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English - 1 (Basic English)
Lecture 53
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Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Structure of Sentences in Passive Voice

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STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES IN PASSIVE VOICE

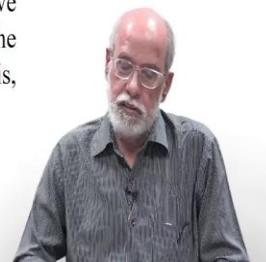
Prof. SHREESH CHAUDHARY



Good afternoon. Today in this unit we are going to talk about the structure of sentences in English, in passive voice. What is passive voice? What is so unique or peculiar about it? And how is it different in English? We will talk about some of these things, please pay attention, we necessarily sometimes have to use abstract language, which might be distracting, but if you pay attention, I am sure you will learn and enjoy this process of learning.

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- Natural languages are designed to say almost anything in any manner. Sometimes we speak about who has done what, but sometimes we also speak about what was done by whom. For instance, we know that police arrests criminals. So when we talk about the arrest of criminals, we need not say that Police have arrested the criminals. A shorter and appropriate answer is, “*Criminals have been arrested*”.



Natural languages are designed to say almost anything in any manner; we can talk about things that are not happened, we can recall things that we have not seen. We can predict the future where we have not been. We can do wonders with language, that is what literatures are created of. So all languages or almost all languages also provide for ways of saying the same thing differently. One same action but sometimes you can talk about the result of the action first.

Sometimes you can talk about the cause of the action first. Sometimes you can talk about the agent of the action first. Sometimes you can talk about the victim of the action first. Ravana was a Rakshisa and killed lots of Rishies that is agent first. We can also bring victims first. Rishies poor people had taken a vow not to be violent and were therefore killed in huge numbers by Rakshaasas led by Ravana. Language allows both of these things.

But in all languages have their ways, but in English, there is something different from other languages. For example, when we talk about what is passive voice when we talk about the arrest of criminals, we need not say that police have arrested the criminals. Sometimes the agent is well known; thieves were arrested. Do we need to know who arrested them? The Earning employee has been dismissed.

Do you need to know who dismissed them? Of course, the director dismissed them. Of course, the boss dismissed them. The patient was treated in the hospital. Do we need to know who treated them? Of course, doctors and nurses and the medical and paramedical staff looked after

these people, so sometimes we use sentences in passive voice without the agent, sometimes we use sentences in active voice when we name the agent, name the cause, depending upon what is important.

Sometimes the agent is not known. Jewelry was stolen. We do not know who stole it, thieves were caught. Of course, the police caught them. Either well known or not known or sometimes we do not want to name them. A dead body was found, perhaps murdered by somebody. Perhaps murdered, we do not want to say, we do not want to hazard a vague guess, so passive voice allows us to say things which otherwise would not be either appropriate or easily possible. How are these sentences constructed? Let us look at next.

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Listen to the audio



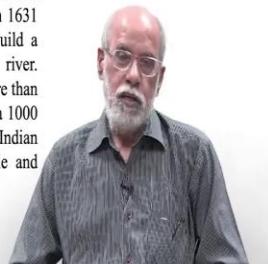
But before we go there. Do we have these things in actual life occurring? Let us listen.

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TRANSCRIPT



Renowned worldwide for its beauty and symmetry, the Taj Mahal is the most famous landmark in India. Located near the city of Agra, the Taj Mahal attracts millions of visitors each year who come to see its beauty and remember the romantic story of its origins. The Taj Mahal, its name is Persian for crown of palaces is an elaborate mausoleum or tomb. It was built more than 350 years ago by Emperor Shah Jahan as a memorial for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, who had died. Shah Jahan met his future wife when he was 15 years old and she was 14. Although they were not married until five years later in 1612. Their marriage was a happy one as the two loved each other and were good friends as well. Shah Jahan gave his wife the title Mumtaz Mahal which means chosen one of the palace and together they had 14 children. It was while giving birth to her final child in 1631 that Mumtaz Mahal died. Shah Jahan was heartbroken and decided to build a memorial for his beloved wife in Agra on the banks of the Yamuna river. Construction of the Taj Mahal began in 1632, it was an immense project. More than 20000 workers were involved and materials were transported by more than a 1000 elephants. The style of the building was inspired by Persian, Islamic and Indian architecture and the tomb was finished with huge slabs of white marble and decorated with many precious and semi-precious stones.



Audio:

Renowned worldwide for its beauty and symmetry, the Taj Mahal is the most famous landmark in India. Located near the city of Agra, the Taj Mahal attracts millions of visitors each year who come to see its beauty and remember the romantic story of its origins. The Taj Mahal, its name is Persian for Crown of Palaces is an elaborate mausoleum or tomb.

It was built more than 350 years ago by Emperor Shahjahan of India as a memorial for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who had died. Shahjahan met his future wife when he was 15 years old, and she was 14, although they were not married until five years later in 1612, their marriage was a happy one as the two loved each other and were good friends as well. Shahjahan gave his wife the title Mumtaz Mahal, which means chosen one of the palace.

And together they had 14 children. It was while giving birth to her final child in 1631 that Mumtaz Mahal died. Shahjahan was heartbroken and decided to build a memorial for his beloved wife in Agra on the banks of the Yamuna River. Construction of the Taj Mahal began in 1632. It was an immense project. More than 20000 workers were involved, and materials were transported by more than a thousand elephants.

The style of the buildings was inspired by Persian, Islamic and Indian architecture. And the tomb was finished with huge slabs of white marble and decorated with many precious and semi-precious stones.

Professor: This is like, real life in a real-life discourse, in a real-life conversation. Whether you are on a guided tour of a monument or talking with friends in a coffee shop, we always have a mix of sentences in active voice, passive voice, questions sentences, answer sentences, variety of questions, variety of answers. You have seen the transcript; if you like, you can play it once again, you can look at the transcript once again. But can you identify some sentences in passive voice there? We have done it for you in another slide.

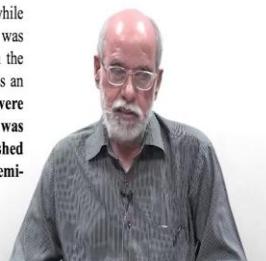
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ANSWERS



Renowned worldwide for its beauty and symmetry , the Taj Mahal is the most famous landmark in India. Located near the city of Agra, the Taj Mahal attracts millions of visitors each year who come to see its beauty and remember the romantic story of its origins. The Taj Mahal, its name is Persian for crown of palaces is an elaborate mausoleum or tomb.

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All the highlighted sentences are passive voice sentences. You can compare your work and then ask yourself if you are right, if you are right, you do not need to do this unit, if you are not, then come. Let us look at the principles which govern the construction of sentences in the passive voice. Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 7:55)

- Look at the following sentences. We do not even need to know who did them.

1)

- The order has been signed. Her resignation has been accepted.
- New academic block has been inaugurated and is being used now.
- Classes were suspended.
- Criminals were caught sooner than expected.
- Accident insurance is paid within weeks.
- Some students have been expelled from the hostel.
- The Taj Mahal was built in over 20 years, between 1632-53.



Look at the sentences before us. We do not have a need to know who did them. Because the agent is obvious, the order has been signed. Her resignation has been accepted. Suppose we are talking about the chief minister who can give the order, of course, the governor. Who can accept the resignation, of course, the governor. Like that for other sentences on this slide. Go next.

(Refer Slide Time: 8:27)

- Crops were destroyed even last year.
- Millions of young men have been rendered jobless.
- Millions of men are employed worldwide at huge costs doing nothing.
- They are called variously as army or defence forces.
- Gandhi was called by various names.
- He was called an army, a beggar, Bapu, Mahatma, and father of the nation.
- He was also called a traitor, and killed by an assassin.
- My wallet was stolen yesterday.

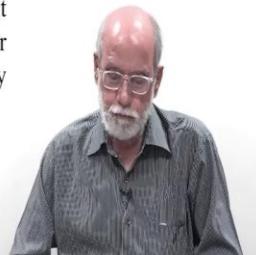


Similar thing here in all of this, actually, it will be a good exercise for us to use a 'by whom'. So crops were destroyed even last year by either drought or floods. Millions of young men have

been rendered jobless by, by the pandemic. So you can try and do this by agent kind of exercises on your own, and you will understand it better.

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- In all of the sentences in 1. above, the doer or the cause or the agent is either well-known, or not known at all, or does not need to be known. Say, for instance. In 1.a, the governor has signed the order, and the chief minister's resignation has been accepted. In 1.b, the agent is likely to be the Director of the college or a higher authority; in 1.c. we can say "by the Dean"; in 1.d., "by police"; 1.e. "by the company". We can go on in this manner. Actually it may be a good idea for you to write this "by..." for the other sentences in the group. Some have already been done for you.



We have done it for you, you can look at this slide, you can look at the next slides and compare your work with the clues given, next.

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ACTIVITY 1



- For sentences given in 1. above, write the name of the possible agent. At the end of each sentence, use "by...." and after "by" write the name of the possible agent/cause/doer, etc.



Just go and do for the rest of those sentences, we have done only for about four or five, you can do for the rest and then you can compare your answers with those given by us.

(Refer Slide Time: 9:31)

ANSWERS



Activity 1:

- f. Some students have been expelled from the hostel by the warden.
- g. The Taj Mahal was built in over 20 years, between 1632-53, by Shah Jahan.
- h. Crops were destroyed even this year by floods.
- i. Millions of young men have been rendered jobless by the pandemic.
- j. Millions of men are employed worldwide at huge costs doing nothing by governments.
- k. They are called variously as army or defence forces by governments.



So, for example, we have some students have been expelled from the hostel, who can expel them? We guess it is by the warden. The Taj Mahal was built in over 20 years, between 16, 32 and 16, 53 by whom? By Shahjahan the Emperor of Hindustan then. So like that, we can go on, and this will give you a better understanding of why natural languages have a device called passive voice. Next.

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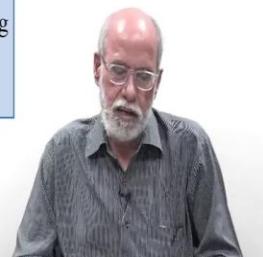
- Similar sentences are there in many languages. But, in English, again sentences of this kind, called **PASSIVE VOICE SENTENCES**, have a fixed structure. They are constructed only in a particular manner. If we look at their **ACTIVE VOICE**, we can soon and better understand how they are constructed. See the following sentences.



So, we have similar sentences in more or less now, I cannot say every language, but many languages have both sentences in active and passive voice. They are of course, our languages which do not have sentences in passive voice because there, the action is performed by tone of the language. So it is not a feature of the sentence construction; it is a feature of tone construction. We will talk about that when we do a course in linguistics. Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:49)

- 2)
- a. Tour operators provide guides on the bus.
 - b. Air hostesses welcome all passengers on board before flights take off.
 - c. Then hostesses give water bottles to passengers.
 - d. Hostesses gave hot meals to passengers before corona pandemic,
 - e. Security and Corona checks have made flying boring now.
 - f. Fire is destroying vast tracts of forests in America.



But to understand that better. You can look at some sentences in active voice and then ask yourself. How, what kind of passive voice can we get out of these sentences in active voice? So

for example look at sentence into a, tour operators provide guides on the bus. This is an, this is sentence in active voice. How do we know because in passive voice the verb, the main verb will necessarily be in the part CPL form.

Here the verb is not in the part CPL form that is in the citation form. It is, as it occurs in the dictionary. So tour operators provide guides on the bus. What kind of passive can we get? Try and make it. Check your, answer later. Air hostesses welcome all passengers on board before flights take off. How can you get a passive? And what kind of passive? Do that for the rest of the sentences. And come to the next slide.

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- Sentences in 2. are in active voice. Agent or cause of action is at the beginning of the sentence. But passive voice is done the other way round. Here the agent comes last, victim, result, effect, etc. comes first, as follows:

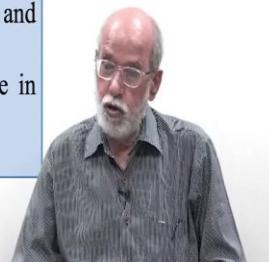


Okay. Next.

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3)

- a. Guides are provided on the bus by tour operators.
- b. All passengers are welcomed on board by air hostesses before flights take off.
- c. Then water bottles are given to passengers by hostesses.
- d. Hot meals were given to passengers by hostesses before corona pandemic.
- e. Flying has been made boring now by Security and Corona checks
- f. vast tracts of forests are being destroyed by fire in America.



Here it is compare your work. We said earlier, tour operators provide for the guide on the bus. The passive is guides have provided on the bus by tour operators. Next. All passengers are welcomed. Earlier sentence was air hostesses welcome all passengers. Now in the passive we say, describing the process on behalf of the airlines company. Hostesses, air hostesses who, we will say all passengers are welcomed on board by air hostesses before flights take off.

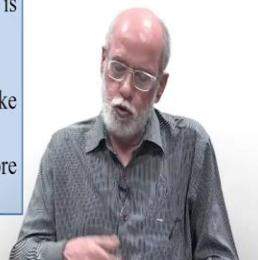
Earlier sentence was then Air hostesses give water bottles to passengers. The same sentence in passive voice would read then water bottles are given to passengers by hostesses. So like this, you can go on for every sentence in active voice. You can create a sentence in passive voice. And for every sentence in passive voice, you can create counterparts, you can create active voice equivalents. And you will understand better what function, which sentence does, what kind of sentence does and how this is done. Next.

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- Rules for making passive voice sentences are given in steps as follows.

4)

- Subject and object switch places.
- Subject, or agent, or cause, is moved to the end of the verb phrase or to the end of the sentence.
- Object moves to the front of the sentence.
- Object is followed by “am/are/is/was/ were...” some tense bearing helping verb.
- If a helping verb is not there, then “is/am/are...” is inserted.
- Otherwise, “be” is inserted in a suitable form.
- Main verb is used in the participial, the 3rd form, like “done” for “do”.
- Then the rest of the sentence follows with a “by” before the subject.



What are the rules? Are there any rules? Now, this is a little bit elaborate the multi-step rules. You can almost create a computer program to generate sentences in passive voice, from those given in active voice. You can also reverse it. You can go backwards. And create sentences in active voice. In a certain sense, this is mechanical but because it is multi step process. We will have to understand it carefully one by one.

So, let us look at it carefully. You need to pay all your attention. Do not be distracted if you are, if your mind is somewhere else take pen and paper. And as I speak as you read you could also copy, so that you can concentrate. Once you concentrate, once you understand the sequence of steps is nothing. You can do it every time in an error free manner. So what are the rules? a, b, c, they are the same.

They are saying subject and object that is the doer of the verb and the victim of the verb. The agent of the verb and the victim of the verb. Subject of the verb and object of the verb. Switch places earlier subject was at the head of the sentence. Object was somewhere towards the end or in the middle, well now object comes to the head of the sentence, beginning of the sentence. And subject goes at the end or somewhere in the middle near the end.

So, that is your step a, step b, step c, read carefully, d, usually the object is followed by an auxiliary verb like am, are, is, was, were, can, that kind sort of thing. Some tense bearing helping verb. But if your helping verb is not there. I will give you example soon, then on your own, you

insert an, is, am, are. So that it can help you create a passive voice. The next step is if nothing is there you know insert a be.

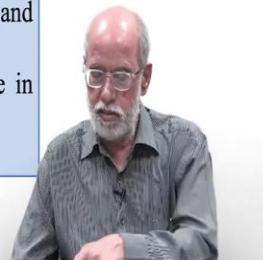
Otherwise, be is inserted in a suitable form. You can be, you can say was you can give be has various forms I have given you reference to books. And you can look them up. We will also illustrate this with examples in the moment. So do not worry. The one, the step after that is, you use the main verb of the sentence in the participial form. If inactive voice it was do, in the passive voice it will always be done.

If in the active voice it is eat then in the passive it will always be eaten. If in the active voice it is break then in the passive voice it will always be broken. In the participial form in the third form. And in the final step, insert a by before the subject. Subject maybe the last word or somewhere in the middle, immediately before subject you insert by, and you get sentences in passive voice. Go to next and let us see how a computer would do it.

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3)

- a. Guides are provided on the bus by tour operators.
- b. All passengers are welcomed on board by air hostesses before flights take off.
- c. Then water bottles are given to passengers by hostesses.
- d. Hot meals were given to passengers by hostesses before corona pandemic.
- e. Flying has been made boring now by Security and Corona checks
- f. vast tracts of forests are being destroyed by fire in America.



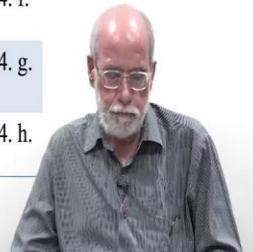
Let us say we have the following sentence. Fire destroys everything you have to change it to the passive voice. So step a, b, c you bring everything to the front of the sentence, and you take fire towards the end of the sentence. That is first three steps. A is you look at them, b is you bring everything to the front, c is you take fire to the end.

Because computers do not do, two things at a time. So you will have to tell them one by one. That is why I have said 4 a, 4 b, 4 c. Otherwise, it is one rule switch places. Next, bring some auxiliary verb. So here you have is everything is. Third step then bring the main verb in the participial form everything is destroyed. Earlier we had active voice said fire destroys everything.

Now, what is the participial form of destroy, destroyed. If it were burn suppose the sentence said fire burns everything. Then we would say everything is burned or everything is burned. Then we would say fire. Finally, in the last step going by rule 4 h, we will insert by before fire, and the passive voice is ready. It is generated everything is destroyed by fire. Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:11)

b) Fire is destroying everything	Changes to
Everything	by 4.a
Everything fire	by 4.b, c
Everything is fire	by 4.d.
Everything is being fire	by 4. f.
Everything is being destroyed fire	by 4. g.
Everything is being destroyed by fire	by 4. h.



Suppose we have inactive voice sentence which has two auxiliaries. Something like fire is then destroy plus ing, fire is destroying everything. How do we do it? Again the same way 4a, b, c are the same steps. We switch places 4 d rule; you had 'is' then because it is already has bd in the appropriate form. So you do not have import be, you just import be and say ing. So everything is being.

If it was, it will be 'was being'. If it were has you will say everything has been. Then you would not say everything has being. That is what we meant by appropriate form of be. If it is has, have

then you will say been. If it is, was, am, are then being. So if that is the passive voice marker. Everything is being that is your step 4 f. Then next rule is you bring in the main verb.

Now, name verb here is destroy, in participial form is destroyed. So you say everything is being destroyed fire. And final step going by sub clause 4 h of the rule of passive voice will add 'by'. So now the passive voice sentence of the active is ready. So the final step is, final product is everything is being destroyed. Being destroyed coming together by fire which is the agent.

So, by fire comes last verbal group is being destroyed come together. But this is the point I want you to understand is that converting a sentence from active to passive voice or back. Passive voice to active voice we will go backwards, and we can, in the same manner, get fire is destroying everything. I mean I am not saying that in real life you might come across sentences like this got forbid. But the idea is number one passive voice is also used for things which are caused due to natural hazards, and this is how they are formed. Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:45)

ACTIVITY 2



Showing steps as in 5.a and 5.b, change the following sentences into passive voice.

- 2)
- Fire can destroy anything.
 - Fire has destroyed everything.
 - Fire has been destroying everything.



We have given you some more sentences in active voice using the rules we gave you, as steps you can yourself derive these sentences in passive voice. Fire can destroy anything, fire has destroyed everything, fire has been destroying everything. Just see I do not want you to go straight on to the active voice. I want you to go step by step for each of these three sentences and check whether you are getting steps right because it is a multi-step process.

Once you get the steps right, then known or unknown whenever you come across any sentence, any active, any sentence in active voice you can rather easily covert the sentence into passive voice if you want to do so. Next.

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ANSWERS



Activity 2:

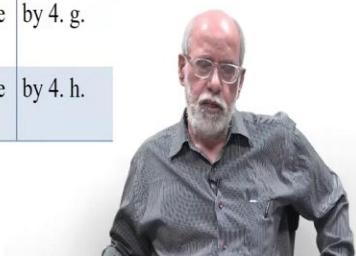
a) Fire can destroy anything.	Changes to
Anything fire	by 4.a, b, c
Anything can fire	by 4.d
Anything can be fire	by 4.f
Anything can be destroyed fire	by 4.g
Anything can be destroyed by fire	by 4.h



Here is check compare your work with the steps we have given. Next sentence.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:54)

b) Fire has destroyed everything.	Changes to
Everything fire	4.a, b. c
Everything has fire	by 4.d
Everything has been fire	by 4. f.
Everything has been destroyed fire	by 4. g.
Everything has been destroyed by fire	by 4. h.



Compare your work with this as well. Next.

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c) Fire has been destroying everything.		Changes to
Everything	fire	by 4.a, b. c
Everything has	fire	by 4.d
Everything has been being	fire	by 4. f.
Everything has been being destroyed	fire	by 4. g.
Everything has been being destroyed by fire		by 4. h.



Compare your work with the steps given here. If the sequence is all right then it does not matter if you do two at a time, that is not important. Important is this is the sequence and this is what we have to understand. Next.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:31)



Thank you!



Before we conclude, there are other aspects to a sentence in passive voice. We frequently come across sentences in passive voice and truncated forms. When the main verb becomes an adjective, has the work been finished. And you can find people saying this is the finished work.

Now finished here becomes adjective of work. How do we arrive at these processes? How do we get negative sentences in passive voice?

How do we get questions in passive voice sentences? How does a sentence in passive voice become subordinate clause to another sentence in active voice. I will give you an example; the director announced that all the good students have been given a free tuition this semester. So the director announced is in the active voice. But all students have been given is a passive voice.

This passive voice works like this sentence in passive voice now has become a subordinate clause in the, to the main clause the director announced, how do we do these things. So there are other aspects to the construction of sentences in passive voice. We can as I told you at the beginning of this unit. We cannot deal with everything only in the classroom that is why we have suggested books and self-work.

Look at those books, look at the audio and video and see, are there examples of sentences in passive voice which you have difficulty driving, difficulty converting into active or from active into passive, try and take the help of books. Try and contact us if you cannot do that and we will be delight to help. The idea is once again that learning is a learner's centered process.

Learning is not a coach centred process. Coach, like any other facility is a help. You are welcome to seek our help, but please, please do your work. Good luck. Have a good day. Thank you.