter language is a system with a structurally intermediate status between the native and target language. He adds that every L2 learner creates an inter language which is unique to this individual, a phenomenon he called the 'idiosyncratic dialect'. He stressed the significance of errors as a source of information. Powell (1998: 4) supports the arguments and states that "the appearance of error in a learner's production was evidence that the learner was organizing the knowledge available to them at a particular point in time"

In his argument that inter language is an autonomous system, Nemser's evidence was that there are "elements which do not have their origin in neither [i.e. neither L1 nor L2] phonemic system" (Nemser, 1971: 134 cited in Powell 1998: 3). To Nemser, a learner of L2 undergoes a process of approximation of the emerging system to the target language (Brown 1980: 163), thus his use of the term 'approximative system'. In the present study, interlanguage elements that seemed neither to be attributable to *Dholuo* nor English were also isolated and analysed.

The foregoing discussion highlights different aspects of interlanguage and yet stress the basic shared idea that interlanguage is an independent language system lying somewhere between MT and TL, that which in the words of James (1998:3) occupies a "halfway position … between knowing and not knowing the TL". Interlanguage analysis attempts to look at the learner's internalised linguistic system as a *system* rather than as a collection of individual surface errors. A probe beneath the surface into the learner's internalized grammatical system is essential for the understanding of the underlying problems and providing a remedy for

them. Interlanguage analysis offers a much more complete picture of the learner's interlanguage grammar, including features that do not show up as errors. Interlanguage theory is wholly descriptive and avoids comparison (James 1998: 6), a fact which caused a revolution in L2 research and teaching as it offered a basis for the understanding of the learner's imperfect L2 system as an autonomous system.

The interlanguage system is thus flexible, dynamic and approximative. Learners are processing language on the basis of their own interlanguage, a system lying between the native language and the target language. It is a system based on the best attempt of learners to provide order and structure to the linguistic stimuli surrounding them. By a gradual process of trial and error and hypothesis testing, learners slowly succeed in establishing closer and closer approximations to the system used by native speakers of the language. Thus, the concept of "interlanguage" might better be understood if it is regarded as a continuum between the native language and the target language. At any point along the continuum, the learners' language is systematic, and any difference may be explained by differences in their learning experience (Freeman and Long, 1991). It is with this in mind that the present study sought to use the interlanguage theory, together with the learnability theory for the purposes outlined and discussed in the foregoing page.

## 2.11. Summary

This chapter reviews the literature related to the study and also presents the theories to be used in data analysis. The literature review is contextualized within the broad area where it belongs and shows the gaps that will be dealt with in the study. It also shows how previous studies are related to this one and how the present study will benefit from the previous ones. Various issues critical to the study such as the influence of gender and age in the acquisition of the English passive; the syntactic properties of English passive constructions; acquisitions profile of the English passive and cross linguistic survey are presented.

The theoretical framework focuses on the learnability theory and interlanguage theory. Learnability theory helped in explaining the processes of acquiring the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The interlanguage theory is hinged on the understanding that the process of second language acquisition is a creative one. It guided the study in characterizing and analysing the data in terms of the interlocking systems of both *Dholuo* passive and the English passive to analyse particular L1/L2 combinations. This helped to generate the data on the cross-linguistic influence in the acquisition of English passive thereby fulfilling the core objectives of the study. Additionally, the interlanguage theory was used to establish the learners' language at a single state of development, thereby charting the development profiles of the subjects of the study which is another critical

objective of the study. The next chapter outlines the methodology – where and how the research was conducted.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the focus has been on the review of relevant literature. In this chapter, the focus is on the research methodology. It deals with the study area, research design, target population, sampling procedure and sample size, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations and data management.

## 3.2. Area of the Study

The study was carried out within Bondo District in Siaya County in the Republic of Kenya. Bondo District (*See appendix 1)* is one of the upcoming urban and cosmopolitan districts in Siaya County and is part of the larger former Nyanza Province which was ranked second poorest of the Kenyan eight provinces according to the National Poverty Index of 2008. Generally, it is a rural set up with virtually limited economic, industrial, or any other income generating activity save for subsistence agriculture and small scale trading activities. The district like most parts of Siaya County is predominantly occupied by the Luo tribe speaking the *Dholuo* language.

The study conveniently sampled one primary school (*Singapala)* within the District through random sampling from which subjects (*Dholuo* speaking pupils) were identified for the study. This one primary school was a representation of

other primary schools in the district. As explained in this chapter, all the primary schools in Bondo district are structured in the same way as follows: they follow the same national English syllabus stipulated by the Kenya Ministry of Education of Science and Technology, the pupils are taught by the teachers with similar training background and they have *Dholuo* speaking pupils with limited influence of other languages, especially Kiswahili.

Due to the similarity of these primary schools, the researcher visited the District Education office and took a list of all the schools in the district. The schools were given numbers and then the researcher selected one randomly.

### 3.3. Research Design

The study adopted a time-lag strategy research design (Bennet-Kastor, 1998; Orwenjo, 2009; Salkind, 2010). They observed that a time-lag strategy combines both the longitudinal and a descriptive cross-sectional design. The present study therefore, adopted the descriptive cross-sectional design which involves respondents in different groups according to their respective levels of development, assumed on the basis of age or any other defensible criteria. The design enabled the study to compare peers or cohorts as they successively reached a given age or points of development. It also allows for child cohort comparison. The cohorts were pupils aged 6-8; 9-11 and 12-14 years. Therefore, the research design enabled the researcher to determine whether the observed changes in terms of the acquisition of the English passive were due to age or gender, the research design was also used to analyse the syntactic properties, acquisition profile of the

English passive and to investigate the effect of cross linguistic influences of *Dholuo* passive on English passive constructions. Generally, the design was relevant to this study.

### 3.4. Target Population, Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study population consisted of ninety eight (98) *Dholuo* speaking pupils within Bondo District, of the ages between 6-14 years. These ages were suitable for the study because the critical period for language acquisition is normally the ages between two years and puberty (see Chapter 2). This implies that a lot of activities characterize the child's language development during these years (Brown, 1973). Since the process of acquisition of English passive constructions is one of the activities that characterize early linguistic development in pupils (Clark & Clark, 1979), it was indeed appropriate to study it during these ages. At this age, it is also assumed that these pupils have already acquired the *Dholuo* passive (see Chomsky, 1959) and have also been exposed to English language through classroom instruction. In addition, it has been claimed in the literature on English acquisition that pupils do not have the ability to use passive voice until about age 4 or 5 (Ishizuka, 2008).

Therefore, as explained above in section 3.2, one school was settled on and the assumption was that since Bondo is a rural town, all the pupils in the chosen school were Luo speakers with no influence from other languages. The researcher met the head teacher of Singapala Primary School on the first day of research and the head teacher then randomly selected sixty (60) pupils for each category that the

study was interested in ages 6-8 years, 9-11 years and 12-14 years. The sixty pupils were believed to be convenient for research and could not interfere with the learning process. The total number of pupils invited by the head teacher was one hundred and eighty (180) pupils.

Upon invitation of one hundred and eighty (180) pupils, further selection of those to participate in the research was done. The selection was done purposively based on those in the same socio-economic status, age and taking consideration of the gender disparity. The socio-economic status was measured according to the level of education and occupation of the parents or guardians. By selecting on pupils with relatively low socio-economic status, the study ensured that the influence of other languages such as Swahili at home was controlled since most of the families had minimal interaction with other tribes speaking other languages. The study sought to keep within the sample population only those pupils in whose homes no other language apart from *Dholuo* was used. This meant nominating only pupils from rural homes where *Dholuo* had an overwhelming functional range. This was to ensure homogeneous population with regard to exposure in English. To ensure that we established such homogeneity, a questionnaire about the informant was administered in response to which the learners provided the researcher with personal information, e.g. about their homes, where they were born, which languages they spoke and what their parents do among others *(see Appendix 2).*

On this basis, pupils whose home environment involved the use of other languages (including English) were excluded from the study. This elimination procedure

cannot boast of having got absolute success. In some cases where the respondents spoke other languages, notably, Swahili, the researcher sought information about how frequently such languages were spoken. Those pupils who spoke those languages (only with their friends) and none of their family members were also nominated for the study. Those who spoke such languages with all their friends even if with no member of their families were eliminated. The pupils selected were both male and female in order to understand gender influence in acquisition of English passive.

Using the above criteria, only ninety eight (98) pupils in different categories (*see Table 1*) participated in the study. The study ensured equal gender representation per cohort following the requirements of the new constitution of Kenya. The ninety eight (98) pupils were used for analysing objective 1.

**Table 1: Age, Gender and Total Number of pupils sampled**

| **Age categories (cohorts)** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total Number of Pupils** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 15 | 16 | 31 |
| 9-11 | 12 | 12 | 24 |
| 12-14 | 23 | 20 | 43 |
| **Total** | | | **98** |

However, for objective 2, 3, and 4 the study expected to elicit homogenous data since they involved sentence structures. According to Milroy (1982), language is a largely homogeneous phenomenon and studies involving language use run the risk of having unnecessarily enormous amount of data with decreasing analytical returns. Milroy (1982) suggests that where homogeneous data is elicited, there is no need for larger samples as would be the case in other social and behavioural sciences. Accordingly, the number of participants for objective 2, 3, and 4 were to be less than those for objective 1. In order to select these participants from the ninety eight (98) pupils earlier selected, a written test was given to each cohort (*see Appendix 3)*. Those who scored above forty five (45) percent (which is equivalent to D+ in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education grading system) were selected because these pupils were able to construct the required sentence structures. A total of twenty eight (28) pupils scored above forty five (45) percent and were eligible to participate. However, due to the outbreak of malaria in that area during that period, a total of ten (10) pupils were not able to participate. Therefore, only eighteen (18) pupils (9 male and 9 female) participated.

### 3.5. Data Collection Techniques

The study had four objectives (*see chapter 1*) and for each objective, a different technique was used to collect reliable information as detailed below.

#### 3.5.1. Objective 1

In order to achieve objective 1, pupils (e.g. ages 6-8 years, 9-11 years and 12-14 years) were presented with three production tasks and a further four receptive

tasks. The need to include both receptive and production tasks was motivated by the fact that competence in any language involves not only the ability to produce appropriate structures in that language, but also that of being able to successfully process and comprehend input in the language. A study on language acquisition must therefore, of necessity, take into account both the receptive and productive\e language use.

The tasks were administered to ninety eight (98) pupils (*see Appendix 4 (P.1-P.23) – 8 and 14)*. The sentences used in the tasks were chosen from the subjects' course books in accordance with the Kenyan Primary School Curriculum (KIE, 2002). The tasks were administered as follows:

**a) Receptive Tasks**

Under receptive tasks, three sub-tasks were administered to the pupils involved in the study.

These tasks were administered to the pupils by the researcher, with the help of two research assistants. The responses were coded by the researcher and then marked and scores recorded for each pupil. The scoring was based on the weighting of each task. Tasks 1-3 are explained below:

**i) Task One: Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences**

Task one involved the pupils matching different English sentences with the pictures that correctly described the pictures. The researcher presented the pupils with pictures showing people carrying out certain activities. The pupils then

listened as the researcher read sentences depicting the activities captured in the pictures. A second reading was done, upon which the pupils were required to perform the matching task. The sentences were a mixture of active and passive voice. Each picture had two sentences, one passive and one active that accurately depicted the activity contained therein. The objective of this task was to determine whether the pupils were able to correctly match the pictures with both the active and passive sentences that described them, and thereby, their underlying ability to effectively process the constituent movement rules in the passive transformation.

The scoring procedure for this task was that only target items were scored. Ten pictures were displayed and 14 sentences were read out aloud of which 4 sentences were distractors. One point was assigned for each correct response; incorrect responses received a score of zero. The maximum score was worth 10 points.

**ii) Task Two: Listening to the sentences read by the teacher and deciding whether sentence is passive or active**

Task Two involved the pupils listening to the researcher as she read to them sentences and then deciding whether the sentences were passive or active. The pupils listened as the researcher read sentences which were a mixture of active and passive ones. A second reading was done upon which the pupils were required to perform the identification task. The objective of this task was to determine whether the pupils were able to correctly discriminate between passive and active constructions. In this way, the researcher was able to determine whether the pupils

had acquired the structural properties of English passive constructions to enable them to distinguish between passive and active English constructions

The scoring procedure for this task was that only target items were scored. Fifteen (15) sentences were read and five (5) sentences were distracters as only 10 among the sentences read were passive or active. One point was assigned for each correct response; incorrect responses received a score of zero. The maximum score was worth 10 points.

**iii) Task Three: Identifying Passive and Active Sentences from pictures**

Task Three entailed the pupils looking at pictures presented to them and reading the sentences that accompanied the pictures. The pupils were then required to determine which of the pictures presented, together with the corresponding descriptive sentences were in the passive. The objective of this task was twofold: to determine whether the pupils were able to correctly discriminate between passive and active constructions. In this way, the researcher was able to determine whether the pupils had acquired the structural properties of English passive constructions to enable them distinguish between passive and active English constructions. Secondly, by presenting the pupils with pictures involving actions and a mixture of passive and active sentences describing these actions, the task sought to know whether the pupils were in a position to process successfully, the passive transformation rule that involves the object movement among others. For instance, the pupils would look at a picture of a boy kicking a ball and would then be asked to decide which of the two sentences, one passive and another active,

correctly depicted the action in the picture. The pupils were then required to state which of the two sentences was in the passive and which one was in the active voice. The pupils were clearly informed that it was possible to choose both active and passive sentences as correct answers. An answer which identified both the passive and the active sentence as referring to the picture would be an indicator that the child had mastered the passive transformation rule.

The scoring procedure for this task was that only target items were scored. 16 pictures were displayed and passive and active sentences could only be derived from 10 of the pictures. The other 6 pictures were detractors. One point was assigned for each correct response; incorrect responses received a score of zero. The maximum score was worth 10 points.

**b) Production Tasks**

The four production tasks administered to the pupils were as follows:

**i) Task One: Turning Active Sentences into Passive Voice**

Task one involved presenting the pupils with sentences in active voice and asking them to transform them into passive voice. The objective of this task was to determine whether the pupils were able to correctly transform active sentences into passive ones thereby indicating their underlying ability to effectively process the constituent movement rule in the passive transformation. A correct answer was therefore interpreted as a successful mastery of the passive transformation rule and the reverse was deemed to be true.

The scoring procedure for this task was that thirteen (13) sentences in active voice were presented to pupils and they were asked to transform them into passive voice. Three (3) sentences were actually not in active voice and were meant to be distractors. One point was given for a sentence in active voice transformed into passive voice. The maximum score was 10 for those who have transformed all the 10 sentences in active voices correctly into passive voice.

**ii) Task Two: Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**

Task Two involved presenting the pupils with cues in the form of pictures of people conducting certain activities. The pictures were accompanied with sentential cues which the pupils were supposed to use to construct English sentences. The cues had a mixture of active and passive ones. For instance the pupils would be shown a picture of a woman cooking and the cue would be: "Food…", or a picture of a boy kicking a ball with a cue, "The boy…" The research assistant presented the pupils with the pictures together with the written cues. The objective of this task was to determine whether the pupils were able to correctly use the cues given to construct passive and active sentences. The focus being on their construction of the passive sentences, the task aimed at determining whether, if presented with an object in the subject position, they could still go ahead and construct passive sentences based on the pictures shown to them. The successful performance of this task would imply successful processing of the object movement rule and their successful acquisition of the English passive construction.

The scoring procedure for this task was that twelve (12) sentences showing pictures of people conducting certain activities were given to pupils and they were requested to construct passive and active sentences. One point was given for a correct sentence in active voice or passive voice. The maximum score was 10 for those who had correctly made 10 active or passive sentences out of the 12 pictures, the remaining two (2) were distracters.

**iii) Task Three: Filling in the Blank Spaces with the Correct Forms of the Passive**

Task two involved presenting the pupils with English sentences in which they were supposed to fill in the blank spaces. Each of the sentences had a blank space and a verb in the uninflected form in parenthesis at the end of the sentence. The objective of this task was to determine whether the pupils were able to correctly use the passive forms of the uninflected verbs in sentences, thereby serving as an indicator of their mastery of the passive transformation rule, including the objective movement and the *by*- insertion rules. Since the task required that pupils construct the verbs directly into the passive form without having the sentence in the active form and making them change it into passive form. The successful performance of this task would imply the successful processing of the passive formation rules and their successful acquisition of the English passive construction.

The scoring procedure for this task was that ten (10) blank spaces were given to the pupils and they were expected to correctly use the passive forms of the

uninflected verbs in filing the spaces. One (1) point was given for a correctly filled space. The maximum score was 10 points for 10 blank spaces correctly filled.

**iv) Task Four: Making English Sentences from Pictures**

Task Four involved presenting the pupils with pictures and asking them to construct English sentences that describe the activities or actions depicted in the pictures. They could construct the sentences either in the passive or active voice, although, unlike in the previous tasks, there were no specific promptings or cues to lead them to construct passive sentences. The objective of this task was to determine whether the pupils were able to generate passive constructions without prompting as they would with their active equivalents. By correctly constructing sentences in the passive and active voice, it would be proof that the pupils have acquired both the passive and active English sentence construction rules.

The scoring procedure for this task was that pupils were presented with 10 pictures and asked to construct English sentences that describe the activities or actions depicted in the pictures. The maximum score was 10 points for 10 correct sentences.

### 3.5.2. Objectives 2 and 3

For objectives 2 and 3, data was collected to analyze syntactic properties and acquisition profile, respectively. Eighteen (18) pupils were given 10 minutes prior to the end of a class to do the task. The task comprised of 25 pairs of nouns and verbs, 10 pairs were in transitive verbs with nouns that could be made the theme subjects. In order to elicit the passive sentences, pupils' attention was diverted

from the targeted construction. This was done by ordering the verbs randomly; accusatives and unergatives (see A*ppendix 9 and 13*).

To circumvent pupils' difficulties with the vocabulary, the selected words were chosen from those that were taught in Kenyan Primary schools for (aged 6-14). The expected constructions were 10 passives, 10 unaccusatives, and 5 unergatives. No terms referring to targeted constructions were mentioned in the task. To ensure occurrence of the passive constructions, the pupils were instructed to form sentences with all of the given nouns as subjects. Research findings are in chapter 5 and 6.

### 3.5.3. Objective 4

Objective 4 tested the effect of the cross linguistic influences of the *Dholuo* passive on acquisition of the English passive constructions.

The pupils who were the subjects of the present study were exposed to two sets of tasks namely production and receptive tasks, respectively. In order to determine the effect of cross-linguistic influence on the acquisition of English passive constructions, the performance of the pupils in both the production and receptive tasks was analysed with a view to determine how the nature of their interlanguage English, specifically with regard to passive constructions, was determined by the structure of the two languages (i.e *Dholuo* passive and the English passive). This was based on the assumption underlying interlanguage theory as elucidated by Nemser (1971:134) namely: at any given time the approximative system is distinct from the L1 and L2; the approximative systems form an evolving series; and that

in any given contract situation, the approximate systems of learners at the same time stage of proficiency roughly coincide.

Tasks were given to eighteen (18) pupils as follows: age 6-8 to write a paragraph about how a house is swept and reading a simple passage; age 9-11 to write two paragraphs on how *ugali* is made and listening to sentences read by research and pointing out the pictures and age 12-14 to write a three paragraph essay describing last Christmas holiday and construction sentences from the pictures given.

The tasks were testing code switching, code borrowing, over generalization and negative or positive transfers from *Dholuo* to the target language. Analysis of this objective is detailed in Chapter Seven.

The scoring procedure for this task was that the cross linguistic features such as code switching, borrowing, over generalization and negative or positive transfers from *Dholuo* to the target language were identified in the writings. For each correct response, one point was awarded. The maximum score was 10 points which equivalent to 100%.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

Data on the test scores were analysed quantitatively in terms of percentage scores and were presented in terms of percentages in pie-charts and bar graphs. This was complemented with qualitative descriptions and presentation of the data in prose form. To realise the first objective, data from the pupils' responses were analysed to determine the aspects of the English passive constructions that the pupils had acquired in different cohorts. This information was presented both qualitatively in

prose and quantitatively in form of tables, graphs and pie-charts. In order to determine the syntactic properties of the pupils' English passive constructions, their responses were analysed to establish the linguistic nature of their passive constructions. This information was presented qualitatively in prose form *(see Chapter Four)*. In order to determine any cross-linguistic influences in the pupils' acquisition of English passive constructions, the pupils' responses were analysed to determine any effects of *Dholuo* pseudo-passive on their responses. This information was presented qualitatively in prose form. Data on the relationship between age and gender and the acquisition of English passives was statistically presented using the spearman's correlation co-efficient at a significant level of 0.05.

### 3.7. Ethical Considerations and Data Management

To conform to standard research ethics, the researcher sought informed consent of all the subjects and the school teachers concerned. Data obtained was used solely for the purposes of this study. Authority to carry out this research was sought from Kenyatta University English Department who issued an introductory letter (*see Appendix 10*) to the school and to the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) (*see Appendix 11*). An identity card was also issued by NACOSTI (*see Appendix 12*). Further, while on the ground, the researcher sought assistance from the local Education office located in Bondo town first to brief them about the intended research and secondly, to get a map of the area showing the location of the rural schools and finally to identify the rural

schools to participate in the research. An informed consent was sought from the respective School Head Teachers who informed the various participants, parents, the class teachers and school time tabler appropriately. Informed consent from participants was sought and confidentiality assured. A questionnaire was designed and administered to the respondents to attain their bio data and to ascertain the participants age, gender and place of origin which had to be Bondo District. Verbal permission was requested while taking photos.

The research data has been safely stored with no unauthorised use, modification or disclosure can only be made to assist with data analysis and writing the thesis. After data analysis, the information shall be shredded and electronically wiped out.

### 3.8. Summary

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the study. The chapter covers the area of study, research design, target population and sample size, data collection techniques and ethical considerations. The study was carried out within Bondo District in Siaya County in the Republic of Kenya which is predominantly rural area occupied by the Luo tribe speaking *Dholuo* language.

The study conveniently sampled one primary school (Singapala*)* within the District through random sampling from which subjects (*Dholuo* speaking pupils) were identified for the study. This one primary school was a representation of other primary schools in the district. As explained in this chapter, all the primary schools in Bondo district are structured in the same way as follows: they follow the same national English syllabus stipulated by the Kenya Ministry of Education

of Science and Technology, the pupils are taught by the teachers with similar training background and they have *Dholuo* speaking pupils with limited influence of other languages, especially Kiswahili.

The chapter explains that the study adopted a time-lag strategy research design (Bennet-Kastor, 1998; Orwenjo, 2009; Salkind, 2010). The design combines both the longitudinal and a descriptive cross-sectional design. However, this particular study used the descriptive cross-sectional design which involves respondents in different groups according to their respective levels of development, assumed on the basis of age or any other defensible criteria. The design enabled the study to compare peers or cohorts as they successively reached a given age or points of development. It also allowed for child cohort comparison. Ninety eight (98) *Dholuo* speaking pupils were chosen purposively based on socio-economic status, age and gender. Data collection technique was through use of production and receptive tasks. Data was analyzed quantitatively in terms of percentage scores and were presented in terms of percentages in pie-charts and bar graphs. This was complemented with qualitative descriptions and presentation of the data in prose form.

The chapter concludes by stating that the research conformed to the standard research ethics. Permission was granted by all relevant administrative authorities and consent received from participants and confidentiality assured. The next chapter discusses data analysis and interpretation of role of gender and age in the acquisition of English passive which is the first objective of the study.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# THE ROLE OF AGE AND GENDER ON THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PASSIVE

## 4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter was a presentation and discussion of the methodological approach that has been used in this study. This chapter discusses the role of age and gender on the acquisition of English passive. As mentioned earlier in Chapters Two and Three, one of the central questions that SLA has tried to answer since its establishment as an independent field of study within Applied Linguistics is why learners of a non-native language (L2) evince such a high degree of inter-individual variation in their final attainment relative to the L2 components and skills they have acquired. In order to acquire the necessary results, both the receptive tasks and production tasks were administered to the pupils (*see Chapter Three*) and data acquired analysed as shown below.

### a) Receptive Tasks

This section shows the analysis of the pupil's performance on each of the three receptive tasks as presented below.

#### i) Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences

The researcher initially presented the pupils with pictures showing people carrying out certain actions. The pupils then listened as the researcher read sentences,

which were a mixture of active and passive voice, depicting the activities captured in the pictures. The pupils then performed the matching task.

Table 2 shows the scores the pupils got in this task. It indicates that there were pupils who scored 0%. From the table, 6-8 years old pupils had those who scored 0%. The table shows that 13.3% of the male pupils scored 0%, while 12.5% female pupils scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 9-11 years, 16.7% male pupils scored 0% and equally 16.7% of the female pupils also scored 0%. It is visible that for pupils aged between 12-14 years, none failed in this particular task. These results indicate clearly that age difference impacted on the matching of English sentences to pictures. It is also worth noting that evaluation also shows that 75% of female pupils aged 12-14 years scored maximum scores of 10/10 against 47.8% of the male pupils who scored 10/10 in this task. This could partly explain that females performed better than males.

It is also interesting to note that, the 12-14 years old (Table 2) scored very well and none failed because the pupils were older and exposed to the school environment where English is the medium of instruction and that tasks were commensurate with their language acquisition developmental milestones (Brown, 1973), whereas, the 6-8 years old scored 0%, it is noticeable that the *Dholuo* speaking pupils already have the universal grammar at first, and it built up over time due to language input ( Krashen, 1982).

**Table 2: Frequency Scores on Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences**

| Age cohort / Sex / Task Scores | 6-8 years | | | | 9-11 years | | | | 12-14 years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | N | % | n | % | n | % |
| 0 | 2 | 13.3 | 2 | 12.5 | 2 | 16.7 | 2 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 2 | 2 | 13.3 | 1 | 6.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 1 | 6.7 | 3 | 18.8 | 1 | 8.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 18.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 5 | 3 | 20.3 | 3 | 18.8 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 6 | 2 | 13.3 | 2 | 12.5 | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 16.7 | 1 | 4.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 7 | 4 | 26.7 | 2 | 12.5 | 2 | 16.7 | 2 | 16.7 | 5 | 21.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 8 | 1 | 6.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 25.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 8.7 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 14.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 25.0 | 4 | 33.3 | 11 | 47.8 | 15 | 75.0 |
| **Total** | **15** | **100.0** | **16** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **23** | **100.0** | **20** | **100.0** |

Furthermore, to determine the influence of age, the scores were entered in the SPSS program that generated the means, Standard Deviations, Pearson Product correlations and ANOVA. The results of the analysis were presented in Table 3. The mean scores of 3.5 and above indicate that age highly influenced the task. The Standard Deviation was used to determine the difference in responses received.

The figure of 2.0 and above indicated a high degree of differences in responses. Table 3 indicates that age has an influence on matching English sentences with correct pictures; mean scores in the task increased with age from a low mean of 4.32 for those aged between 6 to 8 years to a high mean of 8.86 for those aged 12 to 14 years.

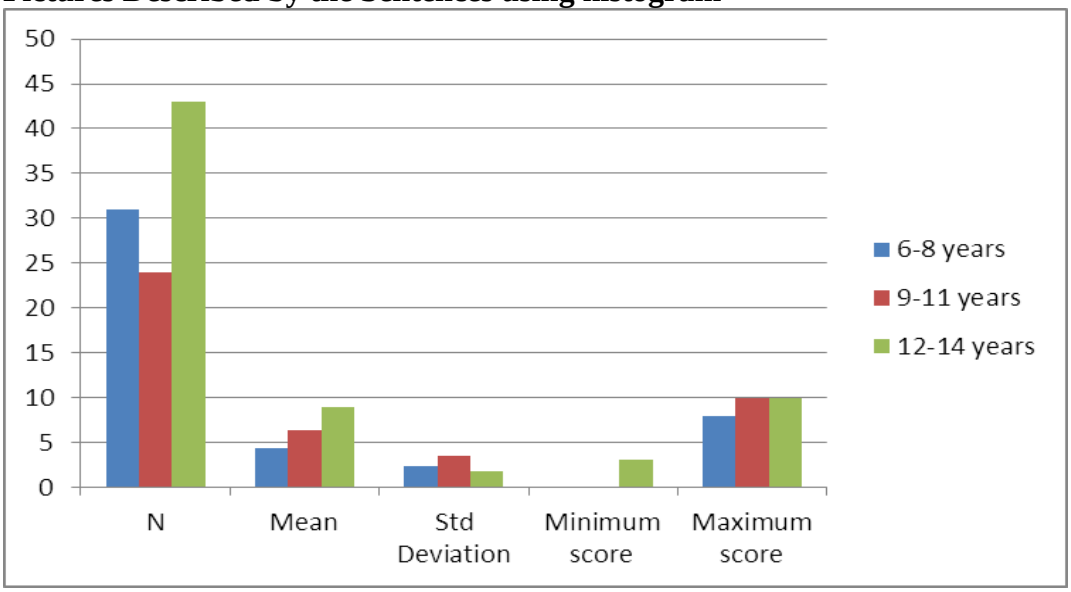
**Table 3: Influence of Age on Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences**

| Age | N | Mean | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 4.32 | 2.37 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 6.38 | 3.49 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 8.86 | 1.79 | 3.00 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **6.86** | **3.15** | **0.00** | **10.00** |

Further explanation of Table 3 is that age influenced the task as the least mean was 4.32. Table 3 also shows that pupils aged between 9-11 years had a significant difference in terms of responses given that their standard deviation was at 3.49. The table shows that the difference in responses of the pupils between the ages of 6-8 years was somewhat significant with a standard deviation of 2.37 and this is because the pupils had never possibly learnt the English passive structures before, and the difference in responses given by the pupils aged between 12-14 was closely related. This means that the classroom instructions based on the Kenyan curriculum had a significant effect on the task, given the difference in terms of

their response was 1.79 meaning it was statistically insignificant. Figure 1 also supports the results in Table 3.

**Figure 1: Influence of Age on Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences using histogram**




Further correlation test was carried out to determine the level of influence of age in matching English sentences (*see Table 4*). The table indicates that age had an influence on matching, at a significance level of 0.626% and a significant level of 0.01. Notably, these results show that the influence of age on ability to match sentences is at 62.6%. The correlation between the dependent (scores) and independent variable (age) is +0.626 which can be described as a strong correlation.

**Table 4: Correlation between Age and Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.626 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5 shows the ANOVA of the estimates between the groups of variance (the mean groups). The results of ANOVA indicated in Table 5 reveal a significant effect on the relationship between age and matching English sentences with correct pictures. This is because of the large size of the computed F (30.697), which indicates that there is difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Age**

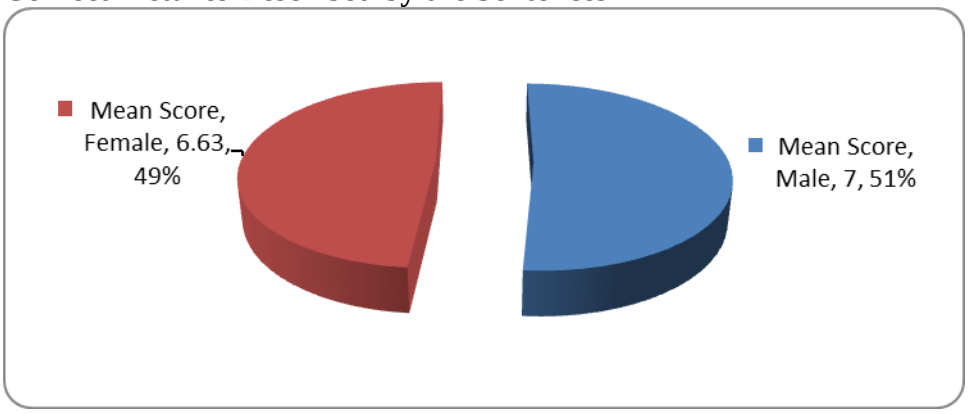
| Age | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 377.132 | 2 | 188.566 | 30.697 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 583.562 | 95 | 6.143 | | |
| Total | 960.694 | 97 | | | |

Grippingly, the results in Table 6 and Figure 2 both reveal that gender had very little influence on matching English sentences with correct pictures; mean score for the male was 7.00 while that of the female ones was 6.63. One would argue that in this case gender influenced the strategy of choices that the male and female pupils made (cf. Chapter 2). Along the same veins, female and male pupils are observed to employ various strategies in language acquisition (Oxford, 1990).

**Table 6: Influence of Gender on Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences**

| Gender | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 7.00 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| Female | 48 | 6.63 | 3.31 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **6.86** | **3.15** | **0.00** | **10.00** |

**Figure 2: Influence of Gender on Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences**




The correlation analysis in Table 7 shows a slight negative correlation (-0.060) which can be described as negligible. When it comes to matching English sentences there is not much Gender difference in the task performance.

**Table 7: Results of the Correlation between Gender and Matching English Sentences with the Correct Pictures Described by the Sentences**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | -0.060 |
| **Sig.** | 0.558 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 8 further indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and matching English sentences with correct pictures. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.345), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Gender**

| Age | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 3.444 | 1 | 3.444 | 0.345 | 0.558 |
| Within groups | 957.250 | 96 | 9.971 | | |
| Total | 960.694 | 97 | | | |

**ii) Listening and Deciding Whether Sentence is passive or Active**

The researcher read to pupils' sentences having a mixture of active and passive voice. Pupils were expected to discriminate between passive and active constructions. Table 9 indicates that there were actually pupils who scored 0%. From the table, 6-8 year old pupils had some pupils who scored 0%. The table shows that 86.7% of the male pupils scored 0%, while 75% female pupils scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 9-11 years old, 66.7% male pupils scored 0% and equally 66.7% of the female pupils also scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 12-14 years old, non-failed the task. These results indicate that age difference impacted on the task.

**Table 9: Frequency Scores on Influence of age and gender on discriminating between passive and active English**

| Age cohort / Sex / Task Scores | 6-8 years | | | | 9-11 years | | | | 12-14 years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| | n | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | n | % | n | % |
| 0 | 13 | 86.7 | 12 | 75.0 | 8 | 66.7 | 8 | 66.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 6.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 2 | 1 | 6.7 | 2 | 12.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 6.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 8.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 4 | 1 | 6.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 17.4 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 16.7 | 2 | 16.7 | 5 | 21.7 | 7 | 35.0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 21.7 | 6 | 30.0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 26.1 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 4.3 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| **Total** | **15** | **100.0** | **16** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **23** | **100.0** | **20** | **100.0** |

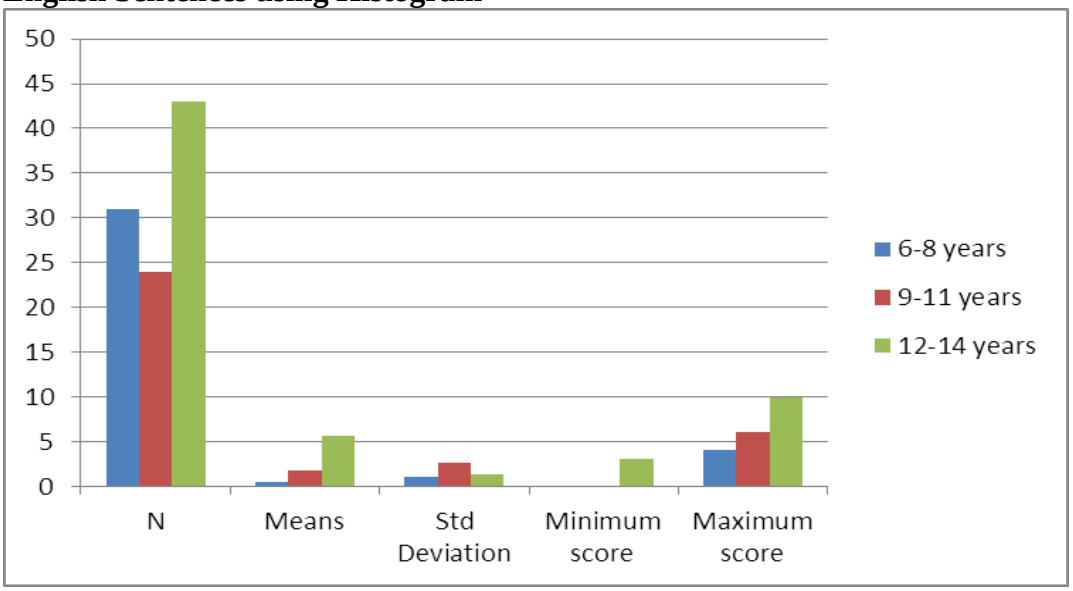
To further determine the influence of gender and age, the scores were entered in SPSS program that generated the means, standard deviations, Pearson Product correlations and ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 10. Results in Table 10 and Figure 3 shows that age has an influence on reading and matching English sentences including passive; mean scores in the task increased

with age from a low mean of 0.45 for those aged between 6 to 8 years old, 1.75 for those aged 9 to 11 years to 5.63 for those aged 12 to 14 years old.

**Table 10: Influence of Age on Discriminating between Passive and Active English Sentences Using Standard Deviation**

| Age | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 0.45 | 1.03 | 0.00 | 4.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 1.75 | 2.59 | 0.00 | 6.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 5.63 | 1.41 | 3.00 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **3.04** | **2.88** | **0.00** | **10.00** |

**Figure 3: Influence of Age on Discriminating between Passive and Active English Sentences using Histogram**




Results of correlation between the dependent and independent variable were very strong with a coefficient of +0.792 as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Correlation between Age and Discriminating between Passive and Active English Sentences**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.792 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 12 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and matching English sentences including passive forms. This is because of the large size of the computed F (94.150), which indicates that there is difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 12: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for age**

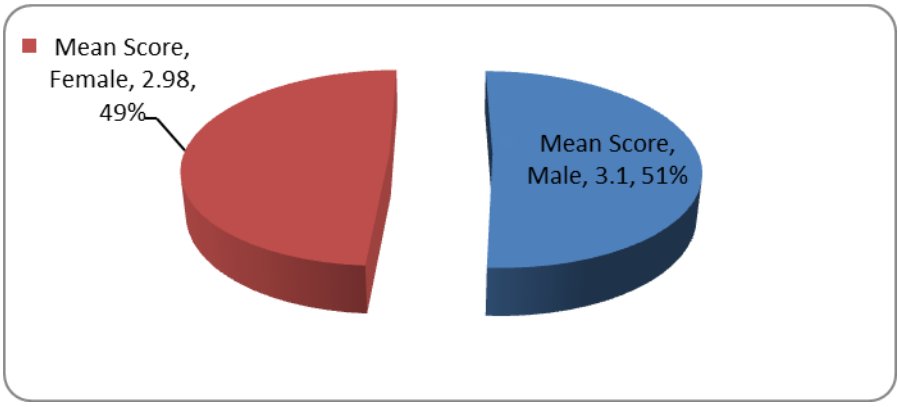
| **Age** | **Sum of squares** | **df** | **Mean squares** | **f** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 535.613 | 2 | 264.806 | 94.150 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 270.224 | 95 | 2.844 | | |
| Total | 805.837 | 97 | | | |

Table 13 reveals that gender has very little influence on matching English sentences with correct pictures although the mean score for male pupils (3.10) is slightly higher than that of female pupils (2.98), the difference is very small. Figure 4 justify these results.

**Table 13: Influence of Gender on Matching English Sentences Including Passive forms**

| Gender | n | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 3.10 | 2.88 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| Female | 48 | 2.98 | 2.91 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **3.04** | **2.88** | **0.00** | **10.00** |

**Figure 4: Influence of Gender on Matching English Sentences Including Passive ones**




The results of correlation analysis in Table 14 shows a slight negative correlation coefficient (-0.021) but this is not significant.

**Table 14: Results of the Correlation between Age and Matching English Sentences Including Passive ones**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | -0.021 |
| **Sig.** | 0.837 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA result in Table 15 indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and matching English sentences including passive ones. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.043), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 15: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Gender**

| Gender | Sum of squares | df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 0.358 | 1 | 0.358 | 0.043 | 0.837 |
| Within groups | 805.479 | 96 | 8.390 | | |
| Total | 805.837 | 97 | | | |

**iii) Identifying Passive and Active Sentences from Pictures**

The pupils were required to look at the pictures presented to them and read the sentences that accompany the pictures. The pupils were then required to determine which of the pictures presented, together with the corresponding descriptive sentences were in the passive forms.

Table 16 indicates the pupils' scores. It shows that there were pupils who scored 0%. From the table, 6-8 year old pupils had some pupils who scored 0%. The table shows that 100% of the male and female pupils scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 9-11 years, 100% male pupils scored 0% and 91.7% of the female pupils also scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 12-14 years, 4.3% male pupils failed and that no female student failed. These results indicate that age difference impacted the task.

**Table 16: Frequency Scores on Influence of Age and Gender on Identifying Passive and Active Sentences from pictures**

| Age Cohort / Sex | 6-8 years | | | | 9-11 years | | | | 12-14 years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| Task Scores | n | % | N | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 0 | 15 | 100.0 | 16 | 100.0 | 12 | 100.0 | 11 | 91.7 | 1 | 4.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 4.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 13.0 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 26.1 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 21.7 | 6 | 30.0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.0 | 3 | 13.0 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 8.7 | 5 | 25.0 |
| **Total** | **15** | **100.0** | **16** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **23** | **100.0** | **20** | **100.0** |

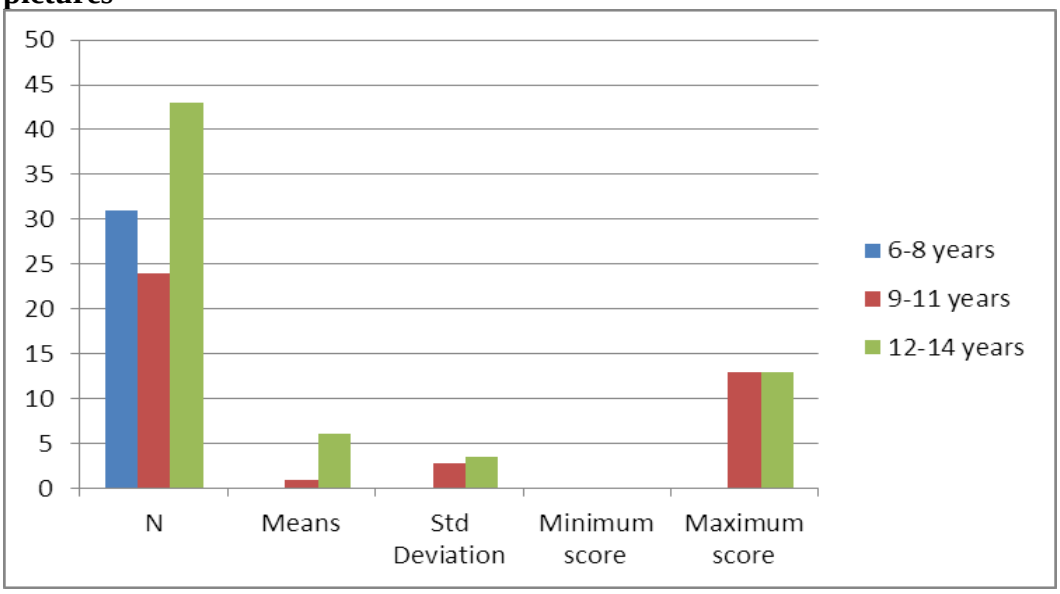
To determine the influence of gender and age, the scores were entered in SPSS program that generated the means, standard deviations, Pearson Product correlations and ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented below:

From Table 17 and Figure 5, it is observed that age has an influence on identifying passive and active sentences from pictures presented; mean scores in the task increased with age from a zero mean for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 0.88 for those aged 9 to 11 years to 6.12 for those aged 12 to 14 years.

**Table 17: Influence of Age on Identifying Passive and Active Sentences from Pictures**

| **Age** | **N** | **Means** | **Std Deviation** | **Minimum score** | **Maximum score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 0.88 | 2.80 | 0.00 | 13.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 6.12 | 3.44 | 0.00 | 13.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **2.90** | **3.91** | **0.00** | **13.00** |

**Figure 5: Influence of Age on Identifying Passive and Active Sentences from pictures**




As shown in Table 18, the correlation between the dependent and independent variable was strong with a coefficient of +0.6696.

**Table 18: Results of the Correlation between Age and Identifying Passive and Active Sentences from Pictures**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.696 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 19 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and identifying passive and active sentences. This is because of the large size of the computed F (56.236), which indicates that there is a difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 19: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for age**

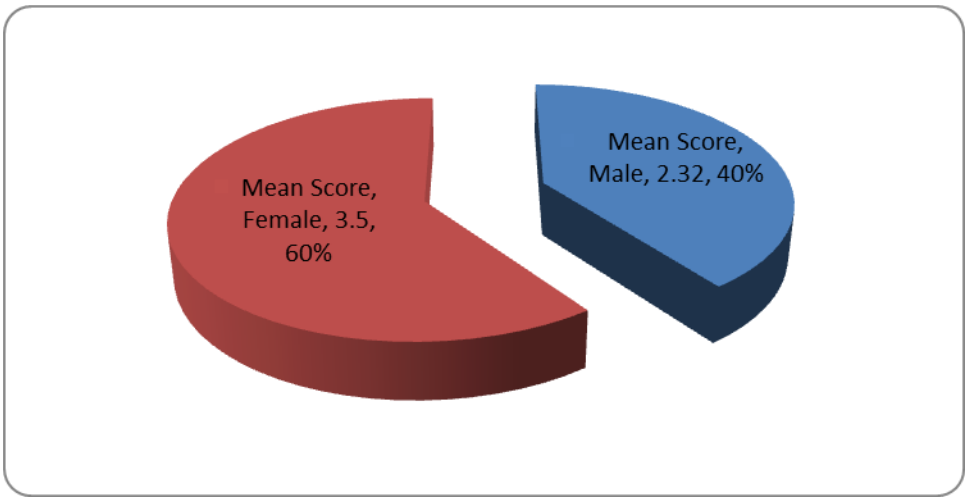
| Age groups | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 803.936 | 2 | 410.968 | 56.236 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 679.044 | 95 | 7.148 | | |
| Total | 1482.980 | 97 | | | |

From Table 20 it is observed that gender has a small influence in identifying passive and active English sentences. Female pupils score slightly higher than male pupils with a mean of 3.50 against 2.32. This is further shown in Figure 6 where mean score for female was slightly higher than that of male.

**Table 20: Influence of Gender on Identifying Passive and Active Sentences**

| Gender | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 2.32 | 3.33 | 0.00 | 13.00 |
| Female | 48 | 3.50 | 4.39 | 0.00 | 13.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **2.90** | **3.91** | **0.00** | **13.00** |

**Figure 6: Influence of Gender on Identifying Passive and Active Sentences**




The correlation analysis in Table 21 shows a slight positive correlation coefficient (0.152).

**Table 21: Results of the Correlation between Gender and Identifying Passive and Active Sentences**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.152 |
| **Sig.** | 0.136 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA results in Table 22 indicate that there is no significant relationship between gender and the identification of passive and active English sentences from the pictures presented. This is because of the small size of the computed F (2.259), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 22: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable**

| **Gender** | **Sum of squares** | **Df** | **Mean squares** | **f** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 34.100 | 1 | 34.100 | 2.259 | 0.136 |
| Within groups | 1448.880 | 96 | 15.093 | | |
| Total | 1482.980 | 97 | | | |

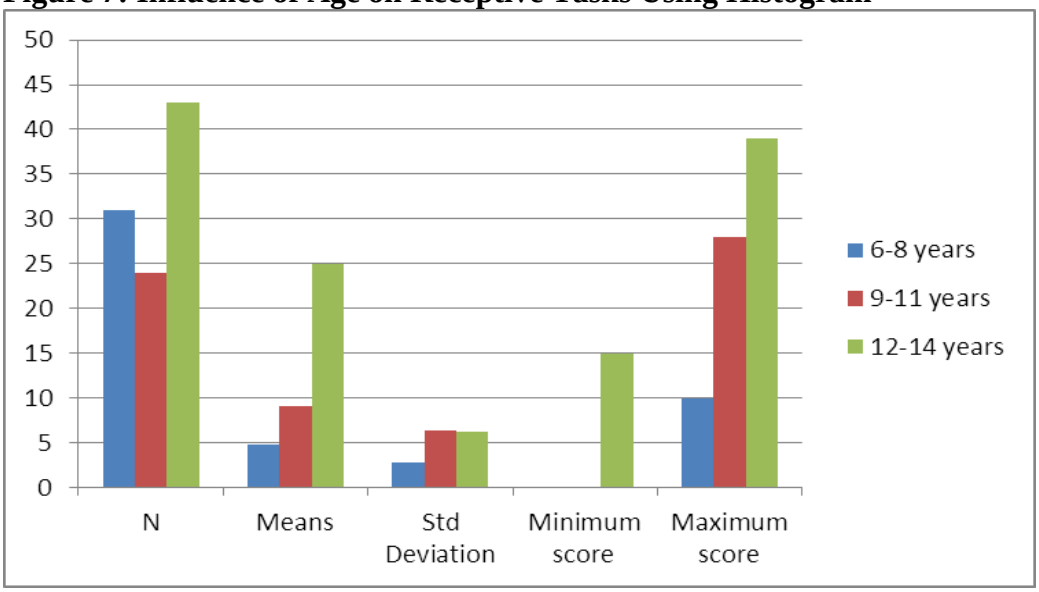
**b) Influence of Age on Receptive Tasks**

The influence of age and gender was also considered on overall receptive tasks. The findings are presented below. From Table 23 and Figure 7, it is observed that age has an influence on performance of the receptive tasks; mean scores in the task increased with age from a low mean of 4.77 for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 9.08 for those aged 9 to 11 years to 24.98 for those aged 12 to 14 years. The results are also shown in Figure 7.

**Table 23: Influence of Age on Receptive Tasks Using Standard Deviation**

| Age | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 4.77 | 2.81 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 9.08 | 6.35 | 0.00 | 28.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 24.98 | 6.20 | 15.00 | 39.00 |
| Total | 98 | 14.69 | 10.71 | 0.00 | 39.00 |

**Figure 7: Influence of Age on Receptive Tasks Using Histogram**




As shown in Table 24, results of the correlation between the dependent and independent variable was very strong with a coefficient of +0.834.

**Table 24: Results of the Correlation between Age and Performance on Receptive Tasks:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Pearson Product Moment Correlation | 0.834 (**) |
| Sig. | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 25 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and performance in receptive tasks. This is because of the large size of the computed F (142.802), which indicates that there is a difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 25: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for age**

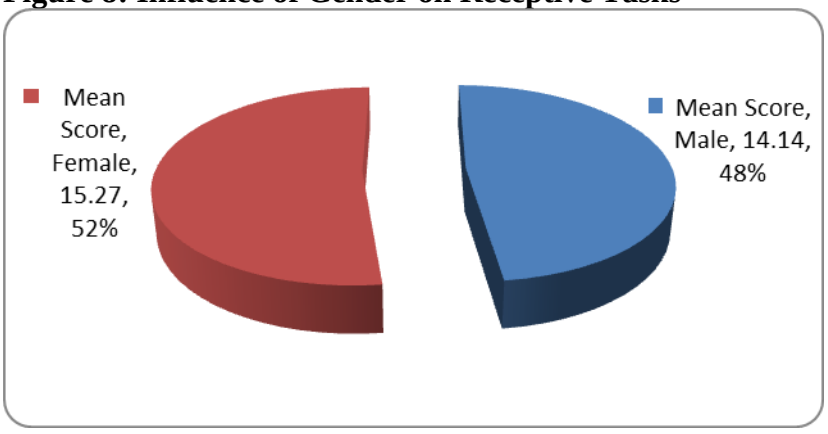
| Age | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 8352.587 | 2 | 4176.293 | 142.802 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 2778.229 | 95 | 29.245 | | |
| Total | 11130.816 | 97 | | | |

From Table 26, it is observed that gender has a very minimal influence on performance on receptive tasks. Female pupils score slightly higher than male pupils with a mean of 15.27 against 14.14. This is further demonstrated in Figure 8 where female had a higher mean score than males.

**Table 26: Influence of Gender on Receptive Tasks**

| Gender | n | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 14.14 | 9.67 | 0.00 | 34.00 |
| Female | 48 | 15.27 | 11.78 | 0.00 | 39.00 |
| Total | 98 | 14.69 | 10.71 | 0.00 | 39.00 |

**Figure 8: Influence of Gender on Receptive Tasks**




However, the correlation analysis in Table 27 shows a slight positive correlation coefficient (0.053).

**Table 27: Results of the Correlation between Gender and Performance of Receptive Tasks:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Pearson Product Moment Correlation | 0.053 |
| Sig. | 0.604 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA results in Table 28 indicate that there is no significant relationship between gender and performance of the pupils on receptive tasks. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.27), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 28: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable**

| Gender | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 31.317 | 1 | 31.317 | 0.27 | 0.604 |
| Within groups | 11099.499 | 96 | 115.620 | | |
| Total | 11130.816 | 97 | | | |

**b) Production Tasks**

The main distinction between the production tasks and the previously discussed receptive tasks lies in the fact that whereas the receptive tasks were meant to verify the acquisition of the English passive by determining what aspects of the passive they are able to successfully understand and process, the production tasks determined their acquisition of the English passive based on their input or performance (not competence) either in written or spoken form. The analysis of the pupil's performance on each of these tasks is presented below:

**i) Turning Active Sentences into Passive Voice**

This task was meant to test the influence of age and gender on turning sentences into passive voice. Table 29 indicates the scores the pupils got on the above mentioned tasks. The table indicates that there were pupils who scored 0%. From the table, 6-8 year old pupils had some pupils who scored 0%. The table shows that 100% of the male and female pupils scored 0% within this age cohort. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 9-11 years, 66.7% male pupils and equally female pupils scored 0%. It is also shown that for pupils aged between 12-14 years old group, 4.3% male pupils failed and that no female student failed.

These results indicate that age difference impacted on the task. And for the 12-14 years old, the female pupils did better.

It is possible that the girls' good performance is due to their socialization and as already discussed in Chapter 2, language acquisition in humans is strongly influenced by the environment. As Warastuti (2011) observes, there are many factors that influence language development in each child, no wonder it's argued that girls speak faster than boys.

**Table 29: Frequency Scores on Influence of Age and Gender on Turning Sentences into Passive Voice**

| Age cohorts / Sex / Task | 6-8 years | | | | 9-11 years | | | | 12-14 years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| Scores | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | N | % | n | % |
| 0 | 15 | 100.0 | 16 | 100.0 | 8 | 66.7 | 8 | 66.7 | 1 | 4.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 4.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 8.3 | 6 | 26.1 | 8 | 40.0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 8.3 | 10 | 43.5 | 8 | 40.0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 4.3 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 8.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | **15** | **100.0** | **16** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **23** | **100.0** | **20** | **100.0** |

To determine the influence of gender and age, the scores were entered in the SPSS programme that generated the means, standard deviations, Pearson Product correlations and ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 30.

The results in Table 30 show that age has an influence on turning English sentences into passive voice. For example, the mean scores in the task increased with age, from a zero mean for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 0.83 for those aged 9 to 11 years to 4.37 for those aged 12 to 14 years. These results are further demonstrated by Figure 9.

**Table 30: Influence of Age on Turning Sentences into Passive Voice Using Standard Deviation**

| **Age** | **N** | **Means** | **Std Deviation** | **Minimum score** | **Maximum score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 0.83 | 0.41 | 0.00 | 2.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 4.37 | 3.14 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **1.94** | **2.99** | **0.00** | **8.00** |

The correlation between the dependent and independent variable was strong with a coefficient of +0.655 as shown in Table 31.

**Table 31: Results of the Correlation between Age and Turning Sentences into Passive Voice**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.655 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 32 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and turning English sentences into passive voice. This is because of the large size of the computed F (51.578), which indicates that there is a difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 32: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Age**

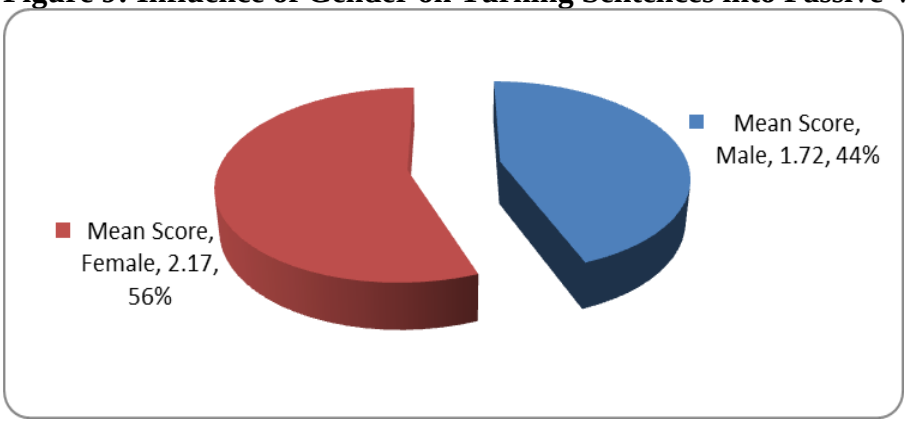
| **Age** | **Sum of squares** | **Df** | **Mean squares** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 453.753 | 2 | 226.876 | 51.578 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 417.880 | 95 | 4.399 | | |
| Total | 871.633 | 97 | | | |

From Table 33 it is observed that gender has very little influence on turning English sentences into passive voice. Although the mean score for female pupils (2.17) is slightly higher than that of male pupils (1.72), the difference is very small. The difference of mean of female and male is 56% and 44%, respectively, which is still minimal (*see Figure 9*).

**Table 33: Influence of Gender on Turning Sentences into Passive Voice**

| Age | n | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 1.72 | 2.81 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| Female | 48 | 2.17 | 3.19 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **1.945 (1.95)** | **2.99** | **0.00** | **8.00** |

**Figure 9: Influence of Gender on Turning Sentences into Passive Voice**




The correlation analysis in Table 34 shows a slight positive correlation coefficient (0.075) but this is not significant.

**Table 34: Results of the Correlation between Gender and Turning Sentences into Passive Voice**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.075 |
| **Sig.** | 0.464 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA result in Table 35 indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and turning English sentences into passive voice. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.541), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 35: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Gender**

| Age | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 4.886 | 1 | 4.886 | 0.541 | 0.464 |
| Within groups | 866.747 | 96 | 9.029 | | |
| Total | 871.633 | 97 | | | |

**ii) Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**

The task was administered and frequencies of occurrence of the respondents' performance were recorded and analysed as shown below.

For instance, Table 36 indicates the scores the pupils got. The table indicates that there were pupils who scored 0%. From the table, 6-8 year old pupils had those who pupils who scored 0%. The table shows that 100% of the male and female pupils scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 9-11 years, 58.3% male pupils and 50% female pupils scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 12-14 years, 30.4% of the male pupils and 30% female pupils scored 0% the task. These results indicate that age difference impacted on the task.

**Table 36: Frequency of Scores on Influence of Age on Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**

| Age cohorts / Sex / Task Scores | 6-8 years | | | | 9-11 years | | | | 12-14 years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 0 | 15 | 100.0 | 16 | 100.0 | 7 | 58.3 | 6 | 50.0 | 7 | 30.4 | 6 | 30.0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 16.7 | 1 | 8.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 4.3 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 16.7 | 1 | 4.3 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 13.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 8.7 | 4 | 20.0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 25.0 | 4 | 17.4 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 21.7 | 4 | 20.0 |
| **Total** | **15** | **100.0** | **16** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **23** | **100.0** | **20** | **100.0** |

To determine the influence of gender and age, the scores were entered in the SPSS program that generated the means, standard deviations, Pearson Product correlations and ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented below

Table 37 indicates that age has an influence on making English sentences using given clues; mean scores in the task increased with age from 0.00 mean for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 2.25 for those aged 9 to 11 years to a high mean of 5.58 for those aged 12 to 14 years.

**Table 37: Influence of Age on Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**

| Age | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 2.25 | 3.38 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 5.58 | 1.59 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **3.00** | **3.13** | **0.00** | **10.00** |

The correlation between the dependent and independent variable is very strong with a coefficient of +0.778 as shown in Table 38.

**Table 38: Results of the Correlation between Age and Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.778 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 39 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and making English sentences using given clues. This is because of the large size of the computed F (74.544), which indicates that there is a difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 39: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Age**

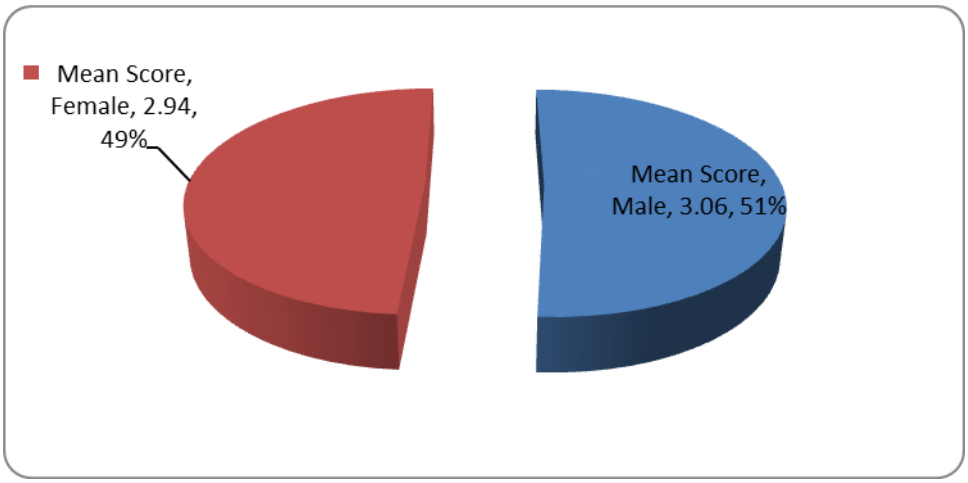
| Age | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 579.035 | 2 | 289.517 | 74.544 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 368.965 | 95 | 3.884 | | |
| Total | 948.000 | 97 | | | |

The results in Table 40 reveal that gender has very little or no influence on constructing English Passive sentences using given clues; the mean score for the boys is 3.06 while that of girls is 2.94. These results are shown in Figure 12.

**Table 40: Influence of Gender on Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**

| Gender | n | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 3.06 | 3.20 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| Female | 48 | 2.94 | 3.08 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **3.00** | **3.13** | **0.00** | **10.00** |

**Figure 10: Influence of Gender on Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**




The correlation analysis in Table 41 shows a slight negative correlation (-0.020) which can be described as negligible.

**Table 41: Results of the Correlation between Gender and Making English Sentences Using Given Cues**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | -0.020 |
| **Sig.** | 0.847 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 42 indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and forming English sentences using given clues. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.037), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 42: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable Using Standard Deviation**

| Gender | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 0.368 | 1 | 0.368 | 0.037 | 0.847 |
| Within groups | 947.632 | 96 | 9.871 | | |
| Total | 948.000 | 97 | | | |

**iii) Filling in the Blank Spaces with the Correct Forms of the Passive**

This task was performed by all the ninety eight (98) pupils, the frequencies of performance of the pupils on this task was analysed as shown below.

Table 43 indicates the scores the pupils got. The table indicates that there were pupils who scored 0%. The table shows that 100% of the male and female pupils aged between 6-8 years scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 9-11 years, 66.7% male and female pupils equally scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 12-14 years, 4.3% male pupils failed the task. These results indicate that age difference impacted the task.

**Table 43: Frequency Scores on Influence of Age and Gender on Turning Sentences into Passive Voice**

| Age cohorts / Sex / Task Scores | 6-8 years | | | | 9-11 years | | | | 12-14 years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 0 | 15 | 100.0 | 16 | 100.0 | 8 | 66.7 | 8 | 66.7 | 1 | 4.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 4.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 8.7 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 8.3 | 6 | 26.1 | 8 | 40.0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 8.3 | 10 | 43.5 | 8 | 40.0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 8.3 | 1 | 4.3 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 8.7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| **Total** | **15** | **100.0** | **16** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **23** | **100.0** | **20** | **100.0** |

To determine the influence of gender and age, the scores were entered in the SPSS program that generated the means, standard deviations, Pearson Product correlations and ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented below:

The results in Table 44 show that age has an influence on the use of correct forms of passive using verbs  Mean scores in the task increased with age from a low mean of 0.00 for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 0.29 for those aged 9 to 11 years to 5.56 for those aged 12 to 14 years.

**Table 44: Influence of Age on Use of Correct Forms of Passive**

| **Age** | **N** | **Means** | **Std Deviation** | **Minimum score** | **Maximum score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 0.29 | 1.43 | 0.00 | 7.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 5.56 | 1.84 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **2.51** | **3.05** | **0.00** | **8.00** |

The correlation between the dependent and independent variable was very strong with a coefficient of +0.816 as shown in Table 45.

**Table 45: Results of the Correlation between Age and Use of Correct Forms of Passive, Using Verbs**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.816 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 46 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and the use of correct forms of passive using verbs. This is because of the large size of the computed F (178.643), which indicates that there is a difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 46: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for age**

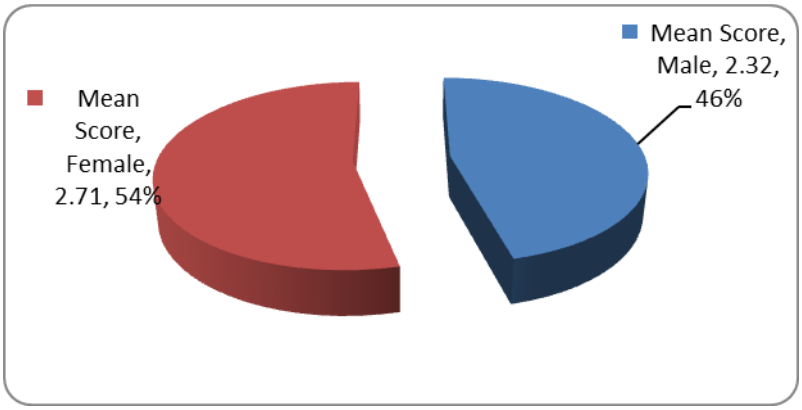
| **Age** | **Sum of squares** | **Df** | **Mean squares** | **f** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 712.927 | 2 | 356.463 | 178.643 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 189.563 | 95 | 1.995 | | |
| Total | 902.490 | 97 | | | |

Results in Table 47 reveal that gender has very little or no influence on the use of correct forms of passive using verbs; although the mean score for female pupils (2.71) is slightly higher than that of male pupils (2.32) the difference is very small. This is further demonstrated in Figure 11.

**Table 47: Influence of Gender on Use of Correct Forms of Passive, Using Verbs**

| Gender | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 2.32 | 2.87 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| Female | 48 | 2.71 | 3.25 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **2.51** | **3.05** | **0.00** | **8.00** |

**Figure 11: Influence of Gender on Use of Correct Forms of Passive, Using Verbs**




The ANOVA results in Table 48 indicate that there is no significant relationship between gender and the use of correct forms of passive using verbs. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.394), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 48: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for gender**

| Gender | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 3.693 | 1 | 3.693 | 0.394 | 0.531 |
| Within groups | 898.797 | 96 | 9.362 | | |
| Total | 902.490 | 97 | | | |

**iv) Constructing English Sentences from Pictures**

The analysis of the frequencies of performance of the pupils on this task is as shown below. Table 49 indicates the scores the pupils got. The table indicates that there were pupils who scored 0%. The table shows that 100% of the male and female pupils aged between 6-8 years scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 9-11 years, 58.3% male pupils and 50% female pupils scored 0%. The table also shows that for pupils aged between 12-14 years, 30.4% male pupils and 30% female pupils failed the task. These results indicate that age difference impacted on the task.

**Table 49: Frequency scores on Influence of Age on Constructing English Sentences Using Given Cues**

| Age cohorts / Sex / Task Scores | 6-8 years | | | | 9-11 years | | | | 12-14 years | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | | Male | | Female | |
| | n | % | n | % | N | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| 0 | 15 | 100.0 | 16 | 100.0 | 7 | 58.3 | 6 | 50.0 | 7 | 30.4 | 6 | 30.0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 16.7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 16.7 | 1 | 8.3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 4.3 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 4 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 8.3 | 2 | 16.7 | 1 | 4.3 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 13.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 8.7 | 4 | 20.0 |
| 7 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 25.0 | 4 | 17.4 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 8 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 21.7 | 4 | 20.0 |
| **Total** | **15** | **100.0** | **16** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **12** | **100.0** | **23** | **100.0** | **20** | **100.0** |

To further determine the influence of gender and age the scores were entered in the SPSS program that generated the means, standard deviations, Pearson Product correlations and ANOVA. The results of the analysis are presented below.

The results in Table 50 show that age has an influence on making sentences from pictures; mean scores in the task increased with age from a low mean of 0.00 for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 1.71 for those aged 9 to 11 years to 4.30 for those aged 12 to 14 years.

**Table 50: Influence of Age on Making English Sentences from Pictures**

| Age | n | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 1.71 | 2.46 | 0.00 | 7.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 4.30 | 3.24 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **2.31** | **3.09** | **0.00** | **8.00** |

The correlation between the dependent and independent variable was strong with a coefficient of +0.607 as shown in Table 51.

**Table 51: Results of the Correlation between Age and Making English Sentences from Pictures**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.607 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 52 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and constructing sentences from pictures. This is because of the large size of the computed F (28.236), which indicates that there is difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 52: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable**

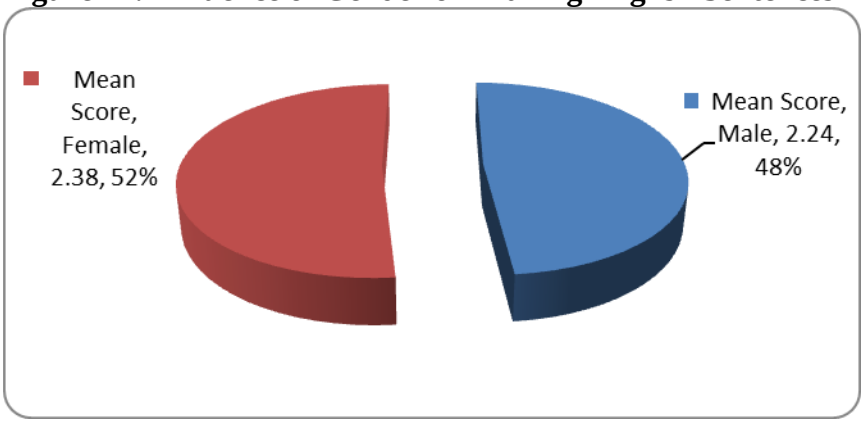
| Age | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 344.788 | 2 | 172.394 | 28.236 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 580.028 | 95 | 6.106 | | |
| Total | 924.816 | 97 | | | |

The results in Table 53 reveal that gender has no influence on making sentences from pictures, although the mean score for female pupils is 2.38 is slightly higher than that of male pupils are 2.24. The difference is very small. This information is further displayed in Figure 12.

**Table 53: Influence of Gender on Making English Sentences from Pictures**

| Gender | n | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 2.24 | 3.07 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| Female | 48 | 2.38 | 3.13 | 0.00 | 8.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **2.31** | **3.09** | **0.00** | **8.00** |

**Figure 12: Influence of Gender on Making English Sentences from Pictures**




The correlation analysis in Table 54 shows a slight positive correlation coefficient (0.022) but this is not significant.

**Table 54: Results of the Correlation between Gender and Making English Sentences from Pictures**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.022 |
| **Sig.** | 0.830 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA results in Table 55 indicate that there is no significant relationship between gender and making sentences from pictures. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.046), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 55: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for gender**

| Gender | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 0.446 | 1 | 0.446 | 0.046 | 0.830 |
| Within groups | 924.370 | 96 | 9.629 | | |
| Total | 924.816 | 97 | | | |

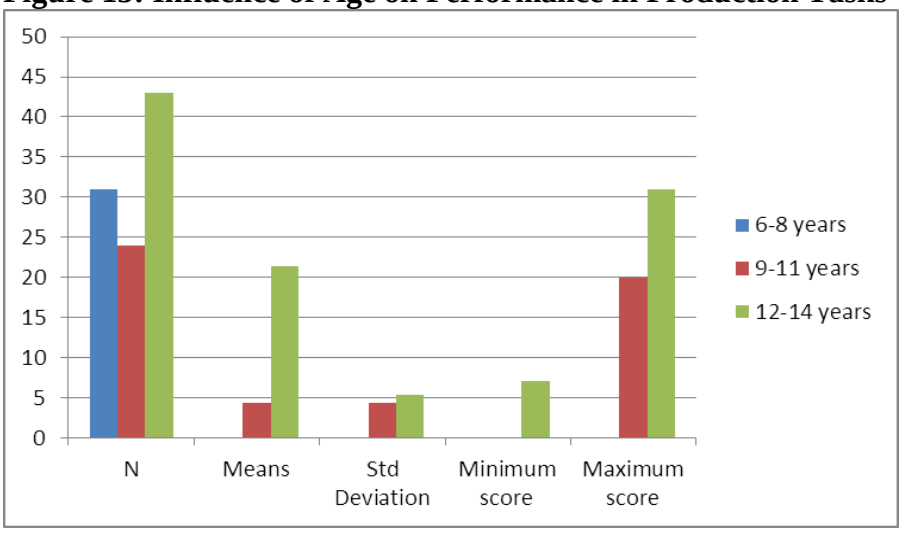
The study also considered the influence of age on the overall performance of the pupils in the production tasks. The results of this analysis are presented below

Table 56 indicates that age has an influence in the pupils performance on production tasks; mean scores in the tasks increased with age from 0.00 mean for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 4.29 for those aged 9 to 11 years to a high mean of 21.37 for those aged 12 to 14 years. Figure 13 also displays the same conclusion as Table 56.

**Table 56: Influence of Age on Performance in Production Tasks**

| Age | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 4.29 | 4.41 | 0.00 | 20.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 21.37 | 5.40 | 7.00 | 31.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **10.43** | **10.70** | **0.00** | **31.00** |

**Figure 13: Influence of Age on Performance in Production Tasks**




The correlation between the dependent and independent variable is very strong with a coefficient of +0.885 as shown in Table 57.

**Table 57: Results of the Correlation between Age and Performance in Production Tasks**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.885(**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 58 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and performance in production tasks. This is because of the large size of the computed F (267.595), which indicates that there is a difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 58: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Age**

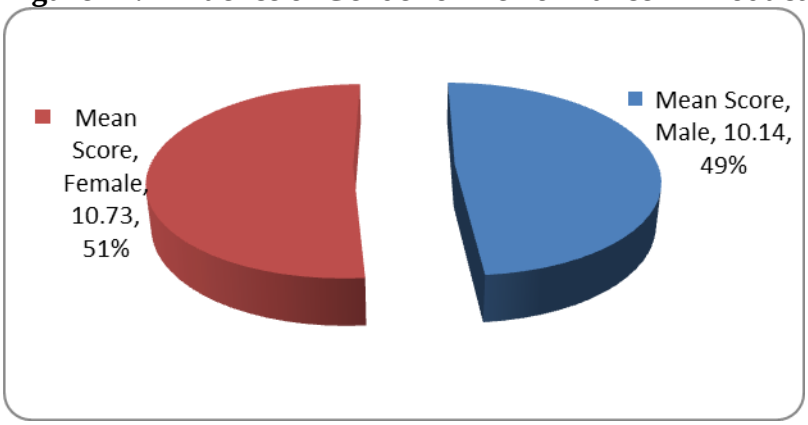
| Age | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 9424.995 | 2 | 4712.498 | 267.595 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 1673.005 | 95 | 17.611 | | |
| Total | 11098.000 | 97 | | | |

The results in Table 59 reveal that gender has no influence on performance on production tasks. Although the mean score for female pupils (10.73) is slightly higher than that of male pupils (10.14), the difference is very small. Figure 14 also has similar results.

**Table 59: Influence of Gender on Performance in Production Tasks**

| Gender | n | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 10.14 | 10.54 | 0.00 | 31.00 |
| Female | 48 | 10.73 | 10.96 | 0.00 | 31.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **10.43** | **10.70** | **0.00** | **31.00** |

**Figure 14: Influence of Gender on Performance in Production Tasks**




The correlation analysis in Table 60 shows a slight positive correlation coefficient (0.028) but this is not significant.

**Table 60: Results of the Correlation between Age and Performance in Production Tasks**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.028 |
| **Sig.** | 0.787 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA results in Table 61 indicate that there is no significant relationship between gender and performance on production tasks. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.074), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance, the observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 61: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variables for Gender**

| Gender | Sum of squares | Df | Mean squares | f | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 8.501 | 1 | 8.501 | 0.074 | 0.787 |
| Within groups | 11089.499 | 96 | 115.516 | | |
| Total | 11098.000 | 97 | | | |

## 4.2. Comparison of Performance in Receptive and Production Tasks

Further, a comparison was made on performance of the pupils in receptive and production tasks. The aim was to triangulate the data on the receptive and production tasks with a view to determining the pupils' performance on each set of tasks and thereby ascertain the overall pattern of the acquisition of the English passive by the pupils. This comparison was done on the basis of both age and gender. The results are presented below. From Table 62, it is observed that the pupils generally perform well in receptive tasks (mean 14.69) as compared to production tasks (mean 10.43).

**Table 62: Comparison of Performance in Receptive and Production Tasks on the Basis of Age**

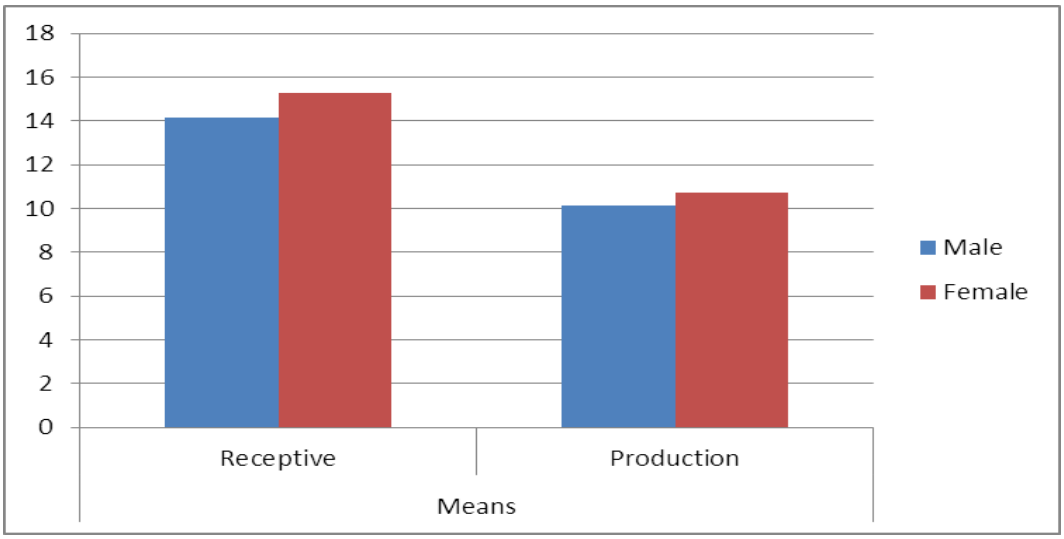
| **Age** | **Mean** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Receptive** | **Production** |
| 6-8 years | 4.77 | 0.00 |
| 9-11 years | 9.08 | 4.29 |
| 12-14 years | 24.98 | 21.37 |
| **Total** | **14.69** | **10.43** |

From Table 63, it is observed that the pupils generally perform well in receptive tasks (mean 14.69) as compared to production tasks (mean 10.43) and female pupils generally performed better than male pupils. Similar results are further shown in Figure 15.

**Table 63: Comparison of Performance in Receptive and Production Tasks on the Basis of Gender**

| **Gender** | **Means** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Receptive** | **Production** |
| Male | 14.14 | 10.14 |
| Female | 15.27 | 10.73 |
| **Total** | **14.69** | **10.43** |

**Figure 15: Comparison of Performance in Receptive and Production Tasks on the Basis of Gender**




### 4.3. Overall Impact of Gender and Age in the Acquisition of English Passive

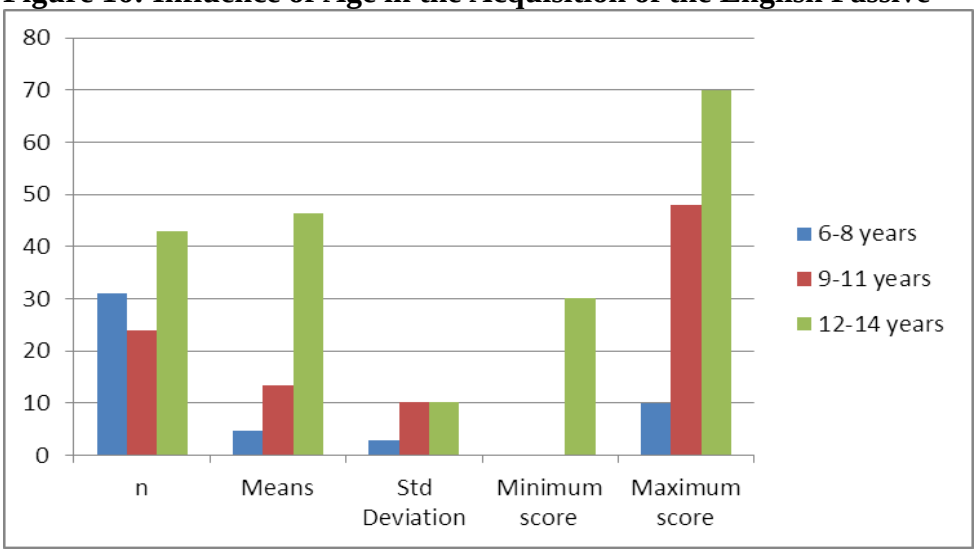
Finally the overall mean scores on all the seven tasks were computed on the basis of gender and age. The aim was to pursue the research question on the impact of age and gender on the acquisition of the English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The results are presented below.

Table 64 indicates that age has an influence in the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The overall mean scores in all the tasks increased with age from 4.77 mean for those aged between 6 to 8 years old, 13.38 for those aged 9 to 11 years to a high mean of 46.35 for those aged 12 to 14 years old. The result is diagrammatically shown in Figure 16.

**Table 64: Influence of Age in the Acquisition of the English**

| Age | N | Means | Std Deviation | Minimum score | Maximum score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6-8 years | 31 | 4.77 | 2.81 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| 9-11 years | 24 | 13.38 | 10.16 | 0.00 | 48.00 |
| 12-14 years | 43 | 46.35 | 10.10 | 30.00 | 70.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **25.12** | **20.91** | **0.00** | **70.00** |

**Figure 16: Influence of Age in the Acquisition of the English Passive**




The correlation between the dependent and independent variable is very strong with a coefficient of +0.880 (Table 4.65) as shown in Table 65.

**Table 65: Results of the Correlation between Age in the Acquisition of the English Passive**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.880 (**) |
| **Sig.** | 0.000 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 66 proves that there is a significant relationship between age and the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. This is because of the large size of the computed F (245.287), which indicates that there is a difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus significant.

**Table 66: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Age**

| **Age** | **Sum of squares** | **Df** | **Mean squares** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 35521.719 | 2 | 17760.859 | 245.287 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 6878.812 | 95 | 72.409 | | |
| Total | 42400.531 | 97 | | | |

The observed influence of age on the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils can be attributable to a phenomenon known as constructional grounding (Johnson, 1999). This is a phenomenon hypothesized to

explain the relations between certain pairs of conventional linguistic signs, or symbolic units, in the acquisition process.

One example of constructional grounding discussed in Johnson (1999) involves the English deictic '*there*' and existential there-constructions (cf. Lakoff, 1987). The deictic '*there*', is often accompanied by a pointing gesture, and serves to focus attention on the location of an entity or situation present in the context of an utterance. Deictics are easy to learn because they serve much the same function as the act of pointing, a gesture which pupils understand as early as 9 to 12 months (Bruner, 1983; Baldwin, 1991). The existential *there*, as has a more abstract and less easily demonstrated meaning; it introduces an entity or situation into the discourse, but it says nothing about the presence or location of that entity. While the deictic *there* has clear referential import, existential there is essentially textual device for managing discourse referents.

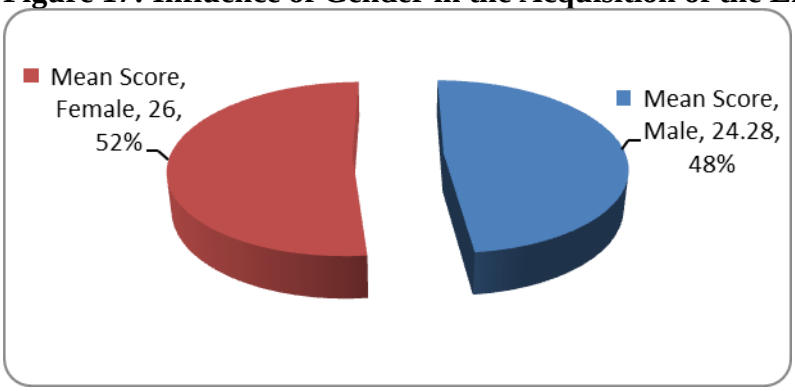
It is argued that constructional grounding was at play in the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. With this interpretation, age was a factor because the younger pupils were still constructing initial hypotheses about the English passive a more difficult target construction having acquired the active construction. In this case, it is further argued that the active constructions were more frequent than the target passive constructions. Consequently, they provided bridging contexts for the acquisition of the more marked and complex passive constructions.

From Table 67, it can be observed that gender has no influence in the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The mean score for the boys is 24.28 while that of girls is 26.00. Figure 17 also justifies these results.

**Table 67: Influence of Gender in the Acquisition of the English Passive**

| **Age** | **n** | **Mean** | **Std Deviation** | **Minimum score** | **Maximum score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 50 | 24.28 | 19.66 | 0.00 | 65.00 |
| Female | 48 | 26.00 | 22.30 | 0.00 | 70.00 |
| **Total** | **98** | **25.12** | **20.91** | **0.00** | **70.00** |

**Figure 17: Influence of Gender in the Acquisition of the English Passive**




The correlation analysis in Table 68 shows a slight positive correlation (0.041).

**Table 68: Results of the Correlation between Gender in the Acquisition of the English Passive.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Pearson Product Moment Correlation** | 0.041 |
| **Sig.** | 0.686 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The ANOVA in Table 69 indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.164), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus not significant.

**Table 69: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) between Dependent and Independent Variable for Gender**

| **Age** | **Sum of squares** | **df** | **Mean squares** | **f** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 72.451 | 1 | 72.451 | 0.164 | 0.686 |
| Within groups | 42328.080 | 96 | 440.917 | | |
| Total | 42400.531 | 97 | | | |
| | | | | | |

## 4.4. Summary

This chapter focuses on data analysis and interpretation of the role of gender and age in the acquisition of English passive construction by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. Statistical analysis was conducted on the performance of the pupils in the productive and receptive tasks administered to them. The analysis indicates that age has an influence in the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The overall mean scores in all the tasks increased with age from 4.77 mean for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 13.38 for those aged 9 to 11 years to a high mean of 46.35 for those aged 12 to 14 years. The correlation between the dependent and

independent variable is very strong with a coefficient of +0.880**.**The ANOVA proves that there is a significant relationship between age and the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

With regard to gender, the analysis revealed that it has no influence in the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. This is evidenced in the calculated mean score for the boys at 24.28 while that of the girls is 26.00. The correlation analysis shows a slight positive correlation of 0.04. The ANOVA indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.164), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences are thus not significant.

In the next chapter, we explore the syntactic properties of the English passive as exhibited by the *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# THE SYNTACTIC PROPERTIES OF THE ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION

## 5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study discussed the role of gender and age in the acquisition of the English passive and it emerged that the pupils used various syntactic features. These features are the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language.

Therefore, in this chapter, the study describes the syntactic properties of English passive constructions forms by the *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The structure of the English passive is presented in this chapter because it is the basis on which we conducted our analysis.

## 5.2. The Acquisition of Passives

It has been observed that the acquisition of passives develops extremely late in pupils' grammar. For instance, English speaking pupils demonstrate difficulties with passives until at least around age 5 (*see Chapter Two).* As observed by Maratsos et al. (1985), the most difficult form for the pupils are the passives of non-actional verbs (the verbs with experiencer subjects, such as, *hear, take, ,* etc.), as opposed to passives of actional verbs (that is, verbs with agent subjects, such as *kick, push,* etc.). For example,

23. Grace was *taken* by Jim.

24. Jane was *kicked* by John.

25. He *kicked* Jane.

The relation between verbal and adjectival passives has been a prominent feature in recent debates on language acquisition and the nature of Universal Grammar, a human innate endowment. According to this theory, every human being is biologically endowed with a language faculty, LAD, which is responsible for the initial state of language development Chomsky (1976) in Mitchell and Myles (2004: 94). Earlier on, the understanding has been that stative, adjectival participles regularly precede eventive, verbal participles in language development. This understanding has been grounded on data elicited from production tasks Horgan (1978) and experimental studies of comprehension, Maratsos et al. (1985); Sudhalter and Braine (1985). These studies have shown that while pre-school pupils (4 to 5 years olds) do use passive participles, they almost never produce full passives with a *by*-phrase, and they have difficulty understanding passives in which the participle does not clearly denote a resultant state. For example, the sampled respondents work had the following for 9-11 years olds (1) *Ugali is eaten*. (It is a resultant state and meaning that there is no more ugali) ‘*Ugali* is eaten.’ is not correct. It should be ‘The *ugali* is eaten.’, that is, all of the ugali has been eaten by the people dining here. This is not really passive voice. It is simply a linking verb situation with an adjective. The respondents were essentially saying: "The *ugali* is all gone.’or ‘The ugali has been all eaten up.’ Interestingly, 6-8 years old pupils wrote *‘I eat the ugali*.’, then the passive of this is ‘The *ugali* is eaten by

me.', which is close to "The *ugali* is eaten.", but emphasis here is different from the above. Here there is no sense of the *ugali* being all gone, but rather you have the action of a person eating *ugali*.

26. *The door is open* (resultant state, the door is now open)

From the illustrations given above, the resultant state for a door is "open" and sentence 'The door is opened.' without an agent does not make sense, 'The door is open.' is not passive but rather a statement of fact: 'The door is open' (not closed). 'The door is opened.' is not used in English – it's incomplete. The door is opened at 9 is correct and is passive voice: The door is opened at 9 a.m (by the staff).'

Interestingly, Horgan (1978) showed that monolingual English pupils comprehend and produce full passives (passives that include the *by* phrase as in the following example, *the zebra was kicked by the camel*, later than short passives lacking the *by*-phrase (e.g., *the tree is broken*). His study also showed that early passives (e.g., *the tree is broken*) represent after-the-fact observations about states, that these passives describe a state and not an event. That *The tree is broken* is interpreted similarly to *The tree is green*, the same view is held by Wasow (1977), that the actional verbs are perceived as adjectival, that is, formed in the lexicon .

The phenomenon is that some sentence types seem to be more difficult to acquire than others especially to the respondents between ages 6-8 and 9-11 years old. According to Gold (1967), some of those passive forms are still learnable, and in this study the 6-8 years old *Dholuo* speaking pupils already have the basic syntactic structures attained through their language developmental milestones and

they are exposed to the language stimuli from their spoken form. In acquisition of English passive forms, the learnability issue becomes more complicated because other than the non-actional verbs that become challenging to the pupils, other variables such as L1 transfer, proficiency level of the pupils and classroom instruction e.t.c also seem to intervene.

According to Borer & Wexler (1987), young pupils of the ages 4 years old cannot comprehend and produce verbal passives. Consequently, it is possible that they are still acquiring the target forms, furthermore, these ties up with the age cohorts in the study (6-8, 9-11 and 12-14). Brown (1973) notes that this complex forms occurs in language acquisition developmental milestones.

A challenge to Borer & Wexler's account and the findings from earlier research has been offered by Pinker; Lebeaux & Frost (1987) who show that in spontaneous speech 3-year-old English pupils produce passive sentences with an eventive interpretation that is usually associated with verbal passives. In addition, using elicitation and act-out tasks, they found that 4-year-old English pupils were able to produce and comprehend passive sentences involving novel actional and non-actional verbs, but they often failed to produce the *by*-phrase.

In this study, the 12-14 years old, were able to produce the passive forms using the '*by*' phrase accurately, for example:

*27. Mary was kicked by a donkey*

*28. The book was read*

More recently, Stromswold (2004) investigated how preschool (3; 1- 4; 8) and school-aged (4; 9-7; 4) pupils and adults process actives and passives in real-time using eye-tracking in a sentence-picture matching task. Participants saw two pictures next to each other on a computer screen and heard an active or passive sentence. In each picture there were a boy and a girl or a man and a woman performing an action. Results showed that all participants were more accurate in the picture-matching task in actives as opposed to passives, and in all groups reaction times (RTs) for correct trials were longer for passives compared to actives. Analyses of the eye-movements revealed that in passives, adults decided which picture matched the sentence at the past participle. In contrast, pupils looked at the matching picture only after the end of the sentence. Stromswold's conclusion was that pupils and adults process passives in different ways: adults make use of acoustic, morphological, and semantic cues and decide that a sentence is passive on-line, at the past participle. For example, from the picture recognition task (P.1)

'Maize *is grown by farmers'* the semantic cue was '*farmers'* so the pupils had some grasp of the meaning of the sentence and not necessarily the passive form. On the other hand, the 6-8 years old respondents did not seem to make use of these cues, but assumed that the first NP is the agent and decide that a sentence is passive off-line, after the end of the sentence. For example, cohort 6-8 years (*see Appendix 4; P.10 and P.19)* were able to produce the following sentences (29) and (30) below, the errors became less frequent with the 9- 11 year old pupils being

able to produce sentences (31) and (32) and notably, the 12- 14 years old pupils were able to produce better sentences as shown in sentences (33) and (34) which was the final cohort.

*29. Man rowed boat*

*30. The boy sees the donkey t*

*31. the boy is seen donkey,*

*32. the man rowed the boat*

*33. the boy was seen by the donkey,*

*34. the boat was row by the man*

While the forms with errors as seen in (29) and (30) are related to the past participles markers showing the missing *by* phrase, it also shows for (33) and (34) the pupils did not have so many problems with the English Passive constructions. Nevertheless, the *Dholuo* passive emerged together with the target –like forms in the written compositions. The target like passives were similar to the *Dholuo* passives in that all the subjects were known information; and the blocked agent could be inferred from the context that they were writing.

This shows that the ages between 6-8 and 9-11 years old pupils are still learning the target forms as exposed to them by the learning environments; it is also observed that these pupils often do not seem to overcome learnability problems. Even though, the 12-14 years old pupils had already acquired the basic syntactic structures through the exposure they received from the Primary English curriculum and through their classroom interaction as revealed in the construction of their

sentences for (33) and (34) shown above, the pupils interpretation for English Passive were in some cases similar to *Dholuo* passive. This may be due to L1 transfer.

Marinis (2007), however, suggests that the delay observed in the pupils' decision could be due to the task used in the study. He argues that in a sentence-picture matching task with two pictures, participants have to scan the pictures and identify how they differ from each other. In this particular sentence-picture matching task, the two pictures were very similar to each other.

In this case, Task one the pictures (*see Appendix 4; P.3 and P.16*) were less similar as both had babies being carried by one mother and the other both parents, respectively. This may have impacted on the time needed to scan the pictures and observe differences between them. The sentences used in this tasks were presented in normal speed (see Chapter Three ) they were relatively short, and the final phrase in actives was the object and in passives the *by*-phrase.

Consequently, taking into account again the learnability theory, the pupils were able to produce some sentences correctly and others with fewer errors as noted in the above sentences. It can be argued that, *Dholuo* speaking pupils acquiring English Passive have acquired *Dholuo* Passive system as L1, with Gold (1967) and Pinker (1989) theory of learnability informed by semantic constraints and linking rules. These *Dholuo* speaking pupils had not achieved native like knowledge yet. As a result, the pupils were only able to produce the sentences within their stages or respective ages and level of learning, the target language was possibly

determined by their own internal syllabuses, in which case they could not produce English Passive forms without having reached a certain stage of maturity and proficiency or awareness, this can be attributed to learnability constraints.

Hence, the pupils at 6-8 years old processed the tasks at a slower rate than those at 12-14 years who took a shorter time in various tasks, thus, speed of performance on the tasks increased with age. It is possible that the pupils in this study did not process the participle until the end of the sentence because they were over the board slower and not because they were not able to use acoustic, morphological, and semantic cues.

As a result, these pupils encountered only one picture at a time, although there were 10 pictures with 13 sentences presented to them (listening task). This was to reduce the processing load, and allow the study to see how the pupils produced a sentence phrase-*by*-phrase.

### 5.3. *Dholuo* Passive

In A Handbook of the Kavirondo Language (Fathers of St Joseph's Society, 1921: 54), a guide to learning *Dholuo* language, adults are advised to avoid 'as much as possible', the use of the passive since *Dholuo* passive is "one of the most difficult in Nilotic languages from the very fact that they very seldom use it." The apparent contradiction is, perhaps indicative of the controversies and challenges inherent in the study of *Dholuo* passive. As noted in *Dholuo* Literature, the *gi* phrases not only function in passive form constructions but also as a plural marker and as preposition meaning 'with*'* For instance, in Ogot (1983, p. 11), the '*gi*' phrase

used in the following '*oromo-gi'* (meeting with) while in Okombo (1983, p.10-11), the use of *'gi'* phrase as in '*gi-wacho' (they say)*, 'gi-dhi'*(they went),*'gi-bedogo' (they have it) and '*gi-temo*' (they tried) . In some circumstances '*gi*' stands for the plural marker 'they' as opposed to the '*gi'* phrase used in the *Dholuo* passive construction like 'jodala noruako welo *gi*-mos (the hosts welcomed the visitors by greeting-hands); (Ogot,1983). mitoka noriemb *gi* Onyango (the car was driven by Onyango).

As already mentioned in (Chapter two), some of the explanations given regarding *Dholuo* passive are as shown below:

a) The root of the transitive verb and prefixing "*o*" as an impersonal pronoun.

e.g.,*Chiemba o-kel* - *My food has been brought*

*Pacho o-sepa* - *The home has been cleaned*

b) If the subject is a personal pronoun, then the pronoun is suffixed to the root.

e.g. *Ohera* - I am loved

*Oheri* - You are loved

*Ohere* - He / she is loved

*Oherwa* - We are loved

*Oheru* - You are loved

*Ohergi* - They are loved

c) When one indicates an action in the progressive, the prefix 'o' is dropped and 'i' is improved with the active verb.

e.g. *You are being called* - *Iluongi*

*You are being called* - *Iluongou(plural)*

*(But) You are called-* *Oluongu*

d) The 'i' is also used when the verb is used impersonally.

e.g. *It is brought* - *i-kelo*

*It is also said* - *i-wacho bende*

e) As already mentioned conjugation affirmative and negative of the passive is the same as of the active voice. Hence it is clear that there is no distinction between some tenses, for example the Past Simple and Future Simple. In those cases only the context can make it clear, but in conversation the accent and tone.

e.g., *Noger ot maonge dhoot* - A house without an entrance was built /A house without an entrance will be built

*Pipa noom* - The barrel will be fetched /The barrel was fetched

### 5.4. *Dholuo* Passives and Passive Equivalents

*Dholuo* constructions such as *Chiemba okel* (My food has been brought) and *Pacho osepa* (The home has been cleaned) have been described as active sentences with an indefinite subject proclitic (Omondi, 1982; Tucker, 1994; Ochola, 1999). They posit that these sentences constitute 'pseudo-passives' or 'passive equivalents' in that they function as passives – i.e. they are the closest translation to the English passive – without actually displaying passive marking. Okoth-Okombo (1997) suggests that they are structural passive sentences.

According to Omondi (1982), the prefix "*o*" in constructions in *Dholuo* phrases, o-*ngad-o a lot ( ngad-cut( root)* ; o-ted- o; o-cham-o, may be said to represent the 'indefinite' or 'general person' being a marker of an indefinite generalized subject. According to Noonan and Bavin Woock (1978) and Noonan (1992), resumption is optional with a human third person objects obligatory with first and second person pronouns and complement of prepositions, and illicit with non-human third person objects. *Dholuo*, therefore, adds to the list of languages with a 'zero-coded passive' discussed by Cobbinah and Lüpke (2009).

### 5.5. The English Passive

This study presents some general syntactic characteristics of the English passive as this would form the basis of production and cross-linguistic analysis. Here we proceed to describe the systems of passive in English as already discussed in (see Chapter two).

The passive in English is grammatically marked by a copular verb followed by a past participle. The structure *be + past participle* can be considered as the norm for English passives. However, *'be'* in the structure can also be replaced by other copular verbs such as *get, become, feel, look, remain* and *seem* because the passive meaning is essentially expressed by past participles.

Differences between active and passive verb phrases have reflexes at two syntactic levels in English: at the verb phrase and clause level. A passive verb phrase differs from an active verb phrase in containing a form of the auxiliary '*be'* and the passive participle of the main verb.

| | **Active** | **Passive** |
|---|---|---|
| **Present** | takes | is taken |
| **Past** | took | was taken |

At the clause level, the difference between the active and the passive lie in the re-arrangement of the 'logical' subject and object and in the marking of the 'demoted' subject by the preposition *by*.

*35. The woman took a mango*

*36. A mango was taken (by the woman).*

The basic relation between the active (35) and the passive (36) is such that the active object (NP) becomes the subject in the passive clause, while the active subject (NP) is demoted to the position of the passive agent and the preposition *by* is inserted before it. The prepositional phrase in the passive is optional, like most other prepositional phrases.

In the passive sentence the promoted object of the active obtains subject properties: it is assigned nominative case (the pronominal object becoming the subject of the passive) and agrees with the verb.

The passive can be with and without an agent. In 39, the apparent passive lacks an active counterpart allows no agent phrase. In 40 and 41, the agent provides essential information and is therefore obligatory.

*37. My father was beaten by a thug. (Passive)*

*38. The thug was arrested. (by the police)*

*39. Oil has replaced coal in Kenyan industries*

*40. The drama was followed by a musician.*

*41. *The drama was followed.*

The passive is only possible in English with transitive verbs.

*42. James runs our staff gym very well*

*43. * Every morning is run by James*

Ditransitive verbs in English can also passivise. Thus, sentence 44 has two corresponding passives, 45 and 46.

*44. Tom gave Mary a present.*

*45. Mary was given a present by Tom.*

*46. A present was given to Mary by Tom.*

There are also no passive counterparts of verbs with reflexive objects (47). As the reflexive refers to the subject, the passive is blocked. The same applies to reciprocal pronouns (48) and possessive pronouns referring to the subject (49).

*47. Tom saw himself in the mirror*

*48. They greeted one another*

*49. Tom milked his cow.*

English allows prepositional verbs to be passivized as illustrated in the following:

*50. You can rely on Tessie.*

*51. Tessie can be relied on.*

As we noted here, the prepositional object Tessie in the active can function as the subject of the passive sentence.

Sometimes passivisation is possible despite the fact that the preposition maintains its identifiable meaning and is not part of the phrasal verb. In 52, the preposition *in* has kept its locative sense.

*52. The mat has been slept in.*

Though transitive verbs take objects and thus should passivize, some verbs appear to take objects but do not occur in the passive. Verbs such as *resemble* and *marry* have a sense of being logically symmetrical, i.e. they refer to a state that relates equally to two entities which both can fill the subject slot — thus pre-empting the need for a passive construction. Thus, 53 and 54 have the same meaning.

*53. Mary resembles Kate.*

*54. Kate resembles Mary*.

Other verbs such as *have, lack, last* also do not occur in the passive.

*55. He has a nice room.*

*56. I lack confidence.*

57. The drama lasts two hours.

Verbs such as *hold, possess, weigh, grow* can be passivized when they signify a task but lack passive when referring to a state — where the above explanation applies.

5*8. The trough holds water.*

*59. *water is held by the trough.*

*60. The thief was held by the police.*

*61. Sugar weighs two kilos.*

*62. *Two kilos are weighed by Sugar.*

*63. Shem grew taller.*

*64. *taller grown by Shem.*

The nature of the participle plays a role in the interpretation of the passive as well. Some combinations with the passive participle can be considered as true passives and some do not like in sentence (65) below, for the stative passive they merely describes a resultant state; the subject is attributed a certain property that results from the action as shown (66).

65. *Adhiambo is said to be a good singer.*

*66. The pot was broken (by Okinyi )*

*Be*, the typical passive auxiliary, alternates with *get*, which also can occur with the passive participle and form the *get*-passive. However, *get* is not freely interchangeable with *be* and is avoided in formal style (70) and is even less frequent in informal style than *be*. The *get*-passive often occurs without an expressed animate agent (71). Nevertheless, inserting the agent is often possible (72).

*70. *the song got written by a singer.*

*71. Bob got fired*

*72. Tom got caught (by police)*

## 5.6. The English Passive Constructions

The English passive constructions were analysed in terms of Malformed, Pseudo-passive, passive unaccusative, active and other constructions.

### 5.6.1. Malformed Passive Constructions

In this study, the pupils had difficulties with all types of past participles, including irregular verbs (e.g. win-won, find-found) and participles ending with *–ed* and *–en*. This was visible in their compositions that they wrote as already described in Chapter three. The cause can be morphological and/or phonological. In this case, the more likely culprit is the latter, as L1 transfer is frequent at the early stage of acquisition when there are discrepancies between L1 and L2 ( Winford, 2003). If L1 has no morphological markers and L2 does, such L1 feature is likely to reflect in IL. Incomplete acquisition of L2 morphological structures, on the other hand, occurs later in the acquisition when the L2 learner has not fully acquired the L2 feature resulting in some un/misinflected words in the IL. The ability/inability to mark past participles correctly could be due to how often the verbs in question appear in the pupils' input and whether the verbs have been rote-memorized by the pupils (Wolfram, 1985).

Despite the fact that the study of transfer from spoken to written language has not been found, it may be possible to hypothesize that the L2 learners have a tendency to transfer their pronunciation to their writing (especially when time is limited). The pupils' difficulty with *pushed* reflects the fact that some *–ed* ending participles in English, such as *pushed* [pUšt] and *stopped* [stapt], have final consonant

clusters, which do not exist in *Dholuo;* therefore, when the words are pronounced by Thai ESL pupils, the final consonant of the clusters tend to be omitted Simargool (1998). This omission could be transferred to writing. The frequency of the past participle marking in this study supports the above phonological hypothesis. The pupils in this study had the most difficulties with *pushed* because it ends with double consonant clusters. The influence of their L1 syllable structure caused them to leave out the final consonant of the cluster; hence, *push* occurred instead of *pushed*. Moreover, the difficulties with *–ed* [-Id] and the *–en* markers could result from the fact that the markers are unstressed syllables.

The lack of participle markers in the written test agrees with previous studies on past tense markers by Simargool, (1998) who found that in spoken narratives only 28% of the past tense verbs were marked with past tense. The irregular verbs were marked the most, while the ones with *–ed* suffixes were not marked. The conformity of the findings from IL writing and speaking data could suggest that the writing performance of the pupils can be influenced by their pronunciation ability.

Regarding the problematic subject-verb agreement, most of the pupils did not show such difficulty in the agreement between the passive subject and the verb *be* except one student. This student used the auxiliary *was* for most of her passive constructions, as in *the car were drived. She also used the auxiliary *was* with her unaccusative sentences, as in *the accident was happened. These pupils seem to form a system of her own, realizing the difference between the passive and the

unaccusative, apparently, this can be distinguished with auxiliaries (Simargool, 2007).

### 5.6.2. Pseudo-passive Constructions

The IL pseudo-passives found in this study are almost similar to the progressive ergative (e.g. the boat is sailing), the progressive middle, (e.g. the fish is selling well), and the archaic progressive passive constructions (e.g. the book is printing). Yet it is unlikely that in the sentences, the pupils were targeting the ergative constructions because, a look at the verbs reveals that those verbs are not ergative verbs. According to Simargool (2007) and Yip (1995), L2 pupils also were found to have difficulties with ergative constructions. Moreover, the middle construction is difficult for L2 learners in that it differs from English basic sentences which have agent subjects with verbs in the active forms (Yip, 1995). By eliminating the above analyses, the constructions can be analyzed as the IL pseudo-passives, the consequence of L1 transfer of topic-comment construction with the null subject.

The findings of the IL pseudo-passives of this study are distinct because of the very small number of the instances, but also the slight difference in the surface structure. Han (2000) and Yip (1995) found the pseudo-passives to generally be in the form of:

NP+MODAL/HAVE+VP, as in

*The new car must keep inside and *most food … have cooked already.

However, the pseudo-passives in this study, as shown above, are in the form of :

NP+BE+V-ing.

He was coming late.

The book is printing

Despite the slight difference from her findings, Yip's (1995) analysis might be able to shed some light in the case where the intended structure of the *Dholuo* speaking pupil is the progressive passive, as in the cart is being pushed. Yip stated that the complex structure of the English VP may be cognitively heavy for the L2 learners who might decide to omit the second verb *be*, in this case, one of the verb '*be*'. Yip's explanation can be supported by the historical development of the progressive passive in Denison (1993). As indicated above, the archaic progressive passive, as in *the book is reading*, is the earlier version of *the book is being readed* due to the complexity of the latter (Denison, 1993).

A simpler explanation for the IL **the cart is pushing* can also be that the pupils were aware that there is the verb be in the intended construction and that it can be followed by the past participle in the passive or the present participle in the progressive. In these three rare cases, due to the time constraint, they thus opted for the latter.

The incident of the pseudo-passives can be due to the high proficiency of the pupils, the type of the data, and the pupils' L1. The majority of the pupils in this study were those who have been exposed to English in classes for quite some time. The L1 influence, therefore, may not be as strong as expected. If the subjects were in the early stages of L2 acquisition, L1 pragmatic influence could have emerged (Rutherford, 1983 in Han, 2000). Moreover, if the data were from spontaneous

sources, such as unproofread messages or natural English conversation, more IL pseudo-passives might emerge.

### 5.6.3. Passive Unaccusative Constructions

Despite the fact that the participants showed remarkable familiarity with the passive in English, their performance still showed the incident of overgeneralization of passive markers with unaccusatives (e.g. *the accident was happened). The fact that many of the unaccusatives were passivized can be attributed to L1 influence because *Dholuo* unaccusative verbs are similar to English unaccusative verbs. This is supported by Zobl (1989) who explains that L2 pupils who passivize the unaccusatives are likely to analyze that the construction, like the passive, has an implicit agent.

## 5.7. Active and Other Constructions

The fact that many pupils were found to place the given nouns and verbs (see *Appendix 9 & 13*) in the object position regardless of the instructions may be due to a few possible factors. First, the pupils might not have understood the instructions clearly. A case in point is where one pupil did not form the passives from any of the 10 targeted passive verbs; however, in some instances, where the pupils did not know the construction the pupils passivized the unaccusatives. Second, the active forms could also be the effect of the surrounding distracters, the unaccusatives and unergatives. The last explanation for the active forms could be the pupils' unfamiliarity with the given nouns and verbs in the passive form. Of course, at their level of education, they were expected to know the words provided,

and effort was not spared to ensure that they were familiar with the words; however, they might not have been familiar with some of them in the passives. As a result, they resorted to the most accessible construction for them at the moment, the active.

The last two factors leading to the active forms can further apply to the unidentifiable instances involving the pair *game, win,* as in *the *game* win/won, and *she is win the prize. Seven problematic instances arising from the pair prize, win confirm the above assumption regarding the pupils' difficulty in applying the words to the passive form. This could be because the English sentence *the game was won* can never be directly translated into the passive form in *Dholuo*. The difficulty in the application of the given words into the passive form arises from the influence of L1, where the passive does not occur often, and therefore, leads to the difficulty in the passive formation.

The instances of **she is win the price* is what Mayo et al. (2005) interprets as the results of the attempt to form an active sentence with the verb be as a placeholder. According to them, some L2 learners whose L1 lacks subject-verb agreements tend to employ the verb '*be'* to mark the agreement. In this case, the auxiliary '*is'* used as an agreement marker in place of the morpheme *–s* on *win*. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that the majority of the instances produced by the same pupils have the verb '*be'* preceding the given verbs.

With regards to the other constructions, the noun phrase *the house painted by Joseph* and the unidentifiable construction **the house is painting by Joseph* are

very close to the passive in their theme-subject and the emerged agent; however, the difference is in the verbs that were unmarked for passive. The cause of the above constructions, again, could not be the pupils' inability to form the passives because they had proved that they could form 6 and 5 well-formed passives. Such constructions might be caused by other constraints that were unclear in this study.

In this study, the data from *Dholuo* speaking pupils were from a written test, which instructed the subjects to construct sentences from 25 pairs of nouns + transitive, unaccusative, and unergative verbs given (*see Appendix 9*). To elicit the passives, the pupils were instructed to put the given nouns in the subject position.

The malformed passives can also come from the incomplete acquisition of the L2 passive morphology. L1 morphological transfer is unlikely the cause because the respondents performance on the passives is evidence to their awareness of the construction. Other causes of the difficulties in the production of past participles have to do with the frequency of the verbs and routine memorization. Additionally, it has been found that the passive forms were overgenerated to the unaccusative verbs (e.g. **the disaster was occurred*), which is due to the perception of the respondents towards the argument structure of the verbs. Finally, the respondents of the study were at lower levels of L2 proficiency (6-8 years old); it is the reason for more *Dholuo* passives emerging as they constructed the passive forms.

Looking at the performance, we have a clear-cut argument that the *Dholuo* speaking pupils' problem with passives is actually related to the interpretation of the *by* - phrase, and nothing else: they did well on *be*-passive and *get*-passive

constructions. They made mistakes only on non actional passives with *by*-phrases, and crucially, they made none once the *by*-phrase had been eliminated. Thus, the problem cannot be a general problem with the English passive constructions, because that would not explain the pupils' performance on most passives, and crucially, it would not explain why the presence or absence of the *by*-phrase made a difference. This is so because these respondents perform well on actional passives, and on *get* passives. The source of their errors should be sought elsewhere.

We could, though, imagine that their performance points to faults in the given tasks. It is noted that these respondents have a problem with the irregular passive morphology that is used with the particular non agentive verbs chosen for the tasks (*take! taken, hear! heard).* In this case, it is possible that the structure of the *Dholuo* verb as in:

Mama (s) tedo (v) ( ni wan ) kuon (O) ( mother cook for us *ugali* )Ted (v) –o ( cook)

As already stated, the study reveals that pupils' performance on non- actional passives was not good, and that this difficulty shows in the tasks that require a *by*-phrase. However, the respondents are still learning the syntactic features of the passive constructions which includes the transitive verbs, the active voice and the clause which must have two phrases (the NP1) (subject-NP2) (object) and the additional '*be'* form to make it passive. As in, the *food was cooked.* As in learnability theory, the learners go through the basic structures like the active

voices then gradually learn the more complex features such as the English passive constructions.

### 5.8. Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study with respect to the syntactic properties of the passive constructions of the respondents under this study. It has emerged that the pupils displayed adult like behaviour in their construction of the English passives and had problems only with the *by*-constructions. Accordingly, it would therefore be safe to conclude that the L1 *Dholuo* influence accounted for this difficulty since the *by*-construction, though superficially appearing to have the *"gi"* equivalent in the *Dholuo* passive, is quite different in its semantic and syntactic properties, hence the observed difficulties. Accuracy in actives was overall better than in passives, and accuracy in sentences that matched the picture was better than in the mismatch conditions. In the next chapter, we analyse and document the acquisition profile of the pupils English passive constructions forms by the *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

This chapter has formed a basis for the next chapter which analyses English passive acquisition profile.

# CHAPTER SIX

# THE ENGLISH PASSIVE ACQUISITION PROFILE

## 6.1. Introduction

In Chapter Five, the syntactic properties of the pupils' English passive constructions have been presented, analysed and discussed. In this chapter, the acquisition profile of the pupils' English passive constructions is analysed and discussed. The chapter sets off with a broad examination of what constitutes an acquisition profile and the various postulations of how it should be examined. The chapter then delves into the findings of the current study with regard to the acquisition profiles of *Dholuo* speaking pupils (ages 6-8, 9-11, and 12-14) as they acquired the English passive constructions. This is done through a close examination of their English passive interlanguage properties in terms of the structural and syntactic features of the constructions produced by the pupils.

## 6.2. The Order and Profile of Acquisition

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, a profile is "a set of data often in graphic form portraying the significant features of something" Merriam-Webster.com (2013). Adopting this definition, it would suffice to say that the "something", in the case of the present study, is the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils who were the subjects of the current study. Accordingly, in discussing the acquisition profile of these pupils, we present the significant or landmark features that characterise their acquisition of the English passive constructions. This is done by highlighting the significant

structural and syntactic properties of such constructions. We, however, begin with a broad overview of the two issues of order and profile of acquisition.

Krashen (1987) hypothesizes that every person learning a language will acquire that language in a predictable order. For example, pupils learning English, regardless of their cultural and linguistic background, will acquire the plural “s” e.g in *girls* before the third person singular “s” e.g in *likes*. Despite the time a teacher spends practicing the grammatical aspect of third person singular “s” with the pupils, the pupils will not use the grammatical aspect in the target language conversations until they have naturally acquired it. The natural order of acquisition is not affected by instructional sequences. Krashen suggests that providing pupils with meaningful comprehensible input that contains grammar, but focuses on communication, will enable pupils to naturally acquire the necessary grammar.

The Natural Order hypothesis is based on research findings (Dulay & Burt, 1974; Fathman, 1975; Makino, 1980 cited in Krashen, 1987) which suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order' which is predictable. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others late. This order seemed to be independent of the learners' age, L1 background, conditions of exposure, and although the agreement between individual acquirers was not always 100% in the studies, there were statistically significant similarities that reinforced the existence of a Natural Order of language acquisition. Krashen, however, points out that the implication of the natural order hypothesis is not that a language program syllabus should be based on the order

found in the studies. In fact, he rejects grammatical sequencing when the goal is language acquisition.

With the above views by Krashen (1987), it was predicted that the production of English passive constructions would follow a discernible, if not predictable pattern. Consequently, each of the 18 pupils was allocated 15 minutes each to perform a production task (*see Chapter 3*). To ensure the occurrence of the passive constructions, the students were instructed to form sentences with all the given nouns as subjects. Examples of the attested results appear in (73) to 76 as shown below.

Write complete sentences from the subjects and the verbs given. Example:

73. *Father, laugh* *The father was laughed.*

74. *Boy, beat* *The boy was beaten*

*75. disaster, occur* **The disaster occurred.*

*76. page, turn* *The page was turned.*

*77. man, talk* *The man talked.*

From the examples, majority of the pupils from ages 12-14 years old were able to generate well-formed passive as a result of the exposure from the environment and classroom instruction, whereas the other pupils also over-generated passives. This supports the argument in chapter two that learnability issue becomes more complicated because of age and level of learning among other parameters.

### 6.3. Passive Sentences Construction

The passive constructions were divided as follows: well-formed passives (WP), malformed passives (MP), actives (Act.), possible pseudo-passives (PP), and other constructions (Oth.). The well-formed passives refer to native-like passives, while the malformed passives are the ones with agreement errors and those with errors in past participle markers. The active sentences are those with agent subjects and active verbs, whereas the possible pseudo passives are the ones that are similar to the IL pseudo-passives. The 'other constructions' are non-sentences like the noun phrase or ungrammatical sentences that cannot be connected to any of the above four passives. Since the purpose of the task is to test the knowledge of passivization, the spelling is not considered. The results are shown in the Table 70 below:

**Table 70: Passive Sentences Construction**

| **Constructions** | **Cohorts** | **Instances** | **Constructions (WP, MP, Act, PP, and Others)** | **Percentage of passive constructions** | **Overall Percentage of passive constructions** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Well-formed passive (WP) | 12-14 | 64 | 108 | 36 | 60 |
| Well-formed passive (WP) | 9-12 | 32 | | 18 | |
| Well-formed passive (WP) | 6-8 | 12 | | 6 | |
| Malformed Passives (MP) | 12-14 | 14 | 27 | 8 | 15 |
| Malformed Passives (MP) | 9-12 | 10 | | 6 | |
| Malformed Passives (MP) | 6-8 | 3 | | 1 | |
| Active (Act.) | 12-14 | 17 | 32 | 9.3 | 16.8 |
| Active (Act.) | 9-12 | 10 | | 5.5 | |
| Active (Act.) | 6-8 | 5 | | 2 | |
| Possible Pseudo – Passive (PP) | 12-14 | 3 | 5 | 1.6 | 2.7 |
| Possible Pseudo – Passive (PP) | 9-12 | 1 | | 0.5 | |
| Possible Pseudo – Passive (PP) | 6-8 | 1 | | 0.5 | |
| Others (Oth.) | 12-14 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 5.5 |
| Others (Oth.) | 9-12 | 3 | | 1 | |
| Others (Oth.) | 6-8 | 1 | | 0.5 | |
| TOTAL | | 180 | | 100 | 100 |

As shown in the Table 70, 10 transitive verbs given to the 18 *Dholuo* speaking pupils were expected to exhibit 180 instances of passive sentences. The actual

data, however, exhibited 60% well-formed passive, 15% malformed passives, 16.8% actives, 2.7% possible pseudo-passives, and 5.5% other constructions. Most of the participants especially those who were 12-14 years old were able to produce the well-formed passives.

Furthermore, Table 70 shows that 108 (60%) well-formed and 27 (15%) malformed passives contributed to the total of 135 (75%) instances of passive constructions produced in the data. The 75% passive sentences imply the pupils' awareness of the construction, while the 60% reflects the pupils' accuracy in well-formed passive formation. The 27 (15%) malformed passive instances are counted as passives because of their structures, theme-subject + be + verb. Also included in the category of malformed passives are those with subject-verb agreement error, for example,

78. **the teacher were spoken*

79. **the boys were knelt*

The designation 'malformed' comes from subject-verb agreement and the past participle errors. All forms of past participles, including irregular verbs and ones with -ed and -en endings, were problematic for the pupils. Examples from the data are shown in (80) to (82) and the numbers of problematic instances per type of past participles as illustrated below.

80. **My chair was broke by my sister*

81. **The man is talk*

82. **The food was cook*

Only few instances similar to the IL pseudo-passive occurred, as shown in (83) to (85) below - the undergenerated passive morphology. They can also be translated into *Dholuo.*

83. **The boy is pushing inside.*

84. **the ugali was cooking.*

85. **Whose Ugali was cooking?*

The pupils over-generated passive markers by passivizing not only transitive verbs, but also unaccusative verbs e.g. appear. This resulted in passivized unaccusative constructions, two of which are shown in (86) and (87).

86. **The uncle is disappear.*

87. **The grandmother is appeared.*

A number of the pupils produced the active sentence with the given nouns as objects, as in (88) and 89) below.

88. *I am cooking ugali.*

89. **Don't kicked dog*

The other constructions which are non-sentences and unidentifiable constructions are exemplified in (90) and (91).

90. *The Ugali cooked by my mother*

91. **The Ugali is cooking by my mother*

Examples (90) and (91) are partly similar to the IL pseudo-passive because the theme subjects and the active verb form; however, they lack the null subjects which are supposedly agents and the agents' surface after *by*. Example (90) is an

English noun phrase, while examples (91) are neither English nor *Dholuo* constructions. These constructions therefore, are ruled out as IL pseudo passives, passives, or actives.

### 6.4. Summary

In this chapter, we set to establish a ground for the Acquisition Profile of English passive; we examined the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. Of necessity was an exploration of the passive in both the languages that would form the basis of the Inter language Analysis. This chapter also presented a study on the production of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The result shows a high level of the mastery of the English passive by the pupils of age 12-14. These cohorts were already exposed to the language. However, time allocated for the completion of the task may have been adequate to grant the pupils an advantage such that their results were more monitored.

The focus of the next chapter is the findings of this study within the context of cross linguistic influence in the Acquisition of the English Passive constructions.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

# CROSS-LINGUISTIC INFLUENCE IN THE ACQUISITION OF THE ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

## 7.1. Introduction

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the processes by which *Dholuo* speaking pupils acquire the English language passive constructions. One of the objectives of the present study specifically focused on, the cross-linguistic effects of the *Dholuo* passive on the acquisition of the English passive constructions. This chapter is dedicated to the presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings relating to this objective. In order to situate the study within the relevant theoretical paradigms, the chapter begins with a discussion of the theoretical issues that are contingent to cross-linguistic influence as a language acquisition phenomenon. The chapter then proceeds by specifically focusing on a discussion of how various cross-linguistic phenomena impacted on the acquisition of the English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils**.** Accordingly, the chapter further points out the relevant features of interlanguage that are emergent from the pupils' data, along with the presentation of the nature of cross linguistic influence**.** The central argument in this chapter, therefore, is the idea that the pupils' interlanguage consists of the features outlined in Chapter 2 and that such features are brought by among other things, the cross-linguistic influences of *Dholuo* and English.

## 7.2. Theoretical Issues

The role of cross-linguistic influence (CLI) or linguistic transfer in second language acquisition has been a field of extensive research in the past few decades (Ellis, 1994; Gas and Selinker, 1994; Kellerman, 1995; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Odlin, 1989; Selinker, 1992). Transfer is a traditional term from psychology of learning which means imposition of previously learned patterns onto a new learning situation. In second language acquisition, the knowledge of the native language (L1) in acquisition of a foreign language (L2) can indeed have a facilitation or inhibition effect on the learner's progress in mastering a new language. Traditionally, facilitation effect is known as positive transfer, while inhibition is considered negative transfer. Erroneous performance in L2 ascribed to certain constraints existing in the native language can be the simplest example of negative transfer.

The question of what is more likely to be transferred from L1 to L2 and how the mechanism of transfer works has given rise to different linguistic models and hypotheses over the last two decades. One of the earlier hypotheses on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) Lado ( 1957) ; Stockwell, Bowen and Martin (1965) tried to predict the likelihood of linguistic transfer in second language acquisition based on the similarities as well as differences between various aspects of L1 and L2. That is, similarities in linguistic structures in two languages will result in positive transfer, while differences will create an interference which is known as negative transfer. However, the survey of the

recent research on CLI shows that the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis fails to find significant support and its validity has been questioned by many scholars (Gass and Selinker, 1983; McLaughlin, 1984). Therefore, Sharwood -Smith and Kellerman (1986) came up with the term 'cross-linguistic influence' which is theory-neutral and can be used as a superordinate term for the phenomena of 'transfer', 'interference', 'avoidance', 'borrowing' etc.

One of the most effective theories to explain CLI has been the interlanguage theory (Selinker, 1972). Interlanguage theory is hinged on the understanding that the process of second language acquisition is a creative one.

Second language acquisition is a creative construction, during which the learners are consciously or unconsciously constructing a language system which enables them to understand and produce utterances in the target language. This language system so constructed by the learner has been referred to as an interlanguage (Widdowson, 1975) – an evolving linguistic system that incorporates features of both the learner's L1 and L2, as well as features unique to itself, arising from various factors such as over-generalization, simplification, etc.

The notion similar to "interlanguage" was first seen in "The Significance of Learners' Errors" (Corder, 1967) as "transitional competence" to describe foreign language learners' linguistic ability which did not match that of native speakers. Selinker (1969) introduced the word "interlanguage", which was adapted from Weinreich's term "interlingual" to refer to the language system that the foreign language learner created based on the data he had been exposed to. Nemser (1971)

referred to the same phenomenon in his term “approximative system”, stressing the successive approximation to the target language. Corder (1971) used the term “idiosyncratic dialect” to suggest that the learner’s language is unique to a particular individual, and that the rules of the learner’s language are peculiar to the language of that individual alone.

Selinker (1972) has suggested that five principal processes operated in interlanguage. These were (1) language transfer (this was listed first, perhaps in difference to the contemporary importance attached to L1 interference); (2) overgeneralization of target language rules; (3) transfer of training (i.e. the language rules enter the learner’s system as a result of instruction); (4) strategies of L2 learning (i.e. ‘an identifiable approach by the learners to the materials to be learned’); and (5) strategies of L2 communication (i.e. an identifiable approach by a learner to communication with native speakers). Interference, then, was seen as one of several processes responsible for interlanguage. The five processes together constitute the ways in which the learner tries to internalize the L2 system. They are the means by which the learner tries to reduce the learning burden to manageable proportions and, as such, it has been suggested by Widdowson (1975:12) that they can be subsumed under the general process of ‘simplification’.

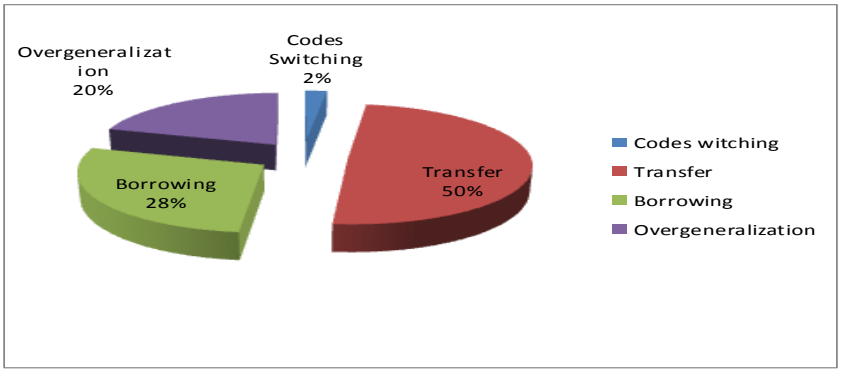
In this study, and as shown in Table 71, out of the written and recognition tasks overgeneralisation, codes switching, transfer and borrowing were identified from their work. The age group 12-14 performed best in the tasks. This result is further

displayed by figure 18, where the proportions of the various types of cross-linguistic influence in the study corpus are given.

**Table 71: % of correctly written and recognised constructions by the cohorts**

| Cohorts (Age) | % of correctly written and recognised constructions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Over-generalization | Codes Switching | Transfer | Borrowing |
| 12-14 | 9 | 2 | 35 | 15 |
| 9-11 | 8 | 0 | 10 | 8 |
| 6-8 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total percentages | 20 | 2 | 50 | 28 |

**Figure 18: Proportions of the various types of cross-linguistic influence**




It emerges from Table 71 that more than half of the cases of cross-linguistic influence in the study corpus were those of transfer. Accordingly, it can be postulated that transfer is the most dominant cross-linguistic influence in the

acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils who have had some exposure to English through formal instruction.

Learners have limited processing space and, therefore, cannot cope with the total complexity of a language system, so they limit the number of hypotheses they test at any one point in time. In analysing the cross-linguistics influences in the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils, Selinker's (1972) and Widdowson's (1975) paradigms were used. First, I present the findings of the current study with regard to the nature of the pupils' English passive interlanguage.

### 7.3. Positive and Negative Transfer

Kellerman defined transfer as "those processes that lead to incorporation of elements from one language into another" (Kellerman 1987 in Ellis 1994: 301). Odlin offers a 'working definition' of transfer: "Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin 1989: 27). L1-L2 transfer was first discussed in Selinker (1969) and other follow-up studies either provided but further evidences of transfer or its role in understanding the learner's error in particular and interlanguage as a whole.

Transfer was considered responsible for error occurrences in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies Lado, (1957); Stockwell & Brown (1965); Corder, 1967; 1975:5). Nevertheless, Richards (1971) evidenced that transfer of strategies was but partially responsible for the learner's errors. In a similar manner, Jain (1974)

reported that transfer was but one of the sources of error. Since then, transfer was more and more indirectly mentioned as an apparent factor of error Corder (1981). The learner language was contrasted with the basic features and hints of transfer (Swan & Smith, 1988; McGurn, 1991; Platt & Weber, 1980) and the tradition has continued into the 90's where Ajiboye (1993) made a theoretical categorization of the errors in terms of phonetics, word-formation, syntax, and semantics.

The relationship between transfer and interlanguage was always a core concern. Though Selinker (1969) did not characterize how the learner's interlanguage looks like (Corder, 1981), yet he did repeatedly imply that transfer was one of the factors associated with the unique system of the learner language Selinker (1969:1972). Then Newser (1971) addressed the relationship by discussing the concepts of an approximative system and plateau. To resume the line, Bickerton (1975) referred to interlanguage as a continuum, while Kellerman (1977) tried to characterize transfer in the learner's interlanguage.

In discussing the phonological features of the learner's interlanguage, Tarone (2007) contended that Native Language (henceforth NL)-based phonology transfers are partially responsible for the features of an interlingual phonology. Similar discussions included Ioup & Weinberger (1987). In terms of linguistic transfer on the syntactical level, Raven (1971) indicated that the learner's NL played a certain role in the formation of his second language syntax. Hakuta (1974) also demonstrated that there is a firm relationship between L1 transfer and the emergence of structure in second language acquisition. In addition, Larsen-

Freeman (1975) evidenced such a relationship through the learner's learning of English grammatical morphemes. To Gass (1979), transfer helps us to see the grammatical elements that are universal in human languages. The present study contributes to these study by investigating transfer as a cross-linguistic phenomenon by specifically focusing on the aspects of *Dholuo*-pseudo passive that were transferred to the *Dholuo* pupils English interlanguage.

The identification of transfer was first discussed by Corder (1981) who remarked that it is the duty of both teachers of languages and native speakers of the language to point out the transfer according to the rules of language. At the same time, Corder (1981) implied the source of data for transfer research lie in the learners' production or utterances that is the observed output which results from the second language learner's attempted production of a TL.

According to Kasper (1992) it is imperative to find certain constraints on a pragmatic transfer, so that our work will be operational. The usual way to identify a transfer in SLA research is something like an informal estimation method (Kasper, 1992). In informal estimations, we decide whether a transfer can be established by looking at the similarities and differences of the percentage by which a particular category of interlanguage features (such as a semantic formulae, strategy, or linguistic form) occurs in the NL, TL, and IL data. Similar response frequencies in all the three data sets are classified as positive transfer (Blum-Kulka, 1982; House & Kasper, 1987; Faerch & Kasper, 1989), while different response frequencies between IL-TL and NL-TL combined with similar

frequencies between IL-NL register as negative transfer (Beebe et al., 1990; Takahashi and Beebe, 1992; Olshtain, 1983).

Another way to determine a transfer is to use a statistically significant method. Kasper (1992) strongly recommended Selinker's (1969) operational definition of transfer. To her, it can be adapted to a suitable method for identifying pragmatic transfer in interlanguage production. This was echoed by Bley-Vroman (1983) who observed that multiple rather than binary choices are usually available for speakers to express communicative intent. Parallel trends towards one option in a binary choice schema as was pointed out by Selinker (1983), however, can rarely be established. A statistically significant method determines whether the differences between the interlanguage and the learner's native language on a particular pragmatic feature are statistically significant, and how these differences relate to the TL. A general guiding principle is, if a pragmatic feature is lack of statistically significant differences in the frequencies of a pragmatic feature in NL, TL, and IL, then it can be operationally defined as positive transfer. On the contrary, statistically significant differences in the frequencies of a pragmatic feature between IL-TL and NL-TL and lack of statistically significant differences between IL and L1 can be operationally defined as negative transfer Kasper (1992). Takahashi (1995) further elaborated on positive transfer as "similarity in terms of response frequencies in NL, IL, and TL", while negative transfer as "similar response frequencies in NL, IL with different response frequencies between NL and TL and between IL and TL."

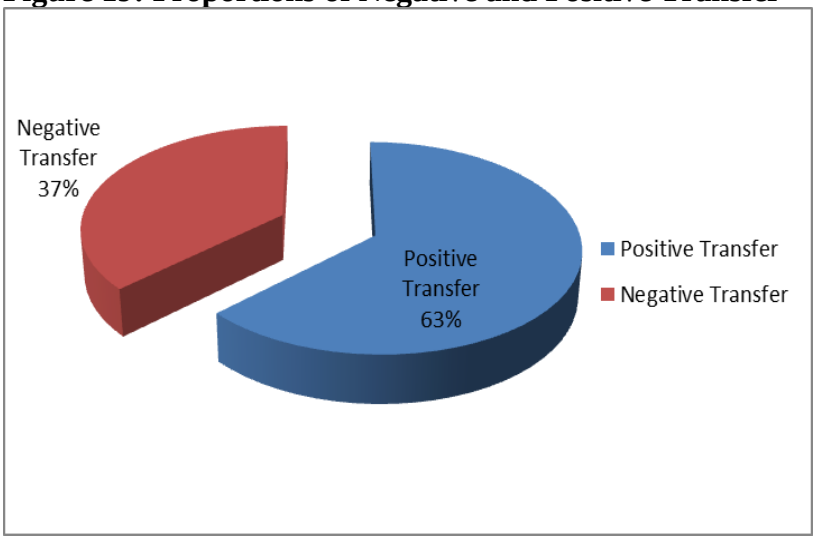
An example of the statistically significant method is Bergman & Kasper's (1993) study of transfer is "apologizing". They showed that more than half of the differences between Thai-English and American-English apologizing strategies are due to negative pragmatic transfer. The process of identifying a transfer, according to Kasper (1992), follows basically three steps namely: an observation on the learner's productive interlanguage data; concentration on the different means that learners employ in expressing and understanding a speech act in the TL and sorting out from collected data the transfer features.

The above procedure outline by Kasper (1982) was applied in this study due to the fact that it was felt to be more rigorous, systematic and scientific as compared to the informal estimation method. The transfer features were then categorized as positive transfer, or negative transfer. Positive transfer was considered to have occurred where a feature or aspect of *Dholuo*-pseudo passive was also present in the English passive, so acquisition of this item made little or no difficulty for the learner. Negative transfer was considered to have occurred where there was no concordance between L1 and L2 and thus, acquisition of the new L2 structure would be more difficult and errors reflecting the L1 structure would be produced (Powell 1998: 2 and Dulay et al. 1982: 97).

Figure 19 indicates the proportions of positive and negative transfer cases that were observed in the English passive interlanguage corpus of *Dholuo* speaking pupils who are learning English. From the figure, it is evident that cases of positive transfer accounted for a majority of the cases (29) at 63% as compared to (17) at

37% for cases of negative transfer. This implies that the cases of transfer of the knowledge of the *Dholuo* passive that enhanced the learning of the English passive construction were more than those that impeded the acquisition of the English passive construction. The implications of this are discussed later on once all the findings relating to cross-linguistic influence have been presented.

**Figure 19: Proportions of Negative and Positive Transfer**




In the foregoing sections, we present the findings of the study relating to both positive and negative transfer.

### 7.3.1. Positive Transfer

As has been stated earlier, positive transfer was considered to have occurred where a feature or aspect of *Dholuo*-pseudo passive was also present in the English passive, so acquisition of this item made little or no difficulty for the learner. Three categories of positive transfer were identified in the corpus, namely, where

there was an agentless passive, cases of passive analogue, and finally cases of oblique agents. These are further discussed and exemplified below:

#### 7.3.1.1. Agentless passives

It is imperative to point out that English language also has agentless passives. These occur in English, in situations among others, where the agent is obvious, not known or irrelevant. In all these instances, the agent is normally recoverable either from the immediate context or from the co-text. However, the agentless passives identified in this study as aspect of transfer differed from the usual agentless passives in English in that the agent was neither recoverable from the immediate context, nor from the co-text and as such they were evidently instances where the agent was erroneously omitted in line with the *Dholuo* passive construction. To Omondi (1982: 38), the type of sentences found in *Dholuo* passive are 'agentless sentences which is the nearest *Dholuo* gets to the passive construction'. The verb displays a prefix 'which may be said to represent the 'indefinite' or 'general person' being a marker of an indefinite generalized subject.'

#### 7.3.1.2. Passive analogs

The 'passive analog' is a construction in which the subject remains preverbal, agrees with the active verb and the object is fronted. According to Noonan and Woock (1978) and Noonan (1992), resumption is optional with a third person object, obligatory with first and second person pronouns and complement of prepositions, and illicit with non-human third person objects. The pseudo-passive approach of *Dholuo* is consistent with what has been observed in other Southern

Luo languages like Lango Noonan, (1977); Noonan and Woock (1978); Noonan (1992) and Acholi language, Ocaya, (1988;2004), as they are described as lacking passive morphology. Instead, to express the passive voice – roughly, an event in which the highest thematic role available is not topical or less topical than another participant– they resort to various active-based strategies.

#### 7.3.1.3. Oblique agents

The oblique passive is a type of impersonal passive with the expression of an oblique agent. The impersonal passive voice is a verb voice that decreases the valency of an intransitive verb (which has valency one) to zero (Kula and Marten, 2010). The impersonal passive deletes the subject of an intransitive verb. In place of the verb`s subject, the construction instead may include a syntactic placeholder, also called a dummy. This placeholder has neither the thematic nor referential content. The oblique passive is attested in other languages and is not at all uncommon (just like impersonal transitive). It is found in a number of Bantu languages, the family neighbouring *Dholuo*. Impersonal passives with optional expression of an oblique-agent are found, for instance, in Bemba, spoken in Zambia (Kula and Marten, 2010) (see also Kawasha (2007) who reports the same type of pseudo-passive for Luvale (Angola, Zambia), KiKaonde (Zambia, DRC), Luchazi (Angola, Zambia) and Kimbundu Angola)). Table 72 summarises these three cases of positive transfer that were noted in the corpus of the *Dholuo* speaking pupils who were acquiring the English passive.

**Table 72: Cases of Positive Transfer in the Study Corpus**

| **Category** | ***Dholuo*-Pseudo passive** | **English Interlanguage** | **Token** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Agentless passive** | oted rech (fish was cooked) | fish cooked | 15 |
| **Passive analog** | diendwa ondiek ochamo (our goat was eaten by a leopard) | our goat leopard ate | 6 |
| **Oblique passive** | ne ok one Onyango | Onyango not seen | 8 |

In Table 72, the actual productions by the pupils (oral and written) are given under the category "English interlanguage", while the *Dholuo* passive equivalents which were the source of the transfer are given under the category "*Dholuo* passive", where also, the correct English passive renditions are given in brackets.

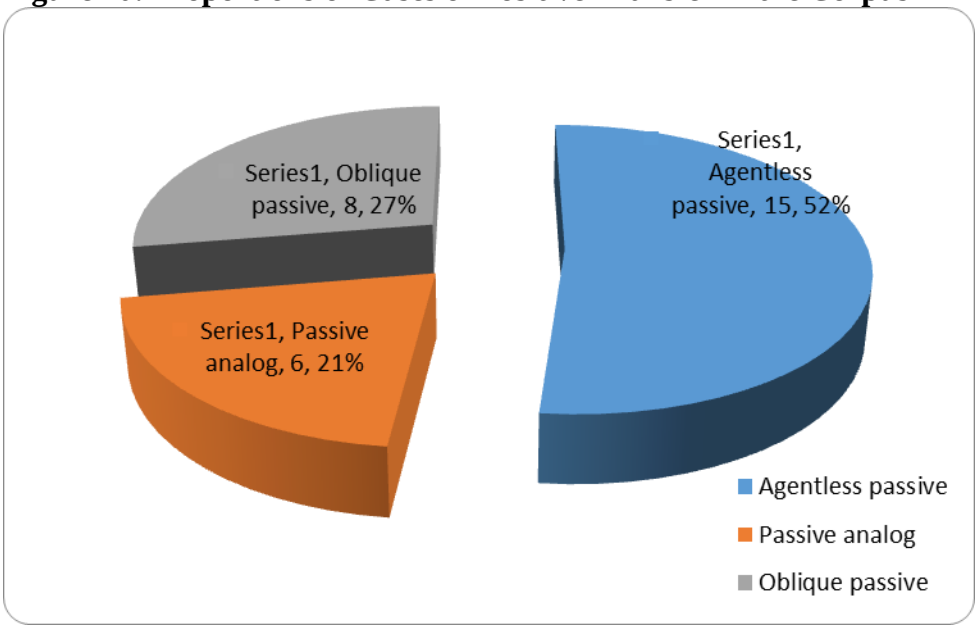
The examples given above, being instances of positive transfer, are pointers to the fact that the pupils were in the process of grappling with the target language passive structure by trying to understand how it works. Consequently, such learners were engaged in a process of hypothesis testing using their knowledge of *Dholuo* passive as the spring board. A look at some of the examples provided in the above table attests to this: for instance, although in the agentless passive, the child fails to get the correct English passive construction, there is evidence, based on the output that the child is on course to learning the correct structure.

As previously stated, the passive voice in English is formed by combining a form of the verb to be with the past participle of a transitive verb. Its overall structure and its contrast with the active voice is probably easier to see if they are displayed

in a paradigm of traditional English verb tenses as has been done elsewhere in this thesis. Thus, by being able to produce the agentless passive, the pupils had already acquired the correct form of the passive verb and were therefore enroute to mastery of the full passive structure. With the passive analog on the other hand, there is evidence that the child has mastered both the correct form of the participle verb and the NP1 and NP2 inversion rule. Finally, the oblique passive demonstrates the fact that the learners have acquired both the participle verb rule and the NP1 and NP2 inversion rule, but are yet to acquire the "be" insertion rule. All these three cases are considered as positive transfer because the learners took advantage of the presence of the relevant target structures of the English passive constructions in *Dholuo* passive in their endeavour to learn the former.

Figure 20 indicates the proportions of the various types of *Dholuo* passive transferred to English interlanguage.

**Figure 20: Proportions of Cases of Positive Transfer in the Corpus**




### 7.3.2. Negative Transfer

Negative transfer was considered to have occurred where a feature or aspect of *Dholuo*-pseudo passive was not present in the English passive, so acquisition of this item presented difficulties to the learner. Four categories of positive transfer were identified in the corpus, namely, where there was a thematic patient without an agent; a thematic patient with an optional agent in an adjunct; a thematic patient with a non-canonical word order; and finally a thematic patient with an instrument instead of an agent. These are further discussed and exemplified below.

#### 7.3.2.1. Thematic Patient without an agent

Also called the target or undergoer, the patient is the participant of a situation upon whom an action is carried out. A patient as differentiated from a theme must

undergo a change in state. A theme is denoted by a stative verb, whereas a patient is denoted by a dynamic verb. At the very least, there is debate to this effect. In sentences where there is a grammatical patient, whether thematic or otherwise, the agent is usually obligatory, both grammatically and semantically. This is due to the fact that they are usually, in these structures, canonical arguments. In semantic obligatoriness, canonical arguments are semantically required to complete the meaning of the predicate, whereas adjuncts are semantically not required (cf. Koenig et al. 2003). Another way to put it is to say that arguments are necessarily entailed by the predicate whereas adjuncts are only optionally entailed Rákosi (2006). Croft (2001) illustrates the same point with the sentence *Randy chased the dog in the park* by writing that "In some sense, the dog is a more "necessary" part of the event than the location is." On the other hand, Canonical arguments are required in syntax whereas adjuncts are optional (Matthews 1981: 125, Przepiórkowski (1999), Dowty (2000), Croft (2001: 272–273, van Valin 2001: 93). According to this criterion, manner adverbs are arguments of certain predicates because they obligatorily co-occur with them, e.g. *behave well/badly*, *treat fairly/harshly*, *look good* (cf. Helbig and Schenkel 1983: 46, Dowty 2000, Rákosi 2006: 100–101).

#### 7.3.2.2. Thematic Patient with Optional Agent in an Adjunct

There were also cases where there was a thematic patient but with an optional agent in an adjunct. An agent, in grammatical terms, is a word or phrase that constitutes an optional element or is considered of secondary importance in a

sentence, for example *on the table* in *we left some flowers on the table*. As has already been pointed out above, in sentences with patient, the agent becomes both semantically and syntactically obligatory. The presence of sentences with a patient but with an optional agent in the study corpus was thus analysed to have been a transfer from *Dholuo* impersonal passive where this is quite legitimate.

#### 7.3.2.3. Thematic Patient with non-Canonical Word Order

The third type of negative transfer were cases in which there was a thematic patient and an agent, but with non-canonical English word order. In such cases, instead of the thematic patient preceding the verb as in a proto-typical passive, it followed the verb in the order *V-O-by Agent.* Thus, in such instances, whereas the obligatoriness of the agent was observed, word order was changed.

#### 7.3.2.4. Thematic Patient with an Instrument instead of an Agent

The final case of negative transfer involved cases where the thematic patient had an instrument instead of an agent. It should be noted here that where there is a patient as opposed to the agent, the instrument is never semantically or syntactically obligatory in sentences with thematic patients. This, therefore, was also considered as one of the instances of negative transfer from *Dholuo* impersonal passive constructions in which such a structure would be legitimate. The table below summarises the various cases of negative transfer found in the study corpus. The cases are given together with their sources in the *Dholuo* passive under the column "*Dholuo* passive". As has been mentioned earlier, 17 cases of negative transfer were noted in total as shown in Table 73.

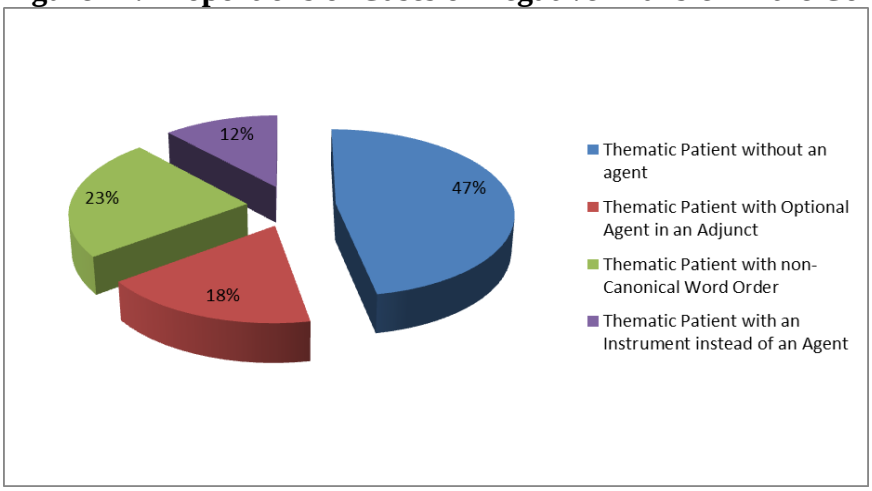
**Table 73: Cases of Negative Transfer in the Study Corpus**

| **Category** | ***Dholuo*-Pseudo passive** | **English Interlanguage** | **Token** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Thematic Patient without an agent** | Chae nende oted (tea was cooked) | Tea cooked | 8 |
| **Thematic Patient with Optional Agent in an Adjunct** | mtoka olos gi fundi | with a mechanic the vehicle was repaired | 3 |
| **Thematic Patient with non-Canonical Word Order** | no-ted kuon | was cooked ugali | 4 |
| **Thematic Patient with an Instrument instead of an Agent** | yath nende otong go-panga | tree was cut with a machete | 2 |

Furthermore, Figure 21 below illustrates the proportions of the various cases of negative transfer that were found in the study corpus. It emerges that out of a total of 17 cases; almost half of them (47%) involved the use of thematic patients without agents. Due to the fact that all these cases involved the pupils carrying over structures of the *Dholuo* passive into their English passive interlanguage, and these structures were not present in the target English language passive structure, they were thus considered as cases of negative transfer. Accordingly, it is postulated that such instances impeded the acquisition of the target English passive structure by the pupils. A comparison between the degrees of positive and negative transfer in the data clearly indicates that the former had higher instances than the latter. Accordingly, it may be concluded that with respect to transfer as a cross-linguistic phenomenon in the acquisition of English passive constructions by

*Dholuo* speaking pupils who are learning English, there is an overall positive influence in the entire acquisition process.

**Figure 21: Proportions of Cases of Negative Transfer in the Corpus**




## 7.4. Borrowing

Linguistic borrowing is a sociolinguistic phenomenon and a form of language interference which appears among bilingual speakers. It is very common in multilingual societies all over the world ( Dulay et al. 1982:113). Powell (1998:8) defines borrowing as "the incorporation of linguistic material from one language into another." Most commonly borrowed items are, as Dulay et al. (1982:113) explain, "lexical items that express either cultural concepts that are new to the borrowing group, or notions that are particularly important in a given contact situation". For example, after discovering the American continent, English and other old European languages borrowed words from the native American languages, such as maize, tomato, igloo, etc.

Words that are borrowed into a language usually preserve their general sound pattern, but they also modify it according to the phonetic and phonological system of the borrowing language. After that, the words are incorporated into the grammar of the borrowing language, i.e. they are given articles, inflections, e.t.c ( Dulay et al.1982: 114). Two types of lexical borrowing have been identified in literature, namely integrated borrowing and creative borrowing. Intergrated borrowing refers to a word which was borrowed into a language and speakers of that language learn this word from each other without understanding its original meaning in the language of origin. On the other hand, '*creative borrowing'* is characterized by speakers using a word from another language to express a concept closely related to the culture of that language (Dulay et al.1982:114). Linguists have been aware of the outcomes of language contact for a long time, and first descriptions of contact phenomena go back to the classical Greek period (cf. Jarvis & Pavlenko, (2008:1), though it is mainly since Haugen (1950) and Weinreich (1953) that contact phenomena have been studied systematically, including studies of grammatical contact phenomena.

Although much of the works that have been done on linguistic borrowing has focused on lexical borrowing (loanwords), the present study concerns itself with grammatical borrowing as a cross-linguistic phenomenon during second language acquisition.

In recent years grammatical borrowing has been looked at from a number of typological perspectives. For example, analysing a wide range of contact

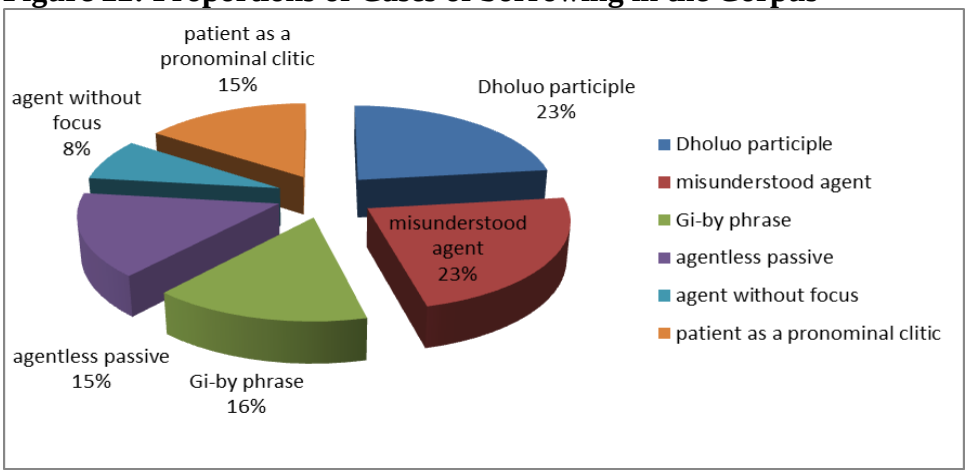
situations, Heine & Kuteva (2005) find that language contact at the grammatical level follows patterns of grammaticalisation similar to those in language-internal changes. In a different typological study, Matras & Sakel (2007a) carry out a typological survey of contact situations. Matras (2007) revisits the question whether it is possible to establish borrowing hierarchies such as those set out by Moravcsik (1978) and Thomason & Kaufman (1988). Indeed, he finds various correlations, presenting a number of sub-hierarchies that show what is likely to happen in contact situations.

A number of recent approaches to language contact (Matras & Sakel 2007b) distinguish different types of loans, namely *matter* (MAT) and *pattern* (PAT). The former (MAT) is the borrowing of morpho-phonological material, i.e. taking a word from one language and inserting it into another. The latter (PAT) is the replication of patterns and is often referred to as calque or loan translation, i.e. only the structure or pattern is followed, while the word(s) used are native to the recipient language. While the distinction between MAT and PAT is very useful in analysing contact phenomena, it has its limits. MAT loans are often a combination of MAT and PAT, i.e. the morphological form appears in the same type of construction as in its source language. MAT is not always a clear copy of the source language form in that it is often phonologically integrated and may have been restricted or extended in its function or meaning. Similarly, PAT is not always an exact copy of the source language, and differences to the original are common. This study focused on the identification of cases of MAT with specific

reference to cases of loaning *Dholuo* passive structure into the English passive structure.

The analysis of interlanguage data in the study revealed that cases of borrowing from the *Dholuo* passive construction involved the placement of agent in the English passive construction. Figure 22 indicates the relative proportions of the various instances of borrowing in study corpus.

**Figure 22: Proportions of Cases of borrowing in the Corpus**




As is evident in Figure 22, a majority of the cases of borrowing involved the learners using the *Dholuo* participle instead of the English participle in the formation of English passive constructions; misunderstanding the agentive role in the English passive constructions. The least number of cases involved where the agent was used, but without focus.

### 7.5. Code Switching

The term ‘code-switching’ refers to “an active, creative process of incorporating material from both of a bilingual’s languages into communicative acts” Dulay et al. (1982: 115). It is pertinent to make a distinction here between code-switching and borrowing. Whereas there is no integration of the word(s) or clause(s) into the language spoken in code switching, there is morphological and phonological integration in borrowing Grosjean, (1982:308). Rapid switches from one language into the other are very characteristic feature for code-switching. There is a widespread opinion that code-switching is an evidence of a lack of proficiency, fluency or control over the language systems on the part of the speaker. However, this is not true. On the contrary, code-switching is most frequent among the most proficient bilinguals and is governed by strict structural and grammatical rules of both the languages involved. It has a strong sociolinguistic function: most importantly, it works as an ethnic marker Dulay et al. (1982).

Code-switching can take the form of (a) inserting words or short phrases from one language into single sentences in another language or (b) altering the languages in terms of entire phrases or clauses. The following examples have been taken from a study of adults' speech in Spanish-English bilingual community by Aurelio Espinosa Dulay et al. (1982)

As it is the case for teachers’ code switching, the pupils also are not always aware of the reasons for code switching as well as its functions and outcomes. Although they may unconsciously perform code switching, it clearly serves some functions

either beneficial or not. Eldridge (1996) names these functions as: equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, and conflict control.

The first function of student code switch is equivalence. In this case, the student makes use of the native equivalent of a certain lexical item in the target language and therefore code switches to his/her native tongue. This process may be correlated with the deficiency in linguistic competence of the target language, which makes the student use the native lexical item when he/she has not the competence for using the target language explanation for a particular lexical item. So, "equivalence" functions as a defensive mechanism for pupils as it gives the student the opportunity to continue communication by bridging the gaps resulting from foreign language incompetence.

The next function to be introduced is floor-holding. During a conversation in the target language, the pupils fill the stopgap with native language use. It may be suggested that this is a mechanism used by the pupils in order to avoid gaps in communication, which may result from the lack of fluency in the target language. The learners performing code switching for floor holding generally have the same problem: they cannot recall the appropriate target language structure or lexicon. It may be claimed that this type of language alternation may have negative effects on learning a foreign language; since it may result in loss of fluency in the long term.

The third consideration in pupils' code switching is reiteration, which is pointed by Eldridge as: "messages are reinforced, emphasized, or clarified where the message has already been transmitted in one code, but not understood" (1996:306). In this

case, the message in the target language is repeated by the student in native tongue through which the learner tries to give the meaning by making use of a repetition technique. The reason for this specific language alternation case may be two-fold: first, he/she may not have transferred the meaning exactly in target language. Second, the student may think that it is more appropriate to code switch in order to indicate to the teacher that the content is clearly understood by him/her.

The last function of pupils' code switching is conflict control. For the potentially conflictive language use of a student (meaning that the student tends to avoid a misunderstanding or tends to utter words indirectly for specific purposes), the code switching is a strategy to transfer the intended meaning. The underlying reasons for the tendency to use this type of code switching may vary according to pupils' needs, intentions or purposes. Additionally, the lack of some culturally equivalent lexis among the native language and target language which may lead to violation of the transference of intended meaning may result in code switching for conflict control; therefore possible misunderstandings are avoided. In this study, it emerged that there were only two cases of code switching in the entire study corpus. These instances of syntactic borrowing are given below:

*92. The plates were washed gi Atieno*

The above example is a case where the gi 'by' phrase in the PP position in the *Dholuo* passive, is integrated into an English passive structure, Ochola (1999) contends that the "gi"-by phrase paradigm in *Dholuo* is a common characteristic of a true passive in languages such as English. Essentially, it appears that the learner

in this case had mastered the "by" insertion rule in the formation of English passive constructions and noticed that this is in many ways similar to the *Dholuo* "by" phrase; but having not fully learnt the rule, decided to code switch to the *Dholuo* passive structure. The second instance is given in number below:

*93. Adoyo was bitten gi thuol*

It is worth pointing out that the two cases of code switching reported in this data are those that can be classified as equivalence. As already mentioned, in this case, the student makes use of the native equivalent of a certain lexical item in the target language and therefore code switches to his/her native tongue. The presence of these two instances of code switching in the student data is therefore symptomatic of the efforts by the learners to come to terms with the passive structure of the English language through a process of hypothesis testing. In these two cases, it was deemed appropriate to classify them as instances negative transfer due to the fact that the ease of transfer of the "by" phrase in the *Dholuo* passive construction made it difficult or convenient for the learners to acquire the correct target structure.

### 7.6. Overgeneralization

The starting point for discussing overgeneralization as a L1 and L2 learning strategy is the concept of interlanguage, which is considered to be an interim grammar that "learners build on their way to full target language competence" Ellis (1994:30). Though, introduced by Selinker (1972) and attributed to the theory of second language acquisition, the construct of interlanguage can refer to the

exploration of child L1 acquisition. The reason for that is the following: just like L2 learners, pupils who acquire their mother tongue, are involved in a continual process of formulation of hypotheses about language rules. As new elements of the L1 are acquired, the hypotheses are tested and assessed which brings pupils closer to the correct use of the language in focus.

Although the interlanguage systems of L1 pupils and L2 speakers are structurally intermediate in status, the L2 learner's interlanguage system is more complicated than that of a L1 learning child. While the interim grammar of a child who is attaining his/her first language approximates the L1, the interim grammar of a L2 speaker is an intermediate stage between the L1 and L2 in which the learner uses forms from both linguistic systems in order to produce sentences in L2 .

The acquisition of abstract grammatical constructions represents the maturation of a child's linguistic productivity. This productivity means that a child can take constructions that have already been learned and extend the application of the construction by using different words. One way to identify if the child has utilized a new construction in a productive way is to look for overgeneralizations in the application of the construction. For instance, things that sound like mistakes in a child's speech might actually represent the analogical extension of a learned construction into new lexical territory to attempt to communicate something that the child understands, but which is outside of the acquired bank of constructions. Pupils sometimes use intransitive verbs in a transitive construction. While this overgeneralization of the transitive construction is ungrammatical, it does

represent an attempt at productive use of learned lexical concepts in learned constructions. Adults encountering overgeneralizations may be able to determine what the child is attempting to communicate as the actual utterance represents an encoding of a concept with the construction as the foundation of meaning with the intransitive verb as the domain of meaning. “He falled me down” Bowerman (1982, cited in Tomasello (2003) is an attested case which indicates that the child has not acquired the appropriate transitive verb to describe the situation of being knocked over, even though the child has acquired the transitive construction.

This is a strategy of innovation in conversation, and may have insight for second language acquisition; when a construction for a particular concept is known, but the lexical particulars are unknown, adapting lexical particulars that account for the general concept and using them in a known construction permits the fielding of the ill-formed utterance and enabling the negotiation of meaning to take place.

In the present study, instances of overgeneralization by *Dholuo* speaking pupils who are acquiring the English passive constructions were analysed. The analysis revealed that unlike other instances of cross-linguistic influence with regard to overgeneralization, these were occasioned by properties of the English language and the English passive itself, and had nothing to do with the structure of the *Dholuo* passive. This, therefore, represents a unique case of cross-linguistic influence. Nonetheless, this would still be considered as a case of cross-linguistic influence given the fact that the interlanguage system that generated them is also considered, alongside the target English language, as a linguistic system. As

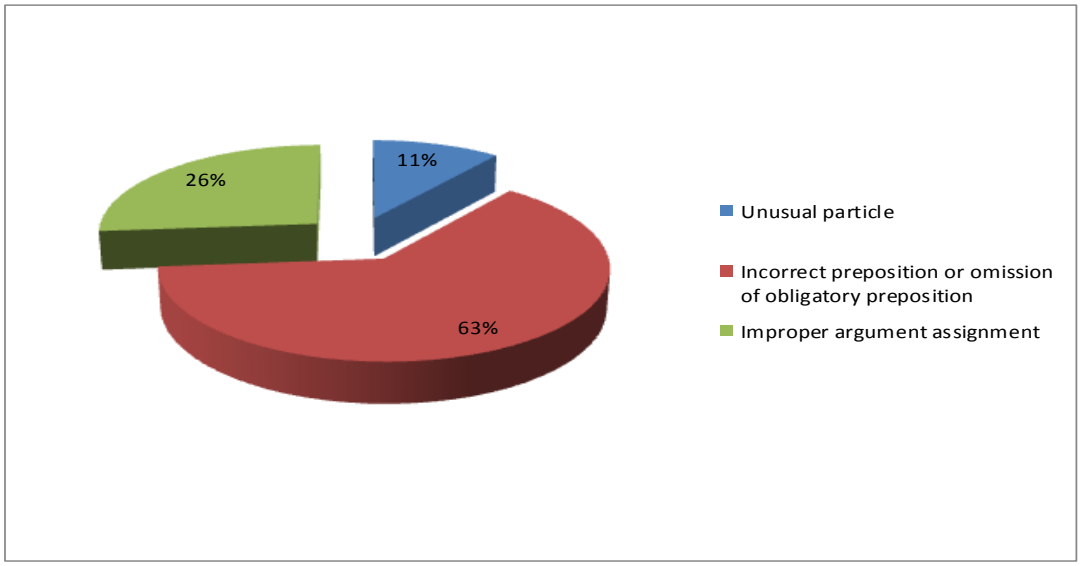
shown in Table 74, a total of 19 cases of overgeneralization were identified in the study corpus. These fell into three categories.

**Table 74: Cases of overgeneralization**

| **Category** | **Example** | **Tokens** |
|---|---|---|
| Unusual particle | Now it's all colored up (while drawing) | 2 |
| Incorrect preposition or omission of obligatory preposition | Oh, look its ropted through here. (Past participle of "rope")* | 12 |
| Improper argument assignment | It was get burned on my thore fingeh | 5 |

The proportions of the various categories of overgeneralization found in the study corpus are given in the Figure 23.

**Figure 23: Proportions of Cases of Overgeneralizations in the Corpus**




Furthermore, from Figure 23 it is evident that a majority of the cases of overgeneralizations involved the use of incorrect preposition or the omission of an obligatory preposition followed by improper argument assignment and finally the use of unusual particle.

## 7.7. Summary

This chapter has analysed and discussed the role of cross-linguistic influence in the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. Using the interlanguage theory, it has been demonstrated that the pupils' interlanguage is characteristic of most approximative linguistic systems in the sense that it has properties of both the *Dholuo* passive and the English passive constructions. In the next Chapter, the entire study is concluded and a number of recommendations made.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 8.1. Introduction

The present study focused on the acquisition of English passive constructions by second language learners of English, namely *Dholuo* speaking pupils who have undergone about six years of English instruction. More specifically, the present study sought to contribute to the scholarship and debate on second language acquisition of the English passive by focusing specifically on how the acquisition of the English passive form occurs in pupils who already have an established first language which is *Dholuo*. The study also restricted itself to *Dholuo* pupils between the ages of 6-14. This is the age at which the pupils are being taught elements of English grammar, including passive constructions. *Dholuo* has two largely mutually intelligible dialects namely the Trans-Yala and the South Nyanza dialects. This study focused only on the pupils speaking the Trans –Yala dialect. This chapter also summarises the research findings, gives a conclusion and proposes recommendations both for policy formulation and for further research.

## 8.2. Summary of Findings

In order to answer the above research questions, the study was guided by the following objectives:

a) To test the role of gender and age in the acquisition of the English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils

b) To describe the syntactic properties of the pupils' passive constructions

c) To describe the acquisition profile of English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils

d) To test the effect of cross linguistic influences of the properties of *Dholuo* pseudo-passive on the acquisition of the English passive

The study adopted a time-lag strategy research design (Bennet-Kastor, 1998; Orwenjo 2009). This is a research design that combines both the longitudinal and the descriptive cross-sectional designs. It involves subjects in different groups according to their respective levels of development, assumed on the basis of age or any other defensible criteria. The researcher then compared peers or cohorts as they successively reached a given age or points of development. Such a research design enabled the researcher to determine whether the observed changes in terms of the acquisition of the English passive were due to age or gender. The pupils were divided into three cohorts on the basis of age and gender.

The study was carried out in a selected primary school within Bondo district in Siaya County in the Republic of Kenya. The researcher conveniently sampled one primary school within the Bondo District from which subjects ( *Dholuo* speaking pupils) were identified for the study. Bondo District was ideal for the study due to a number of reasons: firstly, this county is predominantly *Dholuo* speaking and thus was ideal for the study based on *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The district, apart from its headquarters, is largely rural hence most of the pupils were proficient in the local language, namely *Dholuo*. Finally, the researcher, being a native of the

area, was very familiar with the locale and hence found it easy to conduct the research.

With regard to the influence of age and gender on the acquisition of English passive constructions by *Dholuo* speaking pupils, statistical analyses conducted on the performance of the pupils in the production and receptive tasks administered revealed that age has an influence in the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils; overall mean scores in all the tasks increased with age from 4.77 mean for those aged between 6 to 8 years, 13.38 for those aged 9 to 11 years to a high mean of 46.35 for those aged 12 to 14 years. The correlation between the dependent and independent variable was very strong with a coefficient of +0.880. The ANOVA test proved that there is a significant relationship between age and the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils.

On the influence of gender, the analysis revealed that it had no influence in the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. This is evidenced by the calculated mean score for the boys were 24.28 while that of girls was 26.00. The correlation analysis in Table 4.68 shown in Chapter four, shows a slight positive correlation (0.041). The ANOVA test indicated that there was no significant relationship between gender and the acquisition of the passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. This is because of the small size of the computed F (0.164), which indicates that there is no difference in the mean distribution of the variables at 0.05 level of significance. The observed differences were thus not significant.

Another objective of the present study was to describe the syntactic properties of the pupils' passive constructions. This objective was addressed in chapter five together with the third objective, namely to describe the acquisition profile of English passive by *Dholuo* speaking pupils. The study found out that the pupils demonstrated adult like behaviour. This demonstrates pupils' ability on actives and actional passives. However, performance was split on two conditions: the non-actional non-truncated passive on which performance was at chance (46.1%), and the nonactional truncated passive (32), on which performance, though not perfect, was well above chance (86.5%). On this objective, the study concluded that these results argue against the Maturation Hypothesis, because they indicate that pupils' problem lies not with A-chains but with the *by*-phrase.

Looking at the data of the study, it was argued that their problem with passives is actually related to the interpretation of the by-phrase, and nothing else: they did well on be-passive and get-passive constructions. They made mistakes only on non-actional passives with *by*-phrases, and crucially, they made none once the by-phrase had been eliminated. Thus, the problem cannot be a general problem with the passive (or with A-chains), because that would not explain the pupils' performance on most passives, and crucially, it would not explain why the presence or absence of the by-phrase made a difference.

Concerning the acquisition profile of the *Dholuo* speaking pupils who are acquiring English passive constructions, the study found out that the pupils' data exhibited complex, simple and ill formed constructions. The results were further

divided into 5 categories: well-formed passives (WP), malformed passives (MP), actives (Act.), possible pseudo-passives (PP), and other constructions (Oth.). The well-formed passives refer to native-like passives, while the malformed passives are the ones with agreement errors and those with errors in past participle markers The active sentences are those with agent subjects and active verbs, whereas the possible pseudo passives are the ones that are similar to the IL pseudo-passives.

Finally, with regard to the last objective whereby the study sought to test the effect of cross linguistic influences of the properties of *Dholuo* pseudo-passive on the acquisition of the English passive, the study found out that the structures of both the English passive constructions and *Dholuo* pseudo-passive constructions had both positive and negative influences on the pupils' English passive interlanguage. These were manifested in the form of overgeneralizations, positive and negative transfer, syntactic borrowing and code switching.

### 8.3. Conclusions

The present study has made what could be considered as a modest contribution to debate and scholarship on language acquisition; especially where the subjects acquiring certain target structures in one language have more or less similar structures in their first language. By focusing on *Dholuo*, an African language, and looking at how its structure impacts on the acquisition of English structures (specifically the English passive constructions), the present study opens new grounds for further research and scholarship by deviating from the often trodden

path in such studies which have hitherto concentrated on languages with the same family or related families.

## 8.4. Recommendations Based on Findings

In the light of the foregoing findings, the study makes the following recommendations for further study

### 8.4.1. Policy Recommendations

Given that the study established that there is a lot of influence of *Dholuo* pseudo-passive structure on the latent English passive interlanguage structure, the study makes the following policy recommendations:

a) Syllabus designers and material developers should take due cognisance of the cross linguistic influence while designing syllabi and developing instructional materials for lower primary classes.

b) There is need for teachers handling English language in the corresponding grades to be made aware of the potential effects of the L1 on the acquisition of English target structures.

### 8.4.2. Recommendations for Further Research

Given the scope and limitations of the present study, and considered together with the findings of the study, the following are recommended for further study:

a) The present study focused on only one aspect of English grammar, namely the passive. There is need for more studies which focus on the interaction of *Dholuo* with the acquisition of other aspects of English grammar.

b) The present study focused only on *Dholuo* as a first language and how its syntax interacts with the syntax of English in the acquisition of the latter. There is need for more studies of other languages and how they interact with English during the acquisition process.

c) The present study focused on pupils learning English as a second language. There is need for other studies that would focus on adult learners so that any differences attributable to age of the learners could be noted

d) The present study has focused solely on second language acquisition of English passive constructions. There is need for similar studies but focusing on child language acquisition within the African background so that inherent differences can be noted and accounted for.

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# APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: A map of Siaya County including Bondo District


Source :https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+siaya+county

APPENDIX 2: A Research Questionnaire -Information about the informant

1. What is your name?

   ---

2. Where were you born?

   ---

3. How old are you?

   ---

4. Where do you live?

   ---

5. Are your parents both Luo?

   ---

6. Which languages do you speak?

   ---

7. Which languages do you speak:

   With your parents----------

   With your friends----------

   With your friends----------

8. To which class do you belong in this school?

   ---

9. When did you start learning English?----------

10. How often do you speak *Dholuo*?----------

    -

11. Where do your parents work?

    Father----------

    Mother----------

APPENDIX 3: Written test to identify 18 participants

**Task**

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct forms of passive, using the verbs in brackets

Making bread

Flour----------(buy) by the makers. It ----------( bring) to the bakery. Some water and salt----------(add) into it. Dough----------( make) by the workers or machines. It ----------( bake) in big ovens. Bread----------( deliver) to the shops. It ----------(sell) there. Bread----------( eat) bu millions of the people every day.

TASK …

Standard 1-3 (6-8 years)… write a paragraph about how ugali is made

Standard 4-5 (9-11 years)… write two paragraphs about how a house is swept

Standard 6-8 (12-14) … write a three paragraphs about the christmas

APPENDIX 4: PICTURES P.1-P.23

**(P. 1)**

**(P. 2)**

**(P. 3)**

**(P. 4)**

**(P. 5)**

**(P. 6)**

**(P. 7)**

**(P. 8)**

**(P. 9)**

**P.10)**

**(P.11)**

**(P.12)**

**(P.13)**

**(P.14)**

**(P.15)**

**(P.16)**

**(P.17)**

**(P.18)**

**(P.19)**

**(P.20)**

**(P.21)**

**(P.22)**

**(P.23)**

APPENDIX 5: Sentences Read to Pupils

**Aural Input heard by pupils**

1. Cars are repaired by mechanics.
2. Boys are carried by a motorcycle
3. Maize is grown by farmers.
4. Fish is caught by fisherman.
5. Meals are prepared by cooks.
6. Clothes are being sewed by a tailor.
7. Books are written on by pupils
8. The land is ploughed by oxen
9. The boat is rowed by the fishermen
10. Babies are fed by their mothers
11. The book was written on by a pupil
12. Tom got caught (by the police)
13. The dog was run over by a car
14. Bob got injured
15. Mary is a good player
16. The mother is carrying the babies
17. The girl is getting treated by the doctor
18. The boy is being chased by a hippopotamus
19. The hyena is seen
20. The boy is seen by the donkey
21. She looked at the baby
22. Tom milked the cow
23. They greeted one another
24. The boy ate a banana

APPENDIX 6: Reading sentences and putting a tick for the sentences including passive.

| | | **Tick (√)** |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Kenyans grow coffee | |
| **2** | Fish is caught by fishermen. | |
| **3** | Nurses look after patients. | |
| **4** | The teacher teaches pupils. | |
| **5** | Rice is grown by farmers in Yala swamp | |
| **6** | Everybody likes sleeping. | |
| **7** | Ohangla is listened to by many people in Siaya county . | |
| **8** | Bondo is known by a lot of people in Kenya. | |
| **9** | A lot of people speak *Dholuo* in Nyanza province. | |
| **10** | Mombasa is visited by many tourists every year. | |
| **11** | Omena is cooked by mothers in the kitchen | |
| **12** | Pupils are playing in the field. | |
| **13** | Maria likes skipping | |
| **14** | The school choices were made by our parents | |
| **15** | The head teacher is talking at the parade. | |

APPENDIX 7: Making sentences using the given cues

Make sentences using the given cues in columns A, B, C. Then, compare your sentences with your partner .

| **A** | **B** | **C** |
|---|---|---|
| Books | | called to the board by the teacher |
| Turkish | are | developed in dark rooms |
| Photographs | being | eaten in China |
| I | been | taught in all Turkish schools |
| A lot of rice | was | sold at the bookstores. |
| English | am | spoken by many people around the world |
| Cars | is | read by a lot of people. |
| We | are | given a test every week. |
| The newspaper | | produced in factories. |
| ‘Hürriyet’ | | taken at studios. |
| | | Grown by Chinese. |
| | | mended at the garages. |
| | | written by authors. |
| | | spoken in Turkey. |
| | | loved by a lot of friends. |
| | | sold at newsagent’s. |

APPENDIX 8: Reading sentences

Think about your family and decide whether you agree or not with the following sentences. Read the sentences to your partner as you compare your views. Rewrite down the sentences you agree with.

| **In your family,** | **Agree** | **Disagree** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Bread is bought by your father. | | |
| 2. Meals are cooked by your mother. | | |
| 3. Grandparents are visited by pupils. | | |
| 4. Newspaper is read every day. | | |
| 5. Computer is used. | | |
| 6. Pop music is listened every day. | | |
| 7. Your mother is helped by your sister / brother | | |

APPENDIX 9: Test paper

Name:_____class:_____ Age:_____ gender _____

Write complete sentences from the subjects and the verbs given.

| Examples: | |
|---|---|
| 1. Girl, cry | The girl cried. |
| 2. Cake, eat | The cake was eaten. |

1. accident, happen
2. book, read
3. boy, walk
4. car, drive
5. cart, push
6. cat, sleep
7. dog, die
8. gate, hit
9. leaves, fall
10. letter, write
11. milk, expire
12. mistakes, occur
13. passengers, arrive
14. picture, paint
15. plane, fly
16. prize, win

17. problem, arise

18. shadow, appear

19. song, sing

20. stranger, disappear

21. student, stand

22. sun, rise

23. thief, run

24. wallet, find

25. watch, steal

APPENDIX 10: An introductory letter from Department of English and Linguistics, Kenyatta University

**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS**

**P. O. Box 43844**
**Nairobi, Kenya.**

**Telephone** 8710901/19

**DATE: 5th June , 2012**

District Education Officer,
Bondo, District,
**SIAYA COUNTY**

**REF: QUIN ELIZABETH AWUOR – REG. NO.C82/12913/09**

I write to confirm that the above named is a Ph.D student in the Department of English and Linguistics of Kenyatta University. She is currently collecting Data for her research entitled. **"Acquisition of English passive constructions by Dholuo speaking children".**

She would like to collect data in Nyakasumbi Primary and Sinapanga primary schools.

Any assistance accorded her will be highly appreciated.

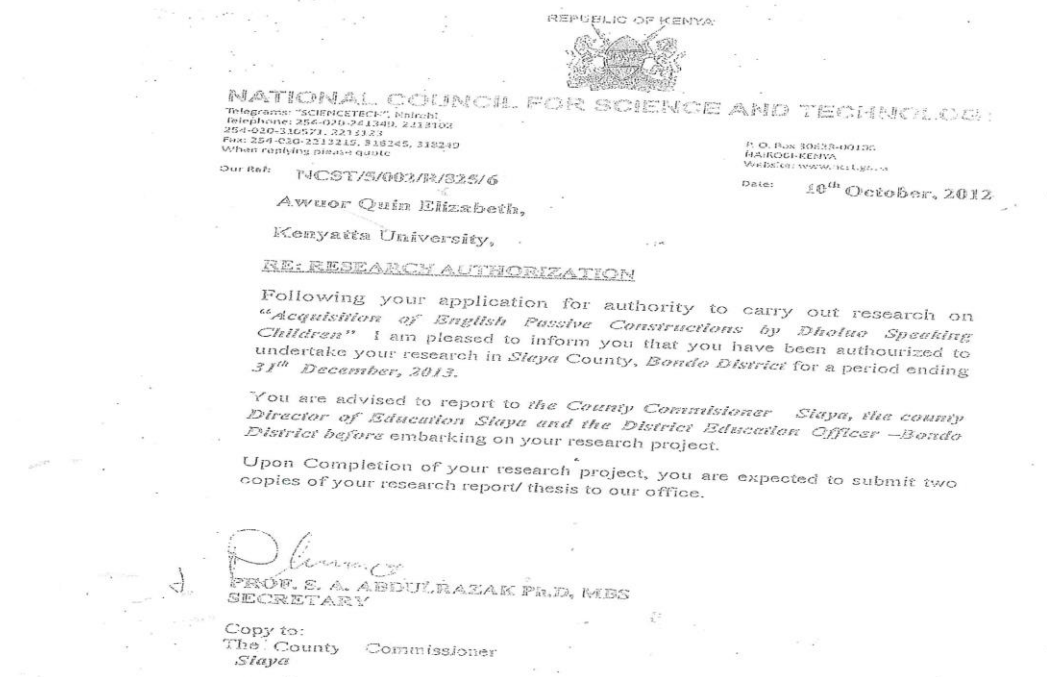
Thank you.

**DR. JOYCE I. WANGIA**
**CHAIRPERSON, ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT**

JIW/fwg

CHAIRMAN
ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS
DEPARTMENT
(KENYATTA UNIVERSITY)

APPENDIX 11: Authorization letter from Nation Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI)



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Telegrams: "SCIENCETECH", Nairobi
Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102
254-020-310571, 2213123
Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249
When replying please quote

P. O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke

Our Ref: NCST/5/002/R/825/6

Date: 16th October, 2012

Awuor Quin Elizabeth,

Kenyatta University,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Acquisition of English Passive Constructions by Dholuo Speaking Children"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authourized to undertake your research in *Siaya* County, *Bondo District* for a period ending *31st December, 2013.*

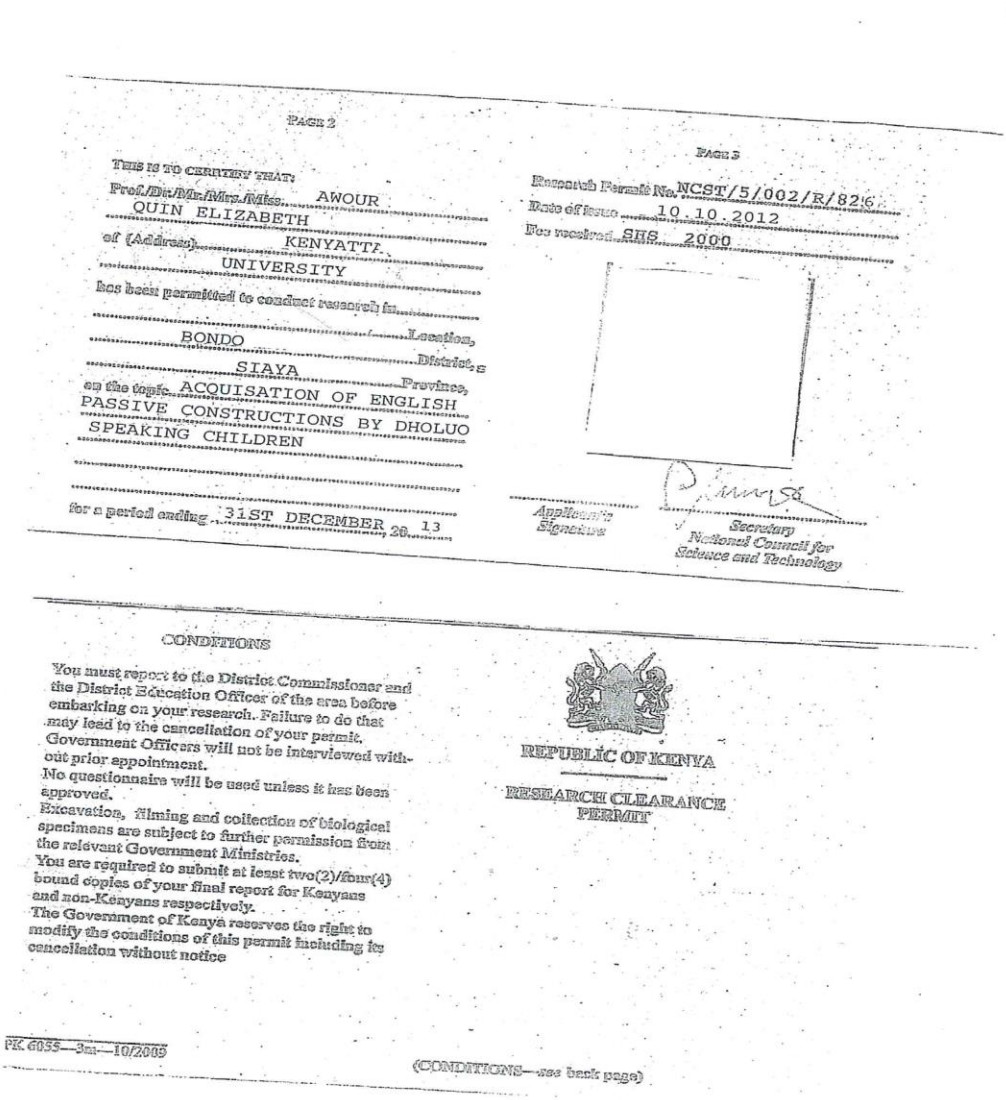
You are advised to report to *the County Commissioner Siaya, the county Director of Education Siaya and the District Education Officer –Bondo District before* embarking on your research project.

Upon Completion of your research project, you are expected to submit two copies of your research report/ thesis to our office.

PROF. S. A. ABDULRAZAK PH.D, MBS
SECRETARY

Copy to:
The County Commissioner
*Siaya*

APPENDIX 12: A Research Authorization Identification Card



PAGE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss. AWOUR QUIN ELIZABETH

of (Address) KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

has been permitted to conduct research in

BONDO Location,

SIAYA District, a

Province,

on the topic ACQUISATION OF ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS BY DHOLUO SPEAKING CHILDREN

for a period ending 31ST DECEMBER, 20 13

Applicant's Signature

PAGE 3

Research Permit No. NCST/5/002/R/826

Date of Issue 10.10.2012

Fee received SHS 2000

Secretary
National Council for
Science and Technology

CONDITIONS

You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Offices of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.

Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.

No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.

Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.

You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.

The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

PK 6055—3m—10/2009

(CONDITIONS—see back page)

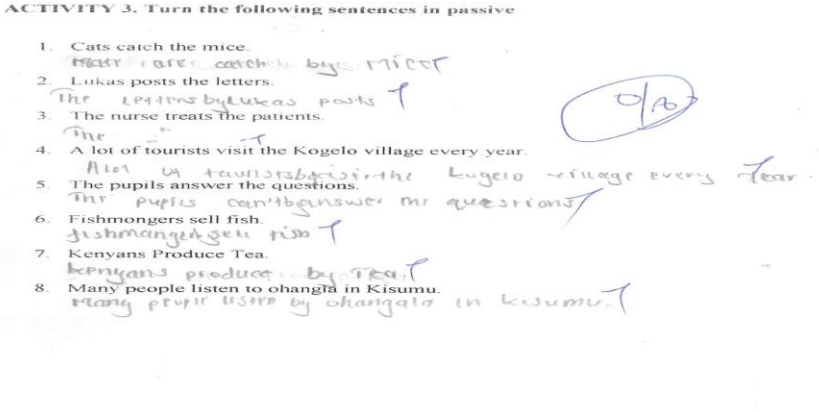
APPENDIX 13: Sample verbs

transitives : read, *drive, push, hit, write, paint, win, sing, find, steal*

unaccusatives : *happen, fall, expire, arrive, arise, appear, disappear, rise*

unergatives : *walk, sleep, die, fly, stand*

APPENDIX 14: Turning Sentences into Passive



**ACTIVITY 3. Turn the following sentences in passive**

1. Cats catch the mice.
   Mice are caught by cats
2. Lukas posts the letters.
   The letters by Lukas posts
3. The nurse treats the patients.
   The
4. A lot of tourists visit the Kogelo village every year.
   Alot of tourists by visit the Kogelo village every year.
5. The pupils answer the questions.
   The pupils can't be answer the questions
6. Fishmongers sell fish.
   fishmongers sell fish
7. Kenyans Produce Tea.
   kenyans produce by Tea
8. Many people listen to ohangla in Kisumu.
   Many people listen by ohangala in kisumu