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The Use of Passive Voice in English And Karakalpak Languages

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Abstract: This article presents a comparative analysis of the use of the passive voice in English and Karakalpak languages. Although both languages feature passive constructions, they differ significantly in terms of grammatical structure, frequency of use, and communicative function. English forms the passive voice analytically using auxiliary verbs and past participles, allowing a wide range of tenses and modal expressions. In contrast, Karakalpak constructs the passive voice morphologically through verb suffixation, with limited tense variation and context-driven interpretation. Furthermore, English tends to use the passive voice extensively in academic and formal contexts, while Karakalpak favors active voice in writing but employs the passive more in oral storytelling and culturally sensitive situations. The study highlights the structural and functional implications of these differences and suggests their relevance for translation studies, second-language teaching, and cross-linguistic research.

Introduction: The concept of voice in grammar reflects how the relationship between the subject and the action is expressed in a sentence. Among various types of grammatical voices, the passive voice is one of the most widely used across many languages [3, 12]. In both English and Karakalpak, the passive voice plays a functional role in focusing attention on the action or the object rather than the doer. However, the ways in which passive constructions are formed and used in these languages differ considerably, both structurally and contextually.

To begin with, English constructs the passive voice analytically, meaning it requires auxiliary (helping) verbs along with the past participle of the main verb. For instance:

The book was read by the student.

The house is being built.

The project will be completed by next week.

In each case, a form of the verb to be (was, is being, will be) is followed by the past participle (read, built, completed). This structure enables English to express the passive voice in various tenses, such as:

Present Simple: The letter is written.

Past Simple: The letter was written.

Present Continuous: The letter is being written.

Present Perfect: The letter has been written.

Future Simple: The letter will be written [1, 9-24].

On the other hand, Karakalpak forms the passive voice morphologically by attaching specific suffixes to the verb root, such as -l, -n, or -il, depending on the verb. For example:

Kitap oqıldı – The book was read.

Úy salındı – The house was built.

Xat jazıldı – The letter was written.

As illustrated above, there is no auxiliary verb equivalent to "to be" in Karakalpak passive constructions. The verb itself carries the passive meaning through its suffix. Moreover, the tense is often understood from context or time expressions, rather than being explicitly marked.

For example:

Xat jazıladı – The letter is written / will be written (depending on context)

Jumıs tamamlandı – The work was completed.

Lekciya oqılmağan – The lecture has not been read [5].

In addition, English and Karakalpak differ in how often they use the passive voice in communication. In English, the passive is especially common in academic, scientific, and formal writing, where the agent is unknown, unimportant, or deliberately omitted:

The experiment was conducted to test the hypothesis

Mistakes were made.

By comparison, Karakalpak tends to favor active constructions, especially in formal or academic discourse. However, the passive is widely used in oral traditions, storytelling, and certain stylistic contexts, particularly when the speaker wishes to emphasize the result or downplay the agent:

Awqat pisirildi – The food was cooked.

Qonaqlar kùtip alındı– The guests were welcomed.

It is also important to note that Karakalpak passives may imply the agent more vaguely or leave it out entirely, which aligns with cultural communication norms that avoid directness or blame in some contexts:

Qàte islendi – A mistake was made (agent omitted, similar to English)

Maqala jazıldı – The article was written (no mention of the writer)

Moreover, while English can form complex passives with modal verbs, such constructions are not common in Karakalpak. For instance:

The law must be obeyed.

The medicine should be taken twice daily.

In Karakalpak, equivalent meanings are expressed differently, often through periphrastic or active structures:

Nızamǵa boysınıw kerek. – The law must be obeyed.

Dári eki márte ishiliw kerek. – The medicine must be taken twice.

Thus, while both languages express passivity, they do so through very different grammatical means: English through auxiliaries and participles, and Karakalpak through suffixation and inference.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of passive voice in English and Karakalpak reveals both universal and language-specific features of grammatical structure and communication style. English passives are highly flexible and structurally complex, suitable for precision in formal writing. Karakalpak passives, though simpler in structure, are functionally rich in storytelling and culturally significant contexts. Understanding these differences not only enhances translation accuracy and language teaching but also deepens our appreciation of the unique linguistic identity of each language.

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