AVOIDANCE OF THE ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION

BY L1 CHINESE LEARNERS

Mr. Yang Wang

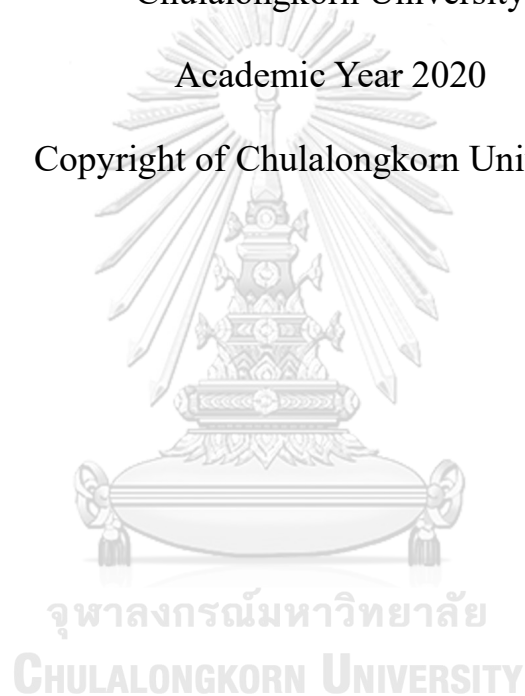จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
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การเลี่ยงโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกภาษาอังกฤษโดยผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง

นายหยาง หวัง

Thesis Title	*AVOIDANCE OF THE ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION BY L1 CHINESE LEARNERS*
By	Mr. Yang Wang
Field of Study	English as an International Language
Thesis Advisor	Associate Professor NATTAMA PONGPAIROJ, Ph.D.

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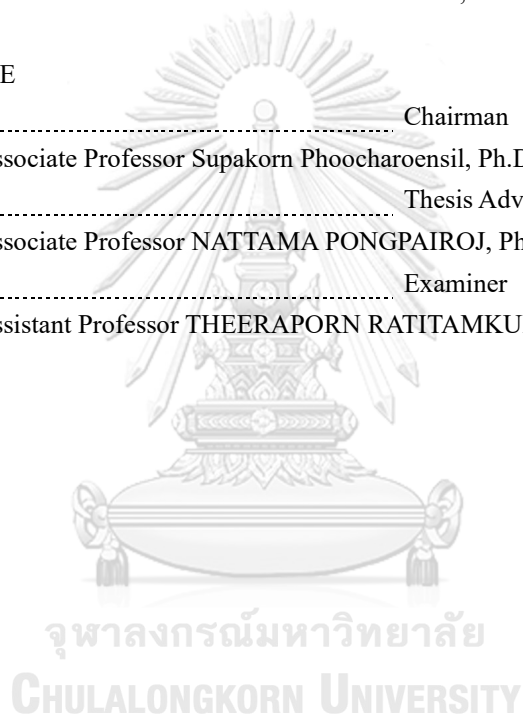
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หยาง หวัง : การเลี่ยงโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกภาษาอังกฤษโดยผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง. (*AVOIDANCE OF THE ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION BY L1 CHINESE LEARNERS*) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : รศ. ดร. ณัฐมา พงศ์ไพโรจน์

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาพฤติกรรมการเลี่ยง ซึ่งอาจเป็นหนึ่งในกลวิธีที่ผู้เรียนภาษาที่สองใช้เนื่องจากโครงสร้างในภาษาที่สองที่ต่างจากโครงสร้างในภาษาที่หนึ่งหรือโครงสร้างใน ภาษาที่สองที่ไม่ปรากฏในภาษาที่หนึ่ง (Schachter, 1974; Dagut & Laufer, 1985) Schachter (1974) ได้เสนอสมมติฐานพฤติกรรมการเลี่ยง (Avoidance Behaviour Hypothesis) โดยผู้เรียนมีแนวโน้มเลี่ยงการใช้บางโครงสร้างในภาษาที่สองเนื่องจากปัญหาความยากซึ่งเกิดจากความแตกต่างระหว่างโครงสร้างในการรับภาษาที่สอง งานวิจัยของ Dagut และ Laufer (1985) และงานวิจัยของ Laufer และ Eliasson (1993) ชี้ให้เห็นว่าโครงสร้างในภาษาที่สองที่ต่างจากโครงสร้างในภาษาที่หนึ่งมี บทบาทสำคัญ หรืออย่างน้อยเป็นสิ่งที่พยากรณ์ได้ดีที่สุด (1993 น.46) ของพฤติกรรมการเลี่ยง อย่างไรก็ตาม งานวิจัยของ Thiamtawan และ Pongpairoj (2013, 2019) ได้สันนิษฐานว่าถึงแม้ว่าโครงสร้างในภาษาที่สองจะต่างจากโครงสร้างในภาษาที่หนึ่ง หรือโครงสร้างในภาษาที่สองไม่ปรากฏในภาษาที่หนึ่ง พฤติกรรมการเลี่ยงอาจไม่ปรากฏ การศึกษาดังกล่าวได้เสนอสมมติฐานปัจจัยของการไม่เลี่ยงภาษาที่สอง (Factors of L2 Non-Avoidance Hypothesis (FNAH)) เพื่ออธิบายปรากฏการณ์ไม่แสดง พฤติกรรมการเลี่ยงโครงสร้างในภาษาที่สอง สมมติฐานของงานวิจัยนี้คือ ผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่งมีแนวโน้มเลี่ยงโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกภาษาอังกฤษเนื่องจากความแตกต่างทาง โครงสร้างและการปรากฏระหว่างโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกในภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาจีน ผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัยประกอบด้วย กลุ่มทดลองเป็นผู้เรียนที่มีภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่งซึ่งมีสมิทธิภาพ ภาษาอังกฤษระดับกลาง (ระดับ B2 ในกรอบมาตรฐาน CEFR) จำนวน 30 คน และกลุ่มควบคุมเป็นผู้ใช้ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่หนึ่ง เพื่อใช้เป็นข้อมูลพื้นฐานเพื่อการ เปรียบเทียบ เครื่องมือวิจัยประกอบด้วย แบบทดสอบความเข้าใจเพื่อยืนยันว่ากลุ่มผู้เรียนภาษาที่สองมีความรู้โครงสร้างกรรมวาจกภาษาอังกฤษ และแบบทดสอบการผลิต ได้แก่ แบบทดสอบ FishFilm (Tomlin, 1995) และแบบทดสอบความพึงใจทางอ้อม (Indirect Preference Elicitation (IPE)) ผลวิจัยจาก แบบทดสอบ FishFilm และแบบทดสอบความพึงใจทางอ้อมชี้ให้เห็นว่าผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยไม่มีแนวโน้มเลี่ยงโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกภาษาอังกฤษซึ่งขัดแย้งกับสมมติฐานงานวิจัย การที่ผู้เรียน ภาษาที่สองชาวจีนผลิตโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกมากกว่ากรรตุวาจกในแบบทดสอบ FishFilm และแบบทดสอบความพึงใจทางอ้อมอาจสนับสนุนแนวคิดเกี่ยวกับลักษณะเฉพาะของ แบบทดสอบในงานวิจัยนี้ และความคุ้นชินกับผู้ร่วมวิจัยมีต่อโครงสร้างกรรมวาจก สืบเนื่องจากคำตอบด้วยโครงสร้างกรรตุวาจกที่มีจำนวนมากและระดับนัยสำคัญที่น้อยในแบบทดสอบ ความพึงใจทางอ้อม ผู้วิจัยได้ศึกษาเพิ่มเติมเกี่ยวกับทัศนคติของผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยต่อบทบาททางความหมายของผู้ถูกกระทำ (patient) ในรูปภาพในแบบทดสอบที่เกี่ยวเนื่องกับการได้รับความ ทุกข์ยาก (adversity) ผลวิจัยพบว่าผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยจะไม่เลี่ยงโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกเมื่อบริบทเกี่ยวเนื่องกับความทุกข์ยาก ซึ่งสันนิษฐานว่าเป็นผลจากการถ่ายโอน (transfer of training) จากการเรียนในบริบทของประเทศจีน กล่าวคือ ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยถ่ายโอนความรู้ด้านความหมายในประโยคกรรมวาจกภาษาจีนในการผลิตโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกในภาษาที่ สอง อย่างไรก็ตาม การศึกษาพบว่าผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยมีแนวโน้มที่จะเลี่ยงโครงสร้างกรรมวาจกในบริบทที่ไม่เกี่ยวเนื่องกับความทุกข์ยาก ซึ่งสันนิษฐานว่าเกิดจากความซับซ้อนของโครงสร้างกรรม วาจกภาษาอังกฤษเมื่อเปรียบเทียบกับโครงสร้างกรรตุวาจก โดยผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยไม่ได้แสดงให้เห็นถึงการถ่ายโอนความรู้ด้านความหมายจากประโยคกรรมวาจกภาษาจีน ผลงานวิจัยนี้มีส่วนช่วยให้ เกิดความเข้าใจการรับภาษาที่สองซึ่งเกี่ยวเนื่องกับปรากฏการณ์การเลี่ยง

สาขาวิชา	ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ	ลายมือชื่อนิสิต ………………………………………
ปีการศึกษา	2563	ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก …………………………

6187564820 : MAJOR ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

Yang Wang : *AVOIDANCE OF THE ENGLISH PASSIVE CONSTRUCTION BY L1 CHINESE LEARNERS* . Advisor: Assoc. Prof. NATTAMA PONGPAIROJ, Ph.D.

This research investigated avoidance behaviour as one of the strategies L2 learners may resort to because of L1-L2 differences, or the non-existence of L2 structures for L1 learners (Schachter 1974; Dagut and Laufer 1985). Schachter (1974) proposed the Avoidance Behaviour Hypothesis, whereby L2 learners were likely to avoid using some L2 structures due to the aforementioned difficulties in L2 acquisition. Later researchers, i.e. Dagut and Laufer (1985), and Laufer and Eliasson (1993), claimed that L1-L2 differences tended to play a role, or at least would be the 'best predictor' (1993, p46) of avoidance. However, recent researchers, i.e. Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013; 2019) assumed that, despite any L1-L2 differences, or the non-existence of L2 structures in the learners' native language, such avoidance behaviour does not necessarily emerge, and they formulated the Factors of L2 Non-Avoidance Hypothesis (FNAH) to explain the non-avoidance phenomenon. In the current study, it was hypothesised that L1 Chinese learners tended to avoid the English passive construction as a result of the structural and distributional differences between the English and Chinese passive structure. The participants in this study consisted of thirty L1 Chinese intermediate-level participants (i.e. B2 in CEFR) as the experimental group, and six native English speakers as the control group formulating the baseline data. The tasks in this study were a comprehension task to check on the L2 learners' knowledge of the English passive, and two production tasks, i.e. the FishFilm task (Tomlin 1995) and the Indirect Preference Elicitation (IPE) task. Results from the FishFilm task and the IPE task showed that the participants tended not to avoid the English passive construction, which rejected the hypothesis. The reasons for the Chinese learners producing more passive than active structures in both tasks might be the task effect and the learners' familiarity with the English passive. Due to a large number of active responses and a marginal level of significant difference in the IPE task, this study investigated further the different contexts in the IPE task with respect to the participants' perspective of whether they considered that the patients in the pictures were suffering from adversity or not. The results clearly revealed that the participants would not avoid the English passive construction under the adversity context due to the transfer of training in the Chinese setting or, to be more specific, the participants transferred their L1 knowledge of the meaning of the Chinese passive into their L2 production. However, there was a tendency for the participants to avoid the English passive construction under the non-adversity context due to the complexities of the English passive construction compared with the active, whereby the participants did not transfer their L1 knowledge of the meaning of the Chinese passive. The findings from this study have contributed to Second Language Acquisition with respect to the L2 avoidance phenomenon.

Field of Study:	English as an International Language	Student's Signature ....
Academic Year:	2020	Advisor's Signature ....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Second language acquisition (SLA) is an academic field of research that investigates the human capacity to acquire languages other than the first language during late childhood, adolescence, or adulthood (Ortega, 2014). "Second language" refers to any language(s) other than one's native language, which does not have to be chronologically the second acquired language. "Acquisition" addresses the question of how learners acquire the linguistic system of another language in their competence, and how they make use of that linguistic system in their language production (VanPatten & Benati, 2015). One of the primary concerns for SLA research is to detect the difficult structures for L2 acquisition (Ellis, 1994).

SLA researchers have often focused their research efforts on L2 English (Ortega, 2014) and have been looking at the difficult structures for English learners. One phenomenon in SLA, which can reflect L2 learning problems, is *avoidance* (Schachter, 1974).

Schachter (1974)'s study found that the error rate of English relative clauses by L1 Chinese and Japanese learners was significantly lower than that by Persian and Arabic learners, even though English was much more different from Chinese and Japanese than Persian and Arabic in terms of the relative clause placement. However, Schachter observed that the Chinese and Japanese learners produced noticeably fewer relative clauses than the other two counterparts. Therefore, it was inferred that the lower frequency of errors did not necessarily mean that the point in question, i.e. the relative clause, was less difficult, but because the learners were more likely to *avoid* using it in

their language production. Thus, the Avoidance Behaviour Hypothesis in SLA was formulated (Schachter, 1974).

Later researchers working on L2 English avoidance studies found avoidance of L2 structures by learners from several L1 backgrounds, e.g. avoidance of English phrasal verbs by L1 Hebrew, Swedish, Dutch, and Thai learners (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Kosolsombat & Pongpairoj, 2017; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993); avoidance of English relative clauses by L1 Thai learners (Rattanasak & Phoocharoensil, 2014; Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013); avoidance of inversions (Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2019); and avoidance of the English passive construction by L1 Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Hebrew, and Thai learners (Chotiros & Pongpairoj, 2012; Kleinmann, 1977; Seliger, 1989). In the context related to L1 Chinese learners, researchers also examined some English structures in their avoidance studies, e.g. relative clauses (Li, 1996; V. Yip & Matthews, 1991), and phrasal verbs (Liao & Fukuya, 2004).

As the above literature presented, avoidance of the passive construction is still open for examination and elaboration. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous studies have focused on avoidance of the English passive construction by L1 Chinese learners. Thus, the present study aims to bridge this gap by investigating avoidance of the passive structure by L1 Chinese learners.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To investigate whether L1 Chinese learners avoid the L2 English passive construction in their language production.

2. To establish the possible factors accounting for L1 Chinese learners' avoidance of the English passive construction.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the objectives, the research questions are formulated as;

1. Do L1 Chinese learners avoid the English passive construction in their language production?

2. What are the factors contributing to L1 Chinese learners' avoidance of the English passive construction?

1.4 Statement of the Hypotheses

1. L1 Chinese learners tend to avoid the English passive construction.

2. The factors contributing to L1 Chinese learners' avoidance of the L2 English passive construction are (1) L1-L2 differences based on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Schachter, 1974); and (2) Strategies of learning based on Error Analysis. (Selinker, 1972; Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013)

1.5 Scope of the Study

1.5.1 Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised L1 Chinese learners with English proficiency at the upper-intermediate level (e.g. B2). The sample of the study was selected by purposive sampling. Firstly, the participants were required to pass the Oxford Quick Placement Test (the Placement Test hereafter) (Allan, 2004) to the extent that their result scores fell between 40 to 47 out of 60, equivalent to the upper-intermediate level. Secondly, all the candidates who passed the Placement Test participated in a multiple-choice comprehension test on the English passive construction in order to ensure that the recruited participants understood the structure, so that its nonuse could be attributed to avoidance rather than ignorance. Thirdly, all the participants were L1

Chinese learners attending Chinese educational institutions and are studying English as a foreign language. In addition, this study also recruited six L1 English speakers to obtain suitable baseline data, which was used as the comparison in the obligatory passive context.

1.5.2 Target Linguistic Features

The passive construction is also called the passive *voice*, which includes the *be* passive and *get* passive structures (Miller, 2016). In this study, no matter which kind of passive was produced by the participants, it was counted as a token. In addition, the appropriateness of all the possible words which the participants were likely to use was confirmed by checking the textbooks and resorting to local English teachers. Besides, in the experiment, the researcher clarified that the participants could use any words they considered appropriate to convey the correct sense.

1.5.3 Tasks for Data Elicitation

In this study, two tasks, the FishFilm task (Tomlin, 1995) and the Indirect Preference Elicitation task, were used to elicit data from the experimental group (the L1 Chinese learners). For the native English speakers, they only completed the Indirect Preference Elicitation task because the FishFilm task positively influenced native English speakers to generate the passive construction (Keatinge & Keßler, 2009; Tomlin, 1995, 1997)

1.6 Definition of Terms

1. Avoidance: Avoidance is said to take place when the specific target-language features are underrepresented in the learner's production in comparison to a native speaker's production. Learners are likely to avoid any structure they find

difficult as a result of differences between their native language and the target language (Ellis, 1989).

2. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH): According to CAH, L2 errors are the result of differences between L1 and L2. The strong form of the hypothesis claims that these differences can be used to predict all the errors that are likely to occur. The weak form of the hypothesis claims that these differences can only be used to identify some of the errors that can actually occur (Ellis, 1989).

3. Error Analysis (EA): EA is a research tool characterised by a set of procedures for identifying, describing, and explaining L2 learners' errors (SM Gass & Selinker, 2008).

4. The English Passive Construction: A passive construction is a grammatical voice construction. In a passive voice clause, the grammatical subject expresses the theme or patient of the main verb – that is, the person or thing that undergoes the action or has its state changed (Quirk, 2010). For example: The wallet was stolen by a thief.

5. L1 Chinese Learners: Learners whose native language is Mandarin and who are studying English as a foreign language in an academic environment, i.e. several Chinese universities. Their language proficiency is the upper-intermediate level (i.e. B2 in CEFR)

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study aims to provide evidence about whether avoidance plays a role in the acquisition of the English passive construction, contributing to Second Language Acquisition with respect to the L2 avoidance phenomenon. The study also provides linguistic implications, i.e. factors attributing to (non-) avoidance of the English passive construction by L1 Chinese learners, and pedagogical implications, i.e. suggestions for English text book design in Chinese context.

1.8 Stages of the Research According to the Objectives and Method

The stages of the research are as follows:

1. Finding the research interest and topic: L1 learners tend to avoid using or producing certain L2 English structures;

2. Reviewing previous literature on the related topic: 1) CAH and EA, 2) Differences between Chinese and English passive constriction, 3) Previous avoidance studies, including avoidance on the English relative clauses, phrasal verbs, inversions and passive construction. Specifying the research gap: L2 English avoidance studies on the passive construction by L1 Chinese learners;

3. Designing the instruments, including a comprehension test and the elicitation tasks;

4. Validation of the instruments by three experts;

5. Submitting information about the methodology to the Office of the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects;

6. Conducting the main study;

7. Analysing the data, and discussing, summarising and concluding the findings.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature review concerning the areas associated with the present study. Section 2.1 provides information about the theories related to avoidance studies; Section 2.2 concerns differences between the Mandarin Chinese and English passive construction; and Section 2.3 deals with previous studies regarding L2 avoidance behaviour.

2.1 Related Theories

2.1.1 Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)

Before the SLA field was established, many researchers from the 1940s to the 1960s conducted contrastive analysis, systematically comparing L1 and L2 (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014). In essence, CAH assumed that the learning difficulty of L2 was ascribed to differences between the native and target languages, while the similarities led to easier acquisition. Hence, a large number of invaluable comparable descriptions of L1 and L2 as well as pedagogical implications for teaching and learning were derived from CAH.

Historically, it was Fries (1945) who firmly established contrastive analysis as a linguistic component of the methodology in foreign language teaching. He stated that "the most effective materials are those based upon a scientific description of the language to be learnt, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner" (1945: 9).

Fries (1945) may be said to have issued the charter for modern CAH, although several pioneers had already noticed the 'pull of the mother tongue' when learning the

target language (Sridhar, 1975). However, Fries did make the first move in what has turned out to be one of the most continuous academic controversies in the field of foreign language teaching, inspiring a broad array of claims and counterclaims in SLA research (Spolsky, 1979).

Lado (1957) further expanded the contrastive studies in his highly influential manual *Linguistic Across Culture*, explicitly claiming that L2 learners' learning difficulties could be traced through CAH:

We assume that the student who comes in contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult. The teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real learning problems are and can better provide for teaching them. (1957:2)

This claim not only gives a fresh impulse for later researchers, e.g. Dušková (1969); Arabski (1979); Laufer and Girsai (2008) to make systematic comparisons between L1 and L2, but also establishes a more solid theoretical foundation about CAH in SLA.

As Lado explained, the reason why learning difficulties are derived from language differences is that "individuals tend to *transfer* [emphasis added] the forms and meanings, and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture" (1957:2). When the parallel structure sets between L1 and L2 are quite different, and there is relatively much interference from L1 to L2, *negative transfer* emerges. If they are similar in such a way that the learning of one facilitates partial learning of the other, there may be *positive transfer* (SM Gass & Selinker, 2008; Odlin, 1989).

The formation of CAH is prominent to the field of SLA, since, if the difficulties in the target language could be anticipated through comparison, errors might be, at least, held to a minimum. This is the process whereby learners continuously overcome errors from the habits of L1 to acquire the new habits of L2. CAH is strongly related to

behaviourism, which is a school of psychology that bases learning on the stimulus-response paradigm (SM Gass & Selinker, 2008). Behaviourists assume that a person learning L2 would start with the habits formed in the acquired L1, and that these habits would interfere with the new habits needed for L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 2013).

Two positions have developed with regard to the CAH framework, the *a priori* versus the *a posteriori* view, the *strong* versus *weak* view, and the *predictive* versus *explanatory* view (Schachter, 1974). The *strong* (*a priori* or *predictive*) view argues that one could make predictions about what would be the points of difficulty for L2 learners, on the assumption that L1-L2 differences would be harder for learners to acquire the L2 structure, whereas L1-L2 similarities would make it easier, which is in accordance with Fries (1945) and Lado (1957). The *weak* (*a posteriori* or *explanatory*) version starts with an analysis of learners' recurring errors and then attempts to account for those errors through contrastive analysis (Schachter, 1974).

By the 1970s, many researchers held the view that behaviourism and CAH were inadequate explanations for SLA (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Those arguing against the strong version of CAH empirically pointed out that not all actually occurring errors were predicted, and not all predicted errors actually occurred. For example, two verbs, *conocer* and *saber* in Spanish correspond to different senses of the English verb *to know*. It seems that the lexical difference gives rise to many problems for L1 English learners studying Spanish, whereas L1 Spanish learners studying English might be free of the difficulty of associating two lexical senses with one form in English (Stockwell, Bowen, & Martin, 1965). The essence of CAH is that L1-L2 differences would lead to learning difficulties. However, the examples show that such differences can explain learning difficulties for L1 English-Spanish learners, but not for L1 Spanish-English learners.

2.1.2 Error Analysis (EA)

Further criticism of CAH comes from the classification of learners' errors in various studies, generally known as error analysis (EA). Some errors appear to arise not from language transfer but from other sources, such as transfer of training; that is, the influence which is determined by the way a student is taught, but not the language differences (Odlin, 1989).

EA is actually as old as language teaching, since teachers have long implemented and applied error analysis for teaching purposes, such as providing diagnostic and remedial measures as well as feedback for the students. However, as the study has grown out of a strong criticism of CAH, and also, as the encompassing research theory for the weak version of CAH, EA is relatively new (Seah, 1980). In this study, EA refers to the latter.

In the 1970s, EA emerged as a reaction to the criticism of CAH, as its predictive value has been refuted repeatedly (VanPatten & Benati, 2015). In essence, EA is a research tool characterised by a set of procedures for identifying, describing, and explaining L2 learners' errors. The first scholar who called for EA was Corder (1967) in his *The significance of learners' errors*. In Corder's view, errors should not just be seen as something to be eradicated, rather, they should be viewed as indications of a learner's struggle to pin down some idea of the L2 system; that is, to impose regularity on language learning (SM Gass & Selinker, 2008).

Corder (1967) also distinguished between errors and mistakes. Mistakes are similar to slips of the tongue in language performance due to fatigue, excitement, etc., and therefore can be readily self-corrected, while errors are systematic deviations made by learners who have not yet mastered the rules of the L2. Learners could not self-correct such error because it is a product reflecting the current stage of L2 development or underlying competence (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014).

EA provides a broader range of possible explanations than CAH for researchers to account for errors, as the latter only attributes errors to L1 (SM Gass & Selinker, 2008). Learners would commit errors traced to L1 interference, which are termed as interlingual errors. The weak version of CAH was originally raised to explain these errors. However, a large number of errors were assumed to derive from the L2 itself, independent of the learners' L1. Such errors are termed intralingual errors, and reflect the general features of rule learning, i.e. over-generalisation, ignorance of the rules, incomplete application of the rules, and false hypothesised concepts. The third error type includes developmental errors, which occur when the learner attempts to build hypotheses about the target language on the basis of limited experience (Richards, 1980).

Even though EA studies have provided invaluable insights and stimulating suggestions for language teaching with regard to the nature of errors, it is not exempted from some level of weakness and limitations. A number of critiques of EA were proposed during the 1970s and 1980s (See Gass & Selinker 2008)

A frequently mentioned limitation is that EA failed to provide a complete linguistic picture of a learner's L2. Therefore, it is necessary that both what the learners did correctly and what they did wrongly should be identified (Ellis, 1994). However, by only focusing on the errors, the researchers denied access to what the learners had learnt. Therefore, Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) argued that one needed to consider non-errors as well as errors in order to capture the entire picture of a learner's linguistic repertoire.

Furthermore, it was often difficult, if not impossible, to identify the correct classification of the identified errors, which sometimes were ambiguous. Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) provided the following examples from L1 Chinese learners:

(1) a. There are so many Taiwan people * live around the lake

  b. There were lots of events * happen in my country.

  c. …and there is a mountain * separate two lakes.

d. …and there are so many tourist * visit there.

(1977: 445)

At first glance, these sentences were relative clauses without any wh-operators, i.e. 'that', 'who', 'which', etc. A possible explanation could be that the Chinese learners typically failed to master relative clauses due to their inherent structural complexity (intralingual errors). However, what is more plausible is that these errors could be explained by interference from the learner's L1, because the learner attempted to establish the language pattern, 'topic + comment', which is syntactically and pragmatically acceptable in Chinese. In this case, it could be defined as an interlingual error (Schachter & Celce-Murcia, 1977).

The third problem showing the inadequacies of EA was more substantive, thus inducing the research area of this study, which was avoidance. Schachter (1974) found that learners may resort to avoidance if they found an L2 structure difficult, and preferred to substitute it with an easier equivalent. Subsequent studies by Kleinmann (1977), Dagut and Laufer (1985), and Liao and Fukuya (2004) testified to the prevalence of avoidance in SLA. EA, which only focuses on what learners do, has no way of detecting avoidance. Therefore, this is a significant limitation.

2.1.3 Avoidance Studies

Since the seminal work by Schachter (1974) brought avoidance behaviour into the SLA field, researchers have realised that empirical studies not only have to take L2 learners' overt errors into account, but also their tendency to apply avoidance. The studies of avoidance can be categorised into two directions, namely, avoidance behaviour as an SLA phenomenon, and avoidance as a communication strategy.

As Kamimoto, Shimura, and Kellerman (1992) stated, post-Schachterian researchers investigating avoidance in SLA also sought evidence by focusing on particular linguistic structures, e.g. relative clauses, phrasal verbs, the passive construction, and so forth. These studies are classified into two general counterparts:

those that try to elaborate the concept of avoidance with more diversified language backgrounds and structures, e.g. Kleinmann (1977); Chiang (1980); Dagut and Laufer (1985); Hulstijn and Marchena (1989); Seliger (1989); and Laufer and Eliasson (1993), and those that question the validity of Schachter's interpretation of the data as evidence of avoidance, e.g. Eckman (1977); Li (1996). Whether the researchers agreed or disagreed with Schachter's construal, they generally acknowledged the existence of avoidance behaviour in SLA.

Another research field extends the concept of avoidance as a type of communication strategy for easing communication problems, represented by the works of Tarone (1976, 1981), Faerch and Kasper (1980, 1984), and Dörnyei (1995). Tarone (1981) defined communication strategy as a method which "attempts to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the L2 learners and the linguistic knowledge of the target language's interlocutors in real communication situations." (1981: 288). The avoidance strategy can be used when the gap is perceived as unbridgeable. In her view, avoidance strategy can be sub-categorised into topic avoidance and message abandonment. Topic avoidance means the learner would avoid the topic areas or concepts which pose language difficulties. Message abandonment means the L2 learners would leave the message unfinished because of the communication difficulties (Tarone, 1976, 1981). Faerch and Kasper (1984) further claimed that when learners were faced with a communication problem, they would adopt avoidance behaviour, thereby "renouncing (part of) their original communication goal" (1984: 48) by avoiding certain speech acts or discourse functions, and avoiding certain topics and modality markers.

Even though avoidance as a communication strategy has attracted more research focus in recent years (Zhang, 2006), there is no denying that detecting language difficulties, especially structural difficulties which cause communication problems for L2 learners, is at the crux of avoidance studies. Therefore, in this study, the researcher

has emphasised avoidance behaviour as an SLA phenomenon by identifying the linguistic structure that is being avoided.

2.1.4 The Factors of the Non-Avoidance Hypothesis (FNAH)

In SLA there are two opposing views related to avoidance behaviour. The first view is that L2 learners avoid a target language's structure if it is perceived as difficult due to the non-existence of the L2 structure in the learner's L1, or the L1-L2 differences. Instead, the learner uses a structure that is in some sense simpler and conveys more or less the same sense as the one initially envisaged (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993). This is the Avoidance Behaviour Hypothesis proposed by Schachter (1974), and followed by several researchers investigating different structures, e.g. Susan Gass (1980), Chiang (1980), V. Yip and Matthews (1991), and Li (1996) on relative clauses; Dagut and Laufer (1985), Laufer and Eliasson (1993), Liao and Fukuya (2004), and Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012) on phrasal verbs, and Kleinmann (1977), Seliger (1989) on the passive voice construction. The second view is that avoidance does not necessarily occur, as several researchers found that L2 learners did not avoid the structures that they investigated, e.g. Chotiros and Pongpairoj (2012); Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013, 2019). Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013, 2019) assumed that several factors could account for the non-avoidance phenomenon in the learners' language production, such as the L2 learners' familiarity with a structure, the simplicity of the equivalent structure compared with the target structure, and the nature of the task. FNAH was formulated to explain that although L1-L2 differences or some L2 structures are non-existent in learners' L1, avoidance behaviour does not necessarily emerge.

2.2 Differences Between the Mandarin and English Passive Construction

For many decades, several contrasting studies of the passive construction in English and Mandarin have been conducted, i.e. Xiao, McEnery, and Qian (2006). This section applies a contrasting perspective to compare these two languages in terms of syntactic and distributional differences, seeking to provide a more systematic account of the passives in these two typologically distinct languages.

2.2.1 The Mandarin Passive Construction

The following section situates the syntactic form (2.2.1.1) and distribution (2.2.1.2) of the passive construction in Mandarin.

2.2.1.1 Three Forms of the Passive

There are three forms of passive construction in Mandarin, including a) The formal passive, b) The notional passive, and c) The lexical passive.

A. The Formal Passive:

The passive construction in Mandarin indicates the subject of the sentence, instead of initiating the action specified in the predicate verb, which is actually the "receiver" of the action, and it can be marked overtly through the addition of a passive morpheme (or passive marker). There are five passive markers in Mandarin, including 被'bèi',让 'ràng',叫'jiào',给'gěi',让…给 'ràng…gěi', 叫…给 'jiào…gěi' (P.-C. Yip & Rimmington, 2006). The basic structure is as follows:

(2)　PATIENT SUBJECT NP + PASSIVE MARKER (+ AGENT NP) + VP (2006)

For example:

(3) 钱包　　　被　　　小偷　　　偷　　　了。

    qiánbāo　　bèi　　　xiǎotōu　　tōu　　　le

    wallet　　　PSV[1]　　thief　　　steal　　PART[2]

    'The wallet was stolen by a/the thief.'

(4) 钱包　　让　　　小偷　　　偷　　　　了。

    qiánbāo　ràng　　xiàotōu　　tōu　　　le

    wallet　　PSV　　thief　　　steal　　PART

    'The wallet was stolen by a/the thief.'

(5) 钱包　　　叫　　　小偷　　　给　　　偷　　　　了。

    qiánbāo　　jiào　　xiàotōu　　gěi　　tōu　　　le

    wallet　　　PSV　　thief　　　PSV　　steal　　PART

    'The wallet was stolen by a/the thief.'

In (3), 钱包 'wallet' is the patient of the action of stealing followed by the passive marker 被'bèi' to imply the passive meaning. The agent, 小偷 'thief' could be explicitly stated in the sentence and be followed by the verb, 偷'steal'. It is worth noting that in (5), 叫…给 'jiào…gěi' is a two-word phrase but it is regarded as one passive marker.

The passive meaning in Mandarin Chinese could be expressed with different passive markers, including 被 'bèi', 让'ràng', 叫'jiào', 给'gěi', 让…给'ràng…gěi', 叫…给'jiào…gěi'. However, the most salient feature of the formal passive is the inclusion of the passive marker 被'bèi'; that is, the passive marker using 被'bèi' is the most common and prototypical passive in Mandarin, whereas the others, including 让 'ràng', 叫'jiào', 给'gěi', 让…给'ràng…gěi', 叫…给'jiào…gěi', are more used in colloquial speech (P.-C. Yip & Rimmington, 2006).

In the formal passive structure, the identity of the initiator of the action could be stated explicitly after the passive marker, or it may remain unstated or vague (2006). For example:

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[1] PSV=passive marker

[2] PART=particle

(6) Initiator revealed:

那个	警察	被	流氓	打伤	了。
nàgè	jǐngchá	bèi	líumáng	dǎshāng	le
that	policeman	PSV	hooligan	hit-wounded	PART

'That policeman was wounded by a/the hooligan.'

(7) Identity unstated:

那个	警察	被	打伤	了。
nàgè	jǐngchá	bèi	dǎshāng	le
that	policeman	PSV	hit-wounded	PART

'That policeman was wounded.'

(8) Identity vague:

那个	警察	被	人	打伤	了。
nàgè	jǐngchá	bèi	rén	dǎshāng	le
that	policeman	PSV	people	hit-wounded	PART

'That policeman was wounded by someone.'
(2006: 127)

In (6), *the hooligan,* who is the initiator, or the agent of the action "hitting the policeman", is plainly revealed. However, the agent in the Mandarin passive is optional according to the context. In (7), the agent is not necessarily stated in the sentence because it is assumed that the reader or listener did not need to know who hit the policeman, or the agent is tacitly known by the interlocutors. Alternatively, if the writers or speakers would not or could not state the agent clearly, 人 'someone' is used to avoid the explicit agent as in (8).

B. The Notional Passive:

The passive in Mandarin can be covertly marked through implicit semantics. This type of passive is defined as the notional passive. The notional passive avoids passive markers by relying on the hearer's common sense or knowledge of the world. Normally, the original object of the verb is posed as the topic under discussion, and the position of the object shifts to the beginning of the sentence (2006).

A notional passive is designed to initiate an explanatory comment about a situation. So, it is often stated as "object + transitive verb" to show the function "topic + explanatory comment" (2006). For example:

(9) 信　　　　　寄　　　　　了。
　　　xìn　　　　jì　　　　　le
　　　letter　　　send　　　　PART
　　　'The letter has been sent off.'
　(2006: 210)

In (9), even though 信 'the letter' as the subject is followed directly by the predicate verb 寄 'send', interpretation of the sentence could not be that the letter initiates the action of sending itself. Instead, the letter is the receiver of the action and the sentence meaning should be "the letter has been sent off".

C. The Lexical Passive

Several researchers have shown that some lexical verbs in Mandarin have an innate passive sense (Xiao et al., 2006). Constructions with such verbs, for example, 受到 'shòudào', which means 'receive an action', 遭到 'zāodào', which means "suffer from or receive (misfortune)", and 得到 'dédào', which means 'obtain', are known as the lexical passive. The structure is as follows:

(10) RECEIVER + VERB + INITIATOR+ NORMINALISED VERB (2006: 222)

For example:

(11) 他的　　　行为　　　遭到　　　父母　　　的　　　　批评。
　　　tāde　　　xíngwéi　zāodào　　fùmǔ　　de　　　pīpíng
　　　3SG　　　behaviour　receive　parents　PART　criticism
　　　'His behaviour was criticised by his parents.'

In (11), 遭到 'zāo dào' is used to convey the passive meaning. Specifically, 他的行为 'his behaviour' as the subject does not initiate the criticism action. Instead, it is the receiver of the action. 父母 'the parents' is the initiator of the action following the lexical passive verb 遭到 'zāo dào', which means "receive something unfavourable from parents". The verb 批评 'criticise' should be nominalised to 'criticism' at the end of the sentence. From word-to-word translation, the sentence meaning is "his behaviour received parents' criticism". However, from the semantics of Mandarin, the sentence denotes the passive meaning because the subject is actually the patient of the action

"criticising". Therefore, a formal translation should be "his behaviour was criticised by his parents".

2.2.1.2 Distribution of the Mandarin Passive Construction

Compatible with Ross and Ma (2017), the Mandarin passive is used under the following conditions:

(12) To express adversity, indicating that the event has negative consequences or is in some way 'bad news' for the narrator, addressee. See examples (3) and (6)

(13) To express surprise or astonishment. For example:

我们	的	秘密	被	政府	发现	了。
wǒmén	de	mìmì	bèi	zhèngfǔ	fāxìan	le
3SG	PART	secret	PSV	government	find	PART

'Our secret was discovered by the government.'

(14) To emphasise the affected noun phrase rather than the agent. For example:

这	的	树	都	被	人	砍	了。
zhè	de	shù	dōu	bèi	rén	kǎn	le
here	PART	tree	all	PSV	people	cut	PART

'The trees here were all cut down by people.'

(15) To describe an action when the agent is unknown. See example (7)

(16) To avoid mentioning the agent of an action. For example:

我	女儿	被	骗	了。
wǒ	nǚér	bèi	piàn	le
my	daughter	PSV	cheat	PART

'My daughter was cheated.'

(2017: 102)

Generally speaking, the Mandarin passive structure is more frequently used with a negative meaning because the passive marker 被 'bèi' is derived from a verb with an inflictive meaning. However, this semantic constraint on the use of the passive structure has become more neutral, especially in written Chinese, under the influence of western languages (Xiao et al., 2006).

2.2.2 The English Passive Construction

2.2.2.1 Active-Passive Correspondence

The passive construction is also called the passive voice. Voice is a grammatical category which makes it possible to view the action of a sentence in either of two ways, and without a change in the reported facts (Quirk, 2010). There are two voices in English, active and passive. For example:

    (17)   a. The butler murdered the detective. [Active]

            b. The detective was murdered by the butler. [Passive]

At the sentence level, changing from the active to the passive voice involves rearranging the elements in the sentence. (a) The active subject becomes the passive AGENT; (b) The active object becomes the passive subject; (c) The preposition phrase '*by' + agent* is employed optionally (2010). The active-passive correspondence can be expressed by the formula (2010:160):

    (18) a. AGENT SUBJECT NP + VP + PATIENT OBJECT NP (active)

        b. PATIENT SUBJECT NP + VP (+ PREPOSITION + AGENT NP) (passive)

For example:

    (19)   a. The man respects her. (Active)

            b. She is respected by the man. (Passive)

            c. She is respected. (Passive)

2.2.2.2 *Be* Passive and *Get* Passive

The VP, as shown in (18b) is typically constructed syntactically with an auxiliary verb and a past participle. The distinguishable syntactic feature of the English passive would be the use of differing auxiliary verbs, i.e. *be* vs. *get*, functioning as the main verb, which gives rise to (a) *be* passive; (b) *get* passive (Miller, 2016).

The *be* passive can be considered as the norm for English passive (Xiao et al., 2006). Most passive sentences contain the auxiliary *be* followed by the verb in the past participle form, as in (19b). Compared to the *be* passive, the *get* passive is avoided in the formal style but it common in colloquial speech (Quirk, 2010). For example:

(20) a. The cat got run over (by a bus).

b. James got beaten last night

The *get* passive is most often used when the subject of the sentence suffers adversely as a result of the action (Berk, 1999), as in (20a). A corpus study shows that the *get* passive is indeed used more frequently to express the speaker's attitude – typically, viewing the consequence as unfortunate. Table 1 shows that the *get* passive is more closely related to a negative meaning (37.7%) than the *be* passive (15%). However, in general, the English passive is used more in neutral situations (Xiao et al., 2006).

Passive type	Negative	Positive	Neutral
Be passive	15%	4.7%	80.3%
Get passive	37.7%	3.4%	58.9%

Table 1: Semantic Properties of Be and Get Passives in FLOB And BNC Demo (2006: 116)

2.2.2.3 Distribution of the English Passive Construction

According to Hewings (2005), there are some situations where the passive rather than the active would be employed.

(21) Using the passive structure allows omitting the unknown or unimportant agent in the context by leaving out the prepositional phrase with '*by'*. For example:

a. My office was broken into when I was on holiday. (Unknown agent)

b. An order form can be found on page 2. (Agent = people in general)

    c.   These boxes should be handled with care. (Unimportant agent)

    d.   She is being treated in hospital. (Obvious agent; presumably 'doctors')

(22) Employing the passive structure allows putting old information at the beginning of the sentence (or clause), and placing the new information at the end. For example:

    a.   The three machines tested for the report contained different types of safety valve. These machines were manufactured by the Boron Group in Germany.

In (22), '*these machines'* is the old information because it was mentioned in the last sentence, and '*the Boron Group in Germany'* is the new information. The passive is employed to make the context develop from old to new.

(23) The passive could be used to place agents which consist of long expressions at the end of the sentence, which makes the sentence more natural. For example:

    a.   I was surprised by Don's decision to give up his job and move to Sydney.

(2005: 60)

2.3 Previous Studies Regarding L2 Avoidance Behaviour

There have been many linguistic researchers focusing on the issue of avoidance behaviour in SLA since Schachter (1974) pointed out the error in EA; that is, studies based only on EA provided evidence on what learners had done and why, but failed to detect the *a priori* difficulty, what they would not produce and why. This kind of difficulty could be predicted by CAH. Later researchers showed more evidence on avoidance by testing different structures from different L1 backgrounds. For example, avoidance of relative clauses (RCs hereafter) (Chiang, 1980; Susan Gass, 1980; Li, 1996; Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013; V. Yip & Matthews, 1991), avoidance of phrasal verbs (PVs hereafter) (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Ghabanchi & Goudarzi, 2012; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Kosolsombat & Pongpairoj, 2017; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya, 2004), avoidance of inversion (Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj,

2019), and avoidance of the passive construction (Chotiros & Pongpairoj, 2012; Kleinmann, 1977; Seliger, 1989). This section introduces some previous avoidance studies.

2.3.1 Avoidance of Relative Clauses

Schachter (1974) seemed to be the first researcher to discuss the avoidance phenomenon, although others had certainly mentioned similar notions, e.g. Lado (1961). Schachter examined four sets of free English compositions written by L2 learners by Arabic, Persian, Chinese, and Japanese students, and one set produced by a control group of L1 English students. Through contrastive analysis, Schachter found that the RCs were positioned before the head noun phrase (NP) in Chinese and Japanese but after the head NP in Persian and Arabic, which is similar to the English structure. Thus, she predicted that RC could be a learning difficulty for the Chinese and Japanese learners because of the L1-L2 differences in the head noun's direction: pre-nominal or post-nominal modifier. After the prediction, Schachter applied error analysis and found that the error rate of the RCs from the Chinese and Japanese learners was significantly lower than that by the other two non-native counterparts, which went against the prediction. However, taking a further step, Schachter also calculated the total RCs produced in the written production of each group and found that the Chinese and Japanese learners produced noticeably fewer RCs compared to the Arabic and Persian learners. She inferred that the Chinese and Japanese learners were more likely to avoid RCs in their production, and the Avoidance Behaviour Hypothesis in SLA was formulated. In conclusion, Schachter emphasised that CA *a priori* (See 2.1.1) should not be abandoned because the learning difficulty resulting from linguistic differences would manifest itself in avoidance rather than error-making.

In the 1980s and 90s, many researchers not only accepted avoidance as a linguistic phenomenon in SLA, but also refined and expanded it on the structure of RCs with more diversified L1 backgrounds, e.g. L1 French, Italian, Korean, Portuguese and Thai

learners in Susan Gass (1980); L1 Spanish in Chiang (1980); L1 Thai in Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013).

Susan Gass (1980) examined comprehension and production of English RCs in light of the Accessibility Hierarchy (AH) theory (Keenan & Comrie, 1977)[3] through three tasks, namely, grammaticality judgment, sentence combination and free composition by seventeen adult speakers from diversified L1 backgrounds (Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, and Thai). It was found that the participants tended to avoid "relativising on positions which were low on AH" (1980: 138). The results indicated that the learners' avoidance of difficult structures could be predicted from the universal properties of the RC, expressly, it is harder for L2 learners to acquire the RCs with the grammatical position of the NP lower on the hierarchy (e.g. object of comparative).

Chiang (1980) aimed to explore the causative factors leading to the avoidance of RCs, by examining eighty-three L2 learners (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Persian, and Spanish) in an oral interview. The participants were asked two questions as input stimuli to elicit RCs with a relativised subject and a relativised non-subject, e.g. 'What is a teacher?' or 'What is a typewriter?' (1980: 145). The same questions were also given to the native speakers of English in the study. It was found that the native speakers preferred RCs in their production, but the L2 learners attempted to avoid using RCs. Through statistical analysis, the results revealed that the factor most strongly correlating with avoidance was overall language proficiency, followed by language background and the type of input question. It was concluded that the L1-L2 differences could not entirely account for avoidance.

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[3] Keenan and Comrie (1977) argued a universal hierarchy of relativisation in the different grammatical position of the noun phrase: SU (subject)>DO (direct object) >IO (indirect object)> OBL (oblique) >GEN (genitive) > OCOMP (object of comparative). The symbol ">" means "more accessible than". It could be inferred from the hierarchy that if the relativatsation out of a position (e.g. IO) in certain languages is realizable, so does the left of the hierarchy (i.e., SU and DO) (See Keenan and Comrie 1977 for more details on hierarchy).

V. Yip and Matthews (1991) also employed AH (See note 3) to further exploit the avoidance hypothesis. They assumed that a learner's production should respect the hierarchy. Thus, the learners would prefer the subject's relatives and avoid other types in the hierarchy. They analysed data coming from the written production of advanced learners who majored in English. The reason why they chose advanced learners was that such learners could no longer afford to avoid RCs because they needed to use RCs to write at an appropriate level of sophistication on topics of literary criticism and linguistic analysis. The results confirmed the prediction to the extent that the participants typically avoided using RCs with an oblique and those with a genitive.

Li (1996) differentiated between conscious avoidance and subconscious under-production[4] to emphasise that Chinese learners did not consciously avoid but subconsciously under-produced RCs due to some subtle pragmatic differences. Two groups of participants were tested separately in two investigations. Sixteen L1 Chinese learners received retrospective interviews, and they were asked whether they tried to avoid using RCs in their writing and nearly all the participants answered "No". The second investigation was conducted involving a group of eleven L1 Chinese learners. During this investigation, the researcher carried out two studies. The first study comprised the task that required the participants to answer questions in written form (e.g. What is a clock?). The second task was sentence translation from English to Chinese and vice versa. The third task was a retrospective interview. The example question was "From your own experience of learning English, have you ever considered this: because English RCs are difficult, have you tried to avoid using them in your writing?" (1996: 178) and nearly all the participants answered "No". In the first study, none of the participants produced sentences with a RC, and in the interview, they denied any conscious avoidance because of the difficulties of producing English RCs. In the second study, the contents of the test were different from the first study, but every

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[4] Li (1996) explained that subconscious underproduction refers to the situation when L2 learners under-produce certain L2 structures without realising that they are doing so, whereas avoidance is a conscious behaviour pattern.

participant could produce all the RCs except for those which had special pragmatic functions (e.g. information focus, adverbial clauses of concession and reason) besides noun modifiers. From these two investigations, Li suggested that concerning form, English RCs were not difficult for intermediate and advanced L1 Chinese learners. However, pragmatic differences, which were too subtle to be noticed by the learners, may cause the learners to subconsciously under-produce English RCs.

Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013) expanded the research on the avoidance behaviour of RCs to participial reduced relative clauses (PRRC) by L1 Thai learners. They hypothesised that Thai learners tended to produce English RCs, rather than the reduced RCs with participles, and the Thai learners were likely to show a higher avoidance level of PRRCs with past participles, compared to those with present participles. The underlying reason for these hypotheses was the three characteristics of the Thai language, namely, a) Fewer conditions under which Thai relative pronouns can be deleted, b) A lack of an inflectional affix system, and c) The more restricted RC reduction, which only requires the omission of relative pronouns. The participants, twenty L1 Thai undergraduate students, were given three tests. The comprehension test was to exclude the possibility of ignorance by the learners about this structure. In order to rule out any wild guessing by the participants, the researchers employed Kleinmann (1977)'s score calculation method, adding a Likert five-point confidence scale, i.e. "Completely unsure", "Mostly unsure", "Half-sure", "Mostly sure" and "Completely sure" to each item and combined the two scores as the final score. The second test was a cloze test, providing two choices of the correct answers to test the participants' preference between PPRC and RC. The last test was a Thai-English translation. The overall results overturned the hypotheses, showing that the participants did not avoid the PRRC structure. Three factors emerged to explain the non-avoidance phenomenon: the L2 learners' familiarity with the PRRC structure, simplicity of the reduced adjectival clause (the complexities of the RC), and the nature of the tasks. Following these findings, the researchers proposed the Factors of L2 Non-Avoidance Hypothesis

(FNAH) and they claimed that "even though the features in L1 and L2 are different or L2 features are non-existent in L1, it does not necessarily mean L2 avoidance will occur" (2013:12).

2.3.2 Avoidance of English Phrasal Verbs

Expanding from the syntactic (e.g. RC) to the lexico-syntactical form, many later researchers focused on PVs to study avoidance in SLA, because complex formation and semantic transparency tended to cause lexical avoidance (Chen & Smakman, 2016). From this point, examining the frequency of English PVs used by learners from different L1s could provide plausible reasons for avoidance behaviour due to maybe L1-L2 differences, e.g. Schachter (1974); Kleinmann (1977); Dagut and Laufer (1985); and Laufer and Eliasson (1993). However, researchers also found other reasons causing avoidance, for example, L1-L2 similarities, e.g. Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), semantic complexity of L2, e.g. Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012), and interlanguage development, e.g. Liao and Fukuya (2004). Most of the studies stood for the position that no single factor could account for avoidance without taking other factors into consideration (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). In this part, the literature is classified according to the different factors functioning in avoidance, namely, L1- L2 differences, L1-L2 similarities, semantic complexity of L2 and interlanguage development.

2.3.2.1 L1- L2 Differences

Dagut and Laufer (1985) reaffirmed the importance of studying avoidance, since it "can throw light on what would otherwise remain as hidden recesses of uncertainty in a learner's mind" (1985: 73). By using multiple choice, verb translation and verb memorising tests, it was found that three different groups of L1 Hebrew learners preferred more familiar one-word verbs instead of PV equivalents compared to the native speaker group, and the avoidance was most obvious with the figurative PVs.

Since PV is a peculiarity of the Germanic languages and distinct from the Hebrew language, they argued that L1-L2 differences played a role in avoidance behaviour.

Laufer and Eliasson (1993) undertook a study to account for the position that avoidance in adult L2 learning, by and large, originated from the L1-L2 differences. They stood for the assumption that "mutual mirroring of L1 and L2 is an intrinsic part of all L2 learning" (1993: 46), highlighting the importance of CAH. Multiple choice and translation tests were used on eighty-seven Swedish learners (with PVs in their L1), paralleled with the Hebrew learners (without PVs in their L1) in Dagut and Laufer (1985). To examine whether L1- L2 differences, L1- L2 similarities, or the semantic complexity of L2 could account for the avoidance behaviour, the researchers designed the study based on the following criteria:

a. Compare two groups of learners (Hebrew without PVs in their L1 and Swedish with PVs in their L1) to see whether L1-L2 differences could be the predictor of avoidance.

b. Within a group of L1 Swedish learners (with PVs in L1), they could be tested to see whether they would avoid English PVs that are identical to the Swedish equivalents.

c. Compare the performance of the same group about two kinds of PVs: figurative and literal, to examine whether the semantic complexity of figurative PVs plays a role in avoidance.

The results revealed that PVs were avoided by the Hebrew rather than the Swedish learners, indicating that the L1-L2 difference was the predictor for avoidance; the L1 Swedish learners did not avoid English PVs which were identical to their L1, indicating that L1-L2 similarities did not necessarily induce avoidance; the Swedish learners did not avoid figurative PVs, showing the semantic complexity of L2 did not come into play in avoidance. Laufer and Eliasson contended that "the best predictor of avoidance is the L1-L2 differences" (1993: 46).

2.3.2.2 L1- L2 Similarities

Many previous studies tended to explain the avoidance phenomenon in light of the L1-L2 differences (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Kleinmann, 1977; Schachter, 1974). Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) perceived that even certain native speakers of Germanic L1 (e.g. L1 Dutch learners), who also had PVs in their language system, tended to avoid using PVs in their language production. They hypothesised that L1 Dutch learners would avoid PVs, because PVs were often attached with specific, sometimes even idiomatic meanings compared with general, multi-meaning one-word counterparts. Multiple choice, memorisation and translation tasks from Dutch to English were given to the one hundred and twenty-five intermediate and one hundred advanced L1 Dutch learners. The results showed that both intermediate and advanced learners did not avoid PVs as a category. However, item analysis revealed that the learners from both levels would adopt a "play-it-safe strategy" (1989: 249), and they tended to avoid those English PVs that were idiomatic and too Dutch-like or with a lack of contrast between English and Dutch. The learners explained that they tried to avoid making interference errors because these PVs were too similar to their L1 and might not be appropriate. These findings gave rise to L1-L2 similarities as the reason for avoidance.

2.3.2.3 Semantic Complexity of L2

Besides the L1-L2 differences and L1-L2 similarities, some researchers assumed that the semantic complexity of L2 could be a factor triggering the avoidance behaviour. In the studies by Liao and Fukuya (2004) and Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012), the researchers found that learners would avoid figurative PVs instead of literal ones because of the inherent complexity of figurative PVs. However, it is worth noting that the reason for the learners' avoidance of figurative PVs could be semantic complexity,

L1-L2 differences, or a combination of both, which means, again, no single factor could account for avoidance.

Ghabanchi and Goudarzi (2012) investigated whether PV types, test types, or the proficiency of L2 learners could be factor(s) accounting for avoidance by Iranian learners. Multiple choice, translation, and recall tasks were given to learners at intermediate and advanced levels. The materials included in the tests included four literal and eleven figurative PVs. The results showed that the learners at both levels preferred literal PVs over figurative ones in all three tests. Therefore, it was concluded that the semantic complexity of the figurative PVs might cause the learners' avoidance, since the meaning of the figurative PVs was not derived from the meaning of the two parts, and the idiomatic meaning could make the learners confused.

2.3.2.4 Interlanguage Development

Liao and Fukuya (2004) claimed that learners' interlanguage development is a factor for learners' avoidance of PVs. To be more specific, the avoidance tendency would diminish with increasing proficiency, even if L1-L2 differences, L1-L2 similarities, or semantic complexity of L2 are manifest in the target structures. Using multiple choice, translation and recall tests (similar to the memorisation test by Dagut and Laufer (1985)) on intermediate and advanced L1 Chinese learners, it was found that compared with native speakers, the intermediate learners significantly avoided PVs, but the advanced learners did not. Combining the previous studies on PVs (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993), the researchers in this study framed a developmental pattern from avoidance to non-avoidance of English PVs, within which one important contributing factor was the learners' proficiency level (e.g. the amount of contact with L2). Figure 1 shows that learners from multiple language backgrounds experience the same developmental track from avoidance to non-avoidance as the learners' proficiency level advances from intermediate, e.g. L1 Chinese undergraduates and graduates in Liao and Fukuya

(2004), to the native-like, e.g. L1 Swedish undergraduates in Laufer and Eliasson (1993). Thus, Liao and Fukuya (2004) speculated that it was interlanguage development that indicated the reason for avoidance, even though the language background could not be excluded.

Figure 1: Developmental Shift from Avoidance to Non-Avoidance of English PVs (2004: 92)

2.3.3 Avoidance of Inversion

Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2019) investigated avoidance of English inversions after 1) Copular verb phrases and/or long subjects, and 2) Negative adverbials on L1 Thai learners. The tasks were a comprehension test and an indirect preference assessment task to explore the participants' preference between the inversion and non-inversion structure. The results indicated that the L1 Thai learners tended to avoid the former inversion type but not the latter. It seemed that FNAH would be a proper explanation for the non-avoidance behaviour by the learners. It was emphasised that 'when the L1 and L2 forms are different, it doesn't necessarily mean that the learners' avoidance behaviour will be manifested' (2019:20).

2.3.4 Avoidance of the English Passive Construction

The English passive construction interplays with a complex system of tense and modality, so the level of sophistication in acquisition poses difficulties for L2 learners (Wang, 2010). Avoidance presumes a choice to replace a complicated structure with an alternative one, which is perceived as less difficult and less error prone (Laufer & Eliasson, 1993). So, a few researchers followed their assumption that the learners would avoid the passive construction in their production because of its syntactic difficulties. This section presents some studies focusing on avoidance of the English passive construction.

Kleinmann (1977)[5] undertook an experiment on the two groups of learners including Arabic, Spanish-Portuguese, as well as one control group of native English speakers in order to investigate whether the participants avoid the passive, the present progressive (PP), the infinitive complement (IC), and the direct object pronoun (DO Pron). The four grammatical structures were chosen based on CAH, as the previous two structures (passive and PP) should be harder for the Arabic learners and the other two (IC and DO Pron) for the Spanish- Portuguese learners. Based on the principle of avoidance, which is "to be able to avoid some linguistic feature presupposes being able to choose not to avoid it, i.e., to use it" (1977: 96), Klienmann initiated a comprehension test incorporating a confidence assessment in order to evaluate whether the participants knew these structures or not, followed by the indirect preference assessment task, as well as testing certain affective variables, e.g. anxiety and the success-failure strategy. The results followed the prediction based on CAH to the extent that the L2 Arab learners knew the passive construction, but they avoided using it in their language performance. Within the Spanish-Portuguese group, Klienmann found that they avoided using the IC and DO Pron structures and the

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[5] Klienmann's paper not only focused on avoidance of the passive construction, but also present progressive, infinitive complement, and direct object pronoun.

facilitating anxiety also correlated significantly with using these two structures. Thus, Klienmann claimed that 'while CAH is a fairly good predictor of avoidance, there is an interaction of linguistic and psychological variables in determining learners' behaviour in a second language, in that the structures which otherwise would be avoided are likely to be produced depending on the affective status of the learner' (1977: 93).

Seliger (1989) demonstrated that the Chinese and Japanese learners in Schachter (1974) research had not acquired the RC form completely. So, what was avoidance could be identified as a case of ignorance. However, contrary to Schachter, Seliger assumed that true avoidance can be a case resulting from L1-L2 similarities, thus a positive transfer leading to avoidance, and excluding the possibility of ignorance. To elaborate, he claimed that rather than seeing avoidance as a strategy by L2 learners, it might be viewed as rule-governed and determined by the transference of a false linguistic universal whereby learners may partly acquire the shared structure in L1 and L2 without knowing the contextual or distributional rules in L2. Therefore, avoidance can be claimed only for instances in which at least:

a. The learner can demonstrate knowledge of the form, at least in isolation.

b. The obligatory environment for use of the form by native speakers can be identified.

c. There are at least interlingual similarities between L1 and L2 on this form.

(1989: 26)

Following this principle, he investigated the use of the passive construction based on four topic cues (e.g. making an omelet, changing a baby's nappy, harvesting oranges, and delivering mail) on the native speakers of English and L1 Hebrew learners. He found that the native speakers tended to use fewer passive construction in the omelet and nappy tasks than the other two, while the L1 Hebrew learners used very few passives in any of the four tasks. He concluded that L1 Hebrew learners maintained a consistent avoidance of the passive construction because they transferred their

preference in Hebrew for the active over to English. He also stated the reasons for non-use of the target language structures can be 1) L1-L2 differences, 2) Ignorance, 3) Non-acquisition, 4) Pre-systematic use of the not-fully-acquired form, 5) True avoidance. The reason for true avoidance is not due to the complexity of the form, but the meaning attached to that form in L1, thus simply, the L1- L2 similarities.

Chotiros and Pongpairoj (2012) investigated whether L1 Thai learners would avoid using the passive construction in language production. Forty-five high school students, comprising twenty-five at 11th grade and twenty of 9th grade, were given a multiple-choice test as the comprehension task in order to exclude the possibility of ignorance. Then, all the participants were required to answer some questions based on five pictures, e.g. What happened to the dog in the picture? The results showed that the majority of both grades did not avoid using the passive in the preference task. The researchers concluded that the similarities between the Thai and English passive, and the more frequent use of the passive in the Thai language, resulted from the non-avoidance phenomenon.

As the literature review presents, the avoidance behaviour of the passive construction still opens this subject for exploration and elaboration with learners from more diverse language backgrounds because the evidence provided by the previous studies seems controversial and divided into two camps: the first view is that L2 learners tend to avoid the passive because of the L1-L2 differences and similarities, e.g. Kleinmann (1977), Seliger (1989); the second view is the non-avoidance of the passive, e.g. Chotiros and Pongpairoj (2012). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous study has focused on avoidance of the passive construction by L1 Chinese learners. Thus, the present study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the avoidance of the passive construction by L1 Chinese learners.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of this study, including Population in section 3.1, Research Instruments in section 3.2, Task Validation in section 3.3, Data Analysis in section 3.4, and Implementation of the Tasks in section 3.5.

3.1. Population

The population in this study were L1 Chinese learners. The sample for the study was selected by purposive sampling. This means selecting the participants based on characteristics of a population, i.e. Chinese university students whose English proficiency was at the upper-intermediate level and who understood the English passive construction. The participants were chosen based on Oxford Quick Placement Test (the Placement Test hereafter) (Allan, 2004), which could be used as a quick measure of the students' general language ability to confirm their CEFR level[6]. The result scores falling between forty to forty-seven out of sixty are considered as the upper-intermediate level (e.g. B2 level in CEFR). In this study, the thirty selected participants who were L1 Chinese learners according to the Placement Test result[7]

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[6] The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, often referred to as CEFR or CEFRL, is an international standard for working out language ability. It was established by the Council of Europe, and aims to validate language ability. The six levels within the CEFR are A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. The "A" levels mean basic users, including A1, beginner and A2, Elementary. The "B" levels mean independent users, including B1, Intermediate and B2, Upper-Intermediate. The "C" levels mean proficient users, including C1, Advanced and C2, Proficient. See more at https://www.examenglish.com/CEFR/cefr.php.

[7] This study first recruited thirty participants who were assumed to be B2 level, and the Placement Test was distributed to them. The results showed that twenty-three of the participants scored between 40 and 47 (i.e. the B2 level), two scored 49, 51, respectively (i.e. the C1 level), and five scored between 30 to 39 (i.e. the B1 level). Thus, seven participants with the C1 and B1 levels were excluded from the study. This study recruited seven more participants to fill the vacancies, and they scored between 42 to 47, reaching the B2 level. In the end, thirty participants at the B2 level formulated the experiment group.

were included in the experimental group, and six native English speakers were included in the control group, as shown in Table 2.

Group	First language	CEFR level	Population
Control group	English	N/A	6
Experimental group	Chinese	B2 level	30

Table 2: Grouping of the Participants

The experimental group completed the comprehension test (See 3.2.1), and two production tasks, i.e. the FishFilm task (Tomlin, 1995) (See 3.2.2), and the Indirect Preference Elicitation task (See 3.2.3). According to Seliger (1989), the obligatory environment for use of the target structure by native speakers should be identified in an avoidance study. Therefore, the control group were included to detect the obligatory passive contexts in both production tasks, forming the baseline data[8] for this study. However, this study did not collect the data of the FishFilm task from the control group because Tomlin (1995) and Keatinge and Keßler (2009) employed this task to investigate whether the L1 English speakers would produce the passive construction in the patient-cued context of the task. They found that the task can reliably induce the L1 English participants to generate passive construction utterances. Thus, it was assumed that the results of their studies were also applied to the control group in this study, to the extent that the patient-cued context in the FishFilm task was the obligatory context for the experiment group to produce the English passive construction.

The target language proficiency level of the participants was the upper-intermediate level, e.g. B2 level. The reason why the researcher chose participants with this level is

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[8] Baseline data is that to which other data can be compared. For example, when examining the performance of non-native speakers in a particular task, it is often important to have baseline data from native speakers for comparison, not simply to assume that native speakers would perform perfectly according to the researcher's idea of what is correct or normal (Richards, Jack C.2002). In SLA, normally, it is collected from L1 speakers to pinpoint the obligatory usage of certain structures, such as the passive voice.

threefold. Firstly, according to the official website of the British Council[9], learners with a basic level (Level A in CEFR) have not acquired the passive construction, possibly leading to the learners' ignorance, instead of avoidance of the passive construction. Therefore, participants with basic level were excluded from this study. Secondly, Liao and Fukuya (2004) summarised different avoidance studies and found that learners from a multiple language background experienced the same developmental track from avoidance to non-avoidance as the learners' proficiency level proceeds from intermediate to native-like. Therefore, learners at the advanced level (Level C in CEFR) were also excluded in this study because there was a high possibility that they would not avoid the passive construction. Thirdly, Seliger (1989) claimed that the participants should demonstrate knowledge of the target structure, at least in isolation of the avoidance study. Learners who can demonstrate knowledge of the passive should be familiar with both the notion and usage of the passive in different tenses and structures, including the simple past, future, present perfect, present progressive, past progressive, past perfect tense and present participle, infinitive structures, and so forth. Based on both the Cambridge English Preliminary (PET) and First (FCE) for Schools Handbook for Teachers (2016), the learners at the B2 level have acquired the passive construction in different tenses and structures. Therefore, learners at the upper-intermediate level (Level B2 in CEFR) were the target participants in this study.

3.2 Research Instruments

This section presents the Comprehension Test in section 3.2.1, the FishFilm Task in section 3.2.2, followed by the Indirect Preference Elicitation Task in section 3.2.3.

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[9] https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/intermediate-grammar

3.2.1 Task 1: Comprehension Test

The Comprehension Test was a semi-replication of Kleinmann (1977)'s instrument. All the candidates were administered a multiple-choice comprehension test on the passive construction. The purpose of this test was to ensure that the participants understood this structure, such that any non-use could be attributed to avoidance, rather than ignorance.

There were ten items examining the passive structure and the other ten were distractors (See Appendix A). All the items were arranged randomly. The passive items covered different tenses, i.e. simple present, simple past, present progressive, present perfect, past perfect, future tense, and different sentence types, i.e. declarative, negative, interrogative and passives with modal verbs and infinitives. The purpose of designing the task was to ensure that participants not only understood the basic structure of the passive, but also knew how to use it in different tenses and sentence types. The distractors covered some English vocabulary, idioms, structure and tense knowledge, etc., but did not involve the passive structure.

Also, the candidates needed to tick their confidence level in each answer on a Likert scale, "Completely Unsure" (0), "Mostly Unsure" ($\pm$ 1), "Unsure/Sure" ($\pm$ 2) "Mostly Sure" ($\pm$ 3) and "Completely Sure" ($\pm$ 4). The confidence scale aimed to eliminate a wild guess by the candidates for the test items. The total for one item included the item score (e.g. 1 or 0) and the confidence score (e.g. 0, $\pm$ 1, $\pm$ 2, $\pm$ 3, $\pm$ 4). For example:

(24)　— Oh, this is a really old school.
　　　— Do you know when it _____?
　　A.　has been built
　　B.　built
　　C.　has built
　　D.　was built

Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure
(0)	($\pm$ 1)	($\pm$ 2)	($\pm$ 3)	($\pm$ 4)

If the candidate chose the correct answer (D) and ticked "Completely Unsure", s/he would get 1 (e.g.1+0) point for this item. If "Mostly Unsure" was ticked, s/he would get 2 (e.g. 1+1) points for this item. If "Unsure/Sure" was ticked, s/he would get 3 (e.g. 1+2) points. If "Mostly Sure" was ticked, s/he would get 4 (e.g. 1+3) points. If "Completely Sure" was ticked, s/he would get 5 (e.g. 1+4) points. If a candidate chose a wrong answer (e.g. C) and ticked "Completely Unsure", s/he would get 0 (0+0) point for the item. If "Mostly Unsure" was ticked, s/he would get -1 (0-1) point, and so forth. The maximum score was 50 points (5 points x 10 passive items). This study recruited those achieving 80% of the maximum score, which was 40 points[10].

3.2.2 Task 2: The FishFilm Task

Tomlin (1995)[11] devised a computer animation clip called the FishFilm to elicit the active and passive construction, which visually manipulated participants' visual attention to create a dynamic context. The clip contains thirty-two trials. Each animated trial (See Figure 2) shows two fish swimming towards each other. At the moment the two fish meet, one fish would swallow the other and then swim off the screen. The manipulated visual attention is drawn to either of the two fish by a flashing arrow appearing above the selected fish, which could be either the agent fish (swallowing) or the patient fish (swallowed). The swimming direction of the agent (from left or right) and the colour of the fish in each episode are randomly selected. The agent is cued (by the arrow) in half of the trials and it is called 'agent-cued situation' in this study; the patient is cued in the other half and it is called 'patient-cued situation'.

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[10] The test result showed that all of the recruited participants scored over 40 points (six of them reached a full score) in the comprehension task. Therefore, they were considered as the participants who understood the passive construction. So any non-use could be attributed to avoidance, rather than ignorance.

[11]See Tomlin (1995) for the rationale of designing the FishFilm task.
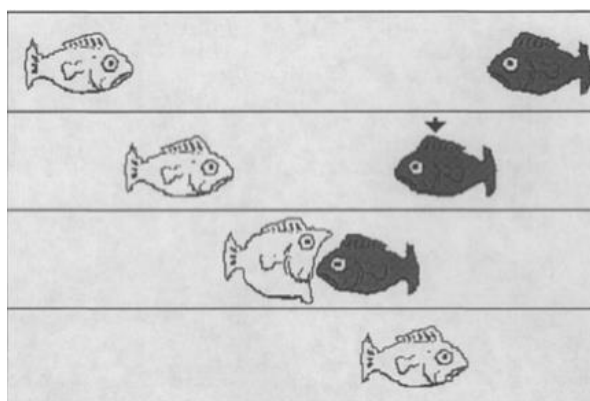
Figure 2: The FishFilm Trial (1997: 169)

In this study, 8 trials (half agent; half patient) were used in the experiment[12], and the participants were asked to focus on the fish pointed by the arrow and produce on-line descriptions of the events concurrently with the unfolding action.

The FishFilm task was audio-recorded for retrievability and the researcher used a coding sheet to note whether the participants employed the passive or active structure. As shown in Table 3, the word in the uppercase means the agent (swallowing fish) in each trial and the lower case the patient (swallowed fish). The fish cued with an arrow in each trial is in the left column, i.e. RED, blue. Target Structure in the table means the anticipated structure to be produced by the participants. For example, in Trial 1, if the cued and agent fish are the RED ones, the anticipated production should be an active sentence, i.e. '*The red fish eats the grey fish*', '*The red fish is eating the grey fish*' or '*The red fish ate the grey fish*'. In Trial 2, if the cued and patient fish are the blue ones, the anticipated sentence structure should be passive, i.e. '*The blue fish is eaten by the green fish*', '*The blue fish was eaten by the green fish*' or '*The blue fish has been eaten by the green fish*'. *Hit or Miss* columns are used to record whether the participants produced the target structure.

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[12]Copyright © 2002-04 Russell S. Tomlin. Expressed consent to use the clip for research purposes is given on Tomlin's website, which states: "The FishFilm is copyright: © 2002-04 Russell S. Tomlin, although I am pleased for anyone to use the film in support of basic research in linguistics, psychology, and related disciplines". The researcher in this study has emailed Russell S. Tomlin and received personal consent to use the FishFilm task in this study.

Trial	Cued fish in the left column AGENT in CAPS, patient not		Target Structure	Hit	Miss	Note
1	RED	grey	Active			
2	blue	GREEN	Passive			

Table 3: Example Coding Sheet for the FishFilm Task

3.2.3 Task 3: The Indirect Preference Elicitation (IPE) Task

Contrary to the dynamic, animated context like the FishFilm task, the passive can also be elicited by viewing static events involving an action relationship between two objects and describing those events off-line.

The previous voice studies resorted to increasing the "salience" of a referent by somehow inducing the selected referent, the agent or the patient, e.g. picture induction (Prentice, 1967; Turner & Rommetveit, 1968), paragraph induction (Prentice, 1967; Tannenbaum & Williams, 1968), and question induction (Bates & Devescovi, 1989). Among them, patient-elicited questions such as "What is happening to (the patient)?" have been found effective in inducing responses of the passive construction (Turner & Rommetveit, 1968).

The IPE task included eight passive-target pictures and twelve distractors (See Appendix C). The passive-target pictures combined patient-elicited questions, i.e. 'what is happening to (the patient)?' in oral instruction to induce the subject, with the related pictures[13] depicting the action relationship between two objects or persons, as shown in Figure 3. The distractors involved questions which were intended for the active construction, e.g. 'what is (the agent) doing?', or general questions, e.g. 'how many animals are there in the picture?'.

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[13]The pictures used in the study come from a website called WPClipart. It claims that these images are in the public domain (PD), which means they can be used and edited for whatever purpose, be it personal or commercial. No attribution or linking is required. See https://www.wpclipart.com/terms.html

Figure 3: Example item in the IPE Task

Before the experiment, the participants were informed that the vocabulary was not the focus of the experiment, and that they could use any words they considered appropriate to convey the correct sense. During the experiment, the participants were presented with the pictures and the related questions simultaneously, and asked to include all the entities in their answers. Table 4 shows the coding sheet used for recording the participants' performance in the IPE task. For example, in Trial 1 (also see Figure 3), if the participant produced a passive sentence, the researcher would tick the *Hit* column, otherwise, the *Miss* column.

Trial	Patients in CAPS		Target Structure	Hit	Miss	Notes
1	THE MAN IN THE BLUE JACKET	The other man	Passive			
2		…				

Table 4: Example Coding Sheet for the IPE Task

3.3 Task Validation

To ensure the grammaticality and appropriateness regarding the language threshold of the participants, the Comprehension Test and the IPE task were validated by three experienced teaching experts, two of whom were L1 English teachers and the other was an L1 English professor of Applied Linguistics. Table 5 shows the background information of these experts. The Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) (Rovinelli &

Hambleton, 1976) was used for the validation. The results are shown in Appendix B and Appendix D.

Expert	Nationality	Teaching Years
Expert A	US	31
Expert B	Australia	7
Expert C	UK	9

Table 5: Background Information of the Validation Experts

3.4 Data Analysis

Since this research was designed to study avoidance behaviour instead of error analysis of the English passive, some ungrammatical sentences listed in Table 6 would also be considered as the 'intended' passive production, but with some errors.

Type	Criteria	Auxiliary (*be/get*)	Past Participle Verb Forms	Preposition	Examples
1	grammatical sentences with the patient as the subject	correct	correct regular and irregular form	optional	The boy *is being saved* (by a firefighter).
					The man's wallet was *stolen* (by the other one).
					The man *got punched* (by the other man).
					The man *got beaten* (by the other one).
2	Ungrammatical sentences with the patient as the subject	incorrect e.g. omission of auxiliary	correct	correct	*The blue fish eaten by the white fish.
					*The boy saved by a firefighter.
3		incorrect, e.g. wrong	correct	optional	*The children was blocked (by a

		agreement			policeman).
4		correct	Incorrect irregular form, e.g. 'hitted' for 'hit' or 'steal'/'stole' for 'stolen'	correct	*The man *was hitted* by the other one. *The man's wallet *was steal/stole* by a guy.
5		correct	incorrect regular form, e.g. 'save' for 'saved' or 'saven' for 'saved'	correct	*The boy *was save* by the firefighter. *The boy was saven by the firefighter

Table 6: Criteria for Judgement of the Passive Production

Other ungrammatical sentences, i.e. '*The man (patient) beaten'* or '*The man (patient) was beat'* would not be counted as the passive in the data analysis because it was difficult to judge whether the learners tried to produce the active construction with the past tense, or the passive construction with a wrong auxiliary or past participle form.

3.5 Implementation of the Tasks

The tasks were verified by the Office of the Research Ethics Review Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects at Chulalongkorn University. Afterwards, the researcher collected data through online systems[14]. That is, the Placement Test and the Comprehension Test were conducted through the online survey platform, *WenJuan*[15]; the FishFilm task and the IPE task were conducted through virtual conference

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[14] The original plan was to collect data from several universities in China. However, due to the travel ban for the COVID-19 situation, all international flights were prohibited by the government for people's health safety. The plan was adjusted to the online data collection.

[15] See the copyright at https://www.wenjuan.com/register/protocol

platform[16] *DingTalk*[17]. Before implementing all the tasks, the researcher sent the e-file information sheet and consent form to clarify the participants' rights in this study.

The time limitation for the Placement Test was 60 minutes. After scoring and selecting the participants, the researcher asked the participants to complete the Comprehension Test, which was set for 30 minutes. Afterwards, the researcher conducted the FishFilm task and the IPE task for each participant at the agreed time slot. The experiment was screen-recorded visually and audibly for retrievability.

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[16] As the online survey platform, *WenJuan*, cannot work for interviews, *DingTalk* was used to implement the IPE task.

[17] See the copyright at https://tms.dingtalk.com/markets/dingtalk/privacy-policy/eu_terms_of_use?wh_ttid=pc

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion about the FishFilm task in section 4.1, followed by the IPE task in Section 4.2.

As stated in 1.4, the hypotheses of this research are,

(25) L1 Chinese learners tend to avoid the English passive construction, and

(26) The factors contributing to L1 Chinese learners' avoidance of L2 English passive construction are,

    a. L1-L2 differences based on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Chotiros & Pongpairoj, 2012; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Schachter, 1974);

    b. Strategies of learning based on Error Analysis (Selinker, 1972; Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013).

4.1 Results and Discussion Regarding the FishFilm Task

The FishFilm, as an online task, consisted of four trials which intentionally induced the participants to produce the passive construction and four trials which were designed to induce the participants to produce the active construction.

Under the agent-cued situation, which disposed the participants to relate the agent to the subject, the participants produced 120 (30×4) responses, 119 of which were active responses (99.2%) and 1 was a passive response (0.8%). The participants produced significantly more active ($m=3.9667$) than passive ($m=0.0333$) responses ($p<0.01$), as shown in Table 7.

Type	Total	Percentage	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (1-tailed)
Passive	1/120	0.8%	.0333	30	.18257	.03333	.000
Active	119/120	99.2%	3.9667	30	.18257	.03333	

Table 7: Passive and Active Responses in the FishFilm Task with the Agent-Cued Situation

Under the patient-cued context, which disposed the participants to map the patient to the subject, thirty participants produced 120 (30 × 4) responses, 96 of which were passive responses (80%)[18] and 24 were active responses (20%). The participants produced significantly more passive (m=3.2) than active (m=0.8) responses (p<0.01), as shown in Table 8.

Type	Total	Percentage	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (1-tailed)
Passive	96/120	80%	3.2000	30	1.27035	.23193	.000
Active	24/120	20%	.8000	30	1.27035	.23193	

Table 8: Passive and Active Responses in the FishFilm Task with the Patient-Cued Situations

It can be seen that the L1 Chinese learners did not seem to avoid the active and the passive construction in either situation, i.e. agent-cued and patient-cued. Therefore, the results from the FishFilm task overturned Hypotheses 1 and 2, indicating that the participants tended not to avoid the passive construction.

Note that the participants' production varied in the tense and vocabulary choices in the passive and active responses in each situation, i.e. agent-cued and patient cued, as shown in (27) and (28), for example: different tenses presented in (27a) and (27b);

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[18] Among 96 passive responses, 84 (87.5%) were Type 1 grammatical sentences (See 3.4), 8 (0.83%) were Type 4 ungrammatical sentences where all the sentences errors involved incorrect use of 'eaten' as 'eat', and 4 (0.42%) were Type 5 ungrammatical sentences, where all the errors concerned incorrect use of 'swallowed' as 'swallow'. However, all the sentences aforementioned were considered as 'intended' passive production with errors, and were included in into data analyses.

different verb choices (i.e. 'eat' and 'swallow') in (27a) and (27c); different vocabulary choices in (28a) and (28b); and different tenses presented in (28c) and (28d). However, these variations were not the subject of the data analysis as long as the language construction produced was either passive or active.

(27) Passive responses

    a. The red one *is eaten by* (the) blue one. (cued patient: red fish) (FF-P4)[19]

    b. The red fish *was eaten by* the blue fish. (cued patient: red fish) (FF-P11)

    c. The blue fish *is swallowed by* the green one. (cued patient: blue fish) (FF-P26)

(28) Active responses

    a. The red fish comes toward to the blue fish and blue fish *eats* the red fish. (cued patient: red fish) (FF-P2)

    b. The red fish swims towards the gray fish and it *swallow**the gray one. (cued patient: gray fish) (FF-P30)

    c. The red fish *eats* the gray fish. (cued agent: red fish) (FF-P5)

    d. The red fish *ate* the white fish. (cued agent: red fish) (FF-P9)

The reason why the FishFilm task can induce the participants to produce significantly more passive than active constructions in the patient-cued context ($p < 0.01$) (See Table 8) was possibly caused by the task effect. In the FishFilm task, the influence of the context manipulating elicitation of the required construction (i.e. passive or active) was twofold. Firstly, as an online task the FishFilm manipulates the participants' visual attention to create a dynamic context, and Tomlin (1995) claimed that the voice constructions were more related to the cognitive processes of 'attention' amenable to experimental manipulation. In other words, the speakers were influenced by the 'attention' given to the specific entity to affect the voice constructions. Therefore, under the patient-cued context, the participants were induced to focus on the attention-capturing cues, taking the patient fish cued with an arrow as the starting point

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[19] 'FF' stands for the FishFilm task and 'P' stands for 'participant'.

of the sentences (i.e. the subject). Secondly, as the animation unfolded, the action relationship ('eating') and the participant ('fish') were sequential, and the tenses involved alternated between the simple present and past. This meant, once the required set of vocabulary and tense knowledge was available, the participants could recycle the process by substituting the agent and patient in accordance with the later trials, which made the cognitive load relatively light for them to produce the passive (Wang, 2010). Therefore, the FishFilm task created a somewhat coercive task context that directed the participants to produce the passive when the patient was cued, leading to a tendency for the learners' non-avoidance of the passive construction.

4.2 Results and Discussion Regarding the Indirect Preference Elicitation (IPE) Task

4.2.1 Results and Discussion Regarding the Control Group in the IPE Task

The control group in this study only finished the IPE task because it was claimed that the FishFilm task reliably inclined L1 English speakers to generate the passive construction (Keatinge & Keßler, 2009; Tomlin, 1995, 1997).

The IPE task, as an offline task, consisted of eight pictures, which intentionally directed the participants to produce the passive construction (See 3.2.3). In the task, the six L1 English speakers produced 48 sentence responses, 45 of which were passive responses and 3 were active responses, as shown in Table 9.

Type	Total	Percentage	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (1-tailed)
Passive	45/48	93.7%	7.5000	6	.83666	.34157	.000
Active	3/48	6.3%	.5000	6	.83666	.34157	

Table 9: Passive and Active Responses by the Control Group in the IPE Task

It can be seen that the native speakers produced significantly more passive than active constructions in the IPE task (p<0.01), which means the eight pictures can be considered as obligatory contexts for producing the English passive, thus formulating the baseline data for the study.

4.2.2 Results and Discussion Regarding the Experimental Group in the IPE Task

In the IPE task, the thirty participants in the experimental group produced 240 (30 × 8) response sentences, 132 of which were passive responses (55%)[20], 105 were active responses (43.8%), and 3 were invalid responses (1.2%), as shown in Table 10.

Type	Total	Percentage	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (1-tailed)
Passive	132	55%	4.4	30	1.37966	.25189	.037
Active	105	43.8%	3.5	30	1.30648	.23853	
No production	3	1.2%	--				

Table 10: Total Passive and Active Responses in the IPE Task

The invalid responses included two non-production cases, where the participants claimed that they could not figure out the relationship between the two entities in the picture, and one unidentified case, i.e. 'the man got punch', which was unclear whether the participant treated 'punch' as a noun or a verb.

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[20] Among 132 passive responses, there were 111 grammatical sentences and 21 Type-4 ungrammatical sentences (See 3.4) where 20 of the errors involved the incorrect use of the past participle of 'hit' as 'hitten' and 1 of the sentence errors was incorrect use of the past participle of 'cut' as 'cutted'. However, all of the sentences mentioned were considered as 'intended' passive construction with errors, and were included in the data analyses.

Hypothesis 1 of the study states that L1 Chinese learners tend to avoid the English passive construction. In the IPE task, the participants produced significantly more passive (m=4.4) than active (m=3.5) responses ($p<0.05$), as shown in Table 10. The overall results of the IPE task, therefore, overturned Hypothesis 1.

Similar to the responses in the FishFilm task, the variations in the passive construction produced in the IPE task were evidenced in terms of the tenses and vocabulary choices. For example:

(29) a. He <u>is being stolen.</u> (IPE-P1)

b. He <u>has been stolen</u> some money by <u>a thief.</u> (IPE-P2)

c. His wallet <u>was stolen</u> by <u>the man with yellow hair.</u> (IPE-P11)

From the above examples, the participants used the passive with different tenses, including present progressive (29a), present perfect (29b), and the past tense (29c) to describe what the pictures depicted. They also adopted an agentless passive (29a), or an expressed agent with different vocabulary, e.g. 'a thief' in (29b) and 'the man with yellow hair' in (29c).

The active responses that the participants resorted to in the IPE task can be categorised into three types:

(30) Using the agent as the subject:

a. The fireman is saving the boy. ('be saved') (IPE-P3)

b. Someone was beating this man ('be beaten') (IPE-P26)

(31) Using the patient as the subject, but turning the patient into an agent-like argument.

a. He (the boy with black hair) is playing game with another boy. ('be chased') (IPE-P5)

b. He (the tree) is talking to the man not to cut him down. ('be cut') (IPE-P5)

(32) Alternating to the active construction in the middle of production.

a. The tree was cut ….., (pause for a second) the man is using an oxe to chop down the tree. ('be cut') (IPE-P16)

      b. Being caught….., (pause for a second) they are playing game. ('be caught')

        (IPE-P14)

It can be seen that some participants tended to use the active construction, although with different strategies, in order to avoid the passive construction, including using the agent as the subject, ignoring the 'stimuli' pointing to the patient by the question: 'what is happening to (the patient)?', as shown in (30). Some of the participants may follow the 'stimuli' to take the patient as the subject, but they would turn the patient into an agent-like argument, i.e. instead of saying 'the tree is cut down by the man', one participant used 'the tree is talking to the man not to cut him down' to express the same scenario, as shown in (31b). It also seemed that some participants were struggling with which voice was more appropriate to describe the pictures, so they would try the passive response first, then use the active form as their final production. For example, in (32a), the participant first used 'the tree was cut down', and then turned to 'the man is using an ox to chop the tree down' as the production.

Considering the results of the IPE task, there were three questions that needed to be answered. First, it was hypothesised that the participants would avoid the passive construction due to L1-L2 differences in CAH and the strategy of learning in EA, but why did the participants produce significantly more passive (m=4.4) than active (m=3.5) responses in this study? Second, compared to the baseline data (6.3%), why did the participants produce a relatively large number of the active responses (43.8%) (See Tables 9 and 10)? Third, why did the results for the L2 learners' production of the active and the passive construction in the two tasks reach different levels of significance, i.e. while those results in the FishFilm reached a great degree of significance level (p<0.01), those in the IPE only reached a marginal level of significance (p<0.05) (See Tables 8 and 10)?

The first question concerns why the participants did not tend to avoid the passive construction in the IPE task. Two factors explored in the FNAH may account for the

L1 Chinese participants producing more passives than actives: 1) The task effect, and 2) The learners' familiarity with the target structure, i.e. the English passive.

Firstly, in terms of the task effect, Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013, 2019) state that natural production tasks are more likely to demonstrate L2 learners' avoidance, because they enable a fair chance between the target structure and their equivalent. Indeed, the majority of tasks used for investigating avoidance in the previous studies were 'free-flowing' tasks without any 'stimuli', in which the target structure and the equivalent were treated as equal choices for the learners, and they could follow their will to choose either one, i.e. as free writing by Susan Gass (1980), Schachter (1974), Seliger (1989), and V. Yip and Matthews (1991), or a multiple choice, translation, and recall test by Dagut and Laufer (1985), Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), and Liao and Fukuya (2004). The results of most of the studies aforementioned supported the avoidance hypothesis (See 2.3). However, this study explores the avoidance phenomenon by investigating the possibility of whether L2 learners would avoid the target structure under a certain degree of stimulus in the tasks. Thus, in the IPE task, the target structure (i.e. the passive construction) was induced by the 'stimuli' of the question 'what is happening to (the patient)?'. The result shows that the participants were 'sensitive' to the 'stimuli' to the extent that they could follow the 'stimuli' to the patient, then produced more passive (m=4.4) than active (m=3.5) constructions accordingly. Tomlin (1995) suggested that 'stimuli' in these tasks could also be referred as 'attention'. By using 'attention', the focused referents (i.e. the patients in the pictures) were mapped as the subjects. Therefore, the participants in this study could consciously produce the sentences following 'attention' distributed to the patient in the tasks, and took the patient as the subject, resulting in non-avoidance.

It seems that, in avoidance studies, if the participants were influenced by 'stimuli' to produce a target structure, they tended not to avoid it, even though the structure was difficult due to L1-L2 differences. Previous researchers, e.g. Schachter (1974), Kleinmann (1977), Dagut and Laufer (1985) and Laufer and Eliasson (1993),

emphasised that learning difficulties resulting from L1-L2 differences would manifest in avoidance. However, from this study, the avoidance phenomenon in SLA more or less hinged on the control level of the task effect. Production of the target structure might be borne out by competition between the structural difficulties and the control level of the task effect. Clearly, if the 'stimuli' in the task was evident enough in terms of 'attention', learners would be directed to taking non-avoidance regardless of the potential difficulty posed to them, excluding the possibility of avoidance.

Secondly, Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013, 2019) state that the factor of learners' familiarity with the target structure may lead to non-avoidance. It can be found that the passive construction is a grammatical point much emphasised in teaching and assessing English in China, especially in secondary schools. For example, one of the most widely used English textbooks, *New Senior English for China (book 2)*[21] (People's Education Press, 2007), regulates that the passive construction is one of the most important grammatical structures in high school English learning, and three units in this textbook are devoted to instructing learners how to construct English passive sentences (P48-69), including changing the bare verbs to their past participle form, e.g. 'save'-'saved', adding *be* in front, and placing the patients and the agents with or without *'by'*. What is more, a list of irregular verb forms, e.g. 'eat'-'ate'-'eaten', is included the appendix of the textbook to remind learners of how to change the base of irregular verb form to the past particple form. 2) Since the participants were upper-intermediate level learners (i.e. B2 in CEFR), it was assumed that the proficiency level contributed to their non-avoidance. Previous researchers, i.e. Liao and Fukuya (2004), claimed that only the advanced learners tended not to avoid the target structure. However, from this study, the upper intermediate learners (i.e. B2) may also take non-avoidance behaviour. Therefore, it was assumed that the participants at a B2 level in this study were familiar with the English passive construction to the extent that, once the 'attention' was distributed to the patient and

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[21] Chinese title: 人教版普通高中课程标准试验教科书英语（必修 2）

the participants took it as the subject, they would process the steps to produce the passive construction, making it the final production in response to the 'stimuli' in the particular tasks.

The second question relates to why the participants produced a large number of actives (i.e. 43.8%) in the IPE task, which intentionally induced them to produce the passive construction. Based on Hypothesis 2, it was assumed that some of the Chinese learners may avoid using the passive and turn to the active construction due to the following factors: the L1-L2 differences on the basis of CAH (Chotiros & Pongpairoj, 2012; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Schachter, 1974) and the strategies of second language learning (Selinker, 1972; Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013).

Firstly, the factor accounting for L1 Chinese learners' avoidance of the English passive may be due to L1-L2 structural differences. As mentioned in 2.2, the English passive differs from the Mandarin passive regarding the arrangement of syntactic elements, as shown in (33).

(33) Passive constructions in English and Mandarin

a. PATIENT SUBJECT NP + VP (+ PREPOSITION + AGENT NP) (English passive)

b. PATIENT SUBJECT NP + PASSIVE MARKER (+ AGENT NP) + VP (Mandarin passive)

It can be seen that in English, the VP follows the subject, whereas in Mandarin, the VP follows the optional agent or the passive marker. Also, Mandarin uses the passive marker to signify the passive, but English uses an auxiliary and a past participle to signify the passive. Thus, it is assumed that the syntactic differences of the passive structures in the learners' L1 and L2 could potentially pose difficulties for the participants' production of the English passive, leading to avoidance.

Secondly, the learning strategy factor could account for L1 Chinese learners' avoidance of the English passive construction. Selinker (1972) argued that L2 learners would resort to different kinds of strategies in their interlanguage whenever they

realised, either consciously or subconsciously, that they have no linguistic competence with regard to some L2 structures. One of the 'strategies of second-language learning' (P219) is the tendency on the part of learners to reduce those L2 structures to simpler ones. In this study, both the active and the passive construction could equally convey the correct meaning, but the L1 Chinese participants may be consciously aware of the structural complexities of the English passive, and thus use the active as production. The complexities of the English passive can be explained from two points. Firstly, according to Pinker (1996), there is a default association between the grammatical functions (i.e. SUBJECT, OBJECT) and the thematic relationships (i.e. agent, patient) where the SUBJECT is associated with the agent and the OBJECT is associated with the patient. The association of the two elements constitutes a mapping where 'no-crossing-links between the elements may be called canonical; those that violate it are non-canonical' (1996: 298). The active construction is the 'basic form' (1996: 297), or canonical structure in English, whereas the passive construction is a non-canonical mapping accordingly because the linking between the grammatical functions and thematic relationships is patient-V-agent. Secondly, compared with the active form, the passive construction adds a form of the auxiliary *be* followed by the past participle (-ed participle) of the main verb (Quirk, 2010). Thus, these structural complexities require an extra processing load, leading to some participants employing the simpler structure, i.e. active, in both the passive and active context, thus avoiding the English passive. Since both factors, the L1-L2 differences and the learning strategies of second language could account for the participants avoiding the passive construction in their production, thus supporting Hypothesis 2.

As far as the third question is concerned, even though the participants produced more passives than actives in both tasks, why did the results reach different significant levels (See Tables 8 and 10)?

Compared with the FishFilm task, which executed a strong task context, the IPE task also gave the participants a certain degree of indication to produce the passive, e.g. the question of 'what is happening to (the patient)?', but the control level of the passive production was not as strong as that in the FishFilm task. The participants could see the pattern of each trial in the FishFilm, whereas the IPE task was relatively 'random' or 'arbitrary' because it was unpredictable for the participants to know what was happening in the next picture. Furthermore, different entities and action relationships were depicted in the various pictures in the IPE task, causing the participants to alternate their sets of lexical items and structures in their repertoire. These factors may cause the participants to produce different tenses, vocabulary, words and voices in different pictures, weakening the possibility of choosing the passive as a consistent language production in the IPE task. Therefore, the statistical results revealed that the produced passive structures in the FishFilm (80%) were higher than those in the IPE task (55%), to the extent that the former reached a great deal of significance ($p<0.01$), whereas the latter only reached a marginal level of significance ($p<0.05$) (See Tables 8 and 10).

From the raw data of the IPE task (See Table 10), it was found that the production rates of active (43.8%) and passive (55%) were rather close to each other, compared to the baseline data (See Table 9). It is thus worth investigating further more factors related to avoidance of the English passive by L1 Chinese learners, i.e. high rates of active production. Therefore, the different contexts in the IPE task were studied, with respect to the participants' perspective of whether they considered the patients were suffering from adversity or not. Following this, the pictures in the IPE task were explored and could be divided into two sets: those considered as an adversity context (i.e. pictures 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 in Appendix D) for the patients, and those considered as

a non-adversity context (i.e. pictures 1, 5, 7 in Appendix D) according to the participants' perspective[22].

As shown in Table 11, under the adversity context, the results show that the participants produced significantly more passive (m=3.8) than active (m=1.1333) responses ($p<0.01$). However, in the non-adversity context, the participants produced significantly more active (m=2.3667) than passive(m=0.6) responses ($p<0.01$).

Context	Response	Total	Percentage	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (1-tailed)
Adversity	Passive	114	76%	3.8000	30	1.12648	.20567	.000
	Active	34	22.7%	1.1333	30	1.07425	.19613	
	No production	2	1.3%	--				
Non-adversity	Passive	18	20%	.6000	30	.62146	.11346	.000
	Active	71	78.9%	2.3667	30	.61495	.11227	
	No production	1	1.1%	--				

Table 11: Passive and Active Responses in the Adversity and Non-Adversity Context

Recall that there is a large number of active responses in the overall results of the IPE task (See Table 10). This may be because the active responses in the non-adversity context (71 token) contributed much to the total active responses (43.8%), making it approach the passive responses (55%).

The results from each picture in the adversity and non-adversity context are demonstrated in Figure 4 and Figure 5, respectively.

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[22] Categorisation of the task contexts was validated by a survey asking the participants in the experimental group to make a judgement whether the patient was suffering from adversity. The results showed that the participants considered the five situations, i.e. 'the face being hit by a ball' (90% of the participants), 'the car being stolen' (76.67%), 'the face being punched' (96.67%), 'the money being stolen'(96.67%), and 'the tree being cut' (83.33%) as 'adversity contexts', whereas the participants considered the other three situations, i.e. 'the boy being saved' (70%), 'the boy being chased' (96.67%) and 'the children being blocked or protected' (100%) as 'non-adversity contexts'.
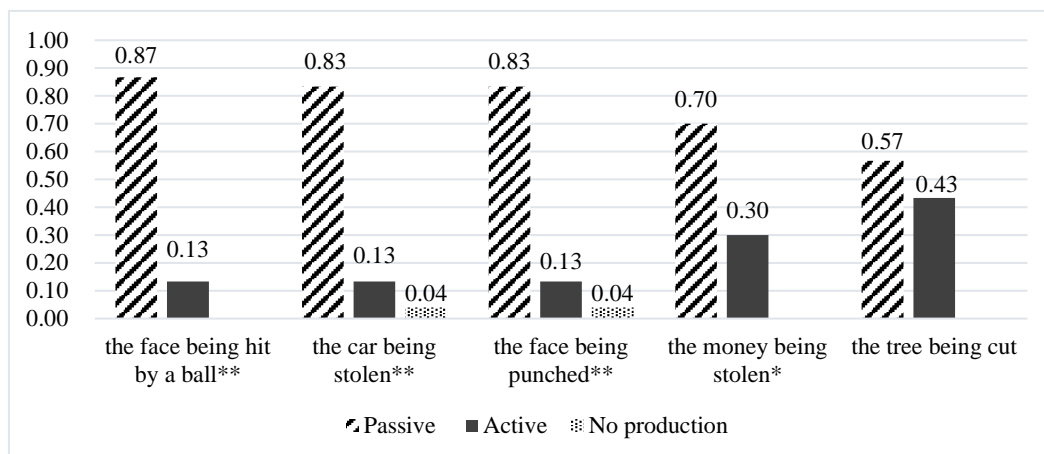
Figure 4: Percentage of Passive and Active Responses in the IPE Task with the Adversity Context

(Note: ** = p<0.00; * = p<0.05)

Figure 4 shows the percentage of active and passive responses for each picture with the adversity context. Among them, the respective production of the passive construction in 'the money being stolen', 'the face being punched', 'the face being hit by a ball', 'the car being stolen' (See pictures 2, 3, 4, and 6 in Appendix D) was significantly higher than that for the active construction, but in the scenario of 'the tree being cut' (See picture 8 in Appendix D), the result did not show a significant difference. What is noticeable is that in the production data, it can be found that even though the participants sensed the 'negative situation' of the 'tree', they still used some active sentences to express adversity, e.g. 'the tree is talking to the man not to cut him' and 'the tree is poor and he will die', which made the comparison between the active (0.43) and passive (0.57) response result reach the level of a non-significant difference. However, considering all the five pictures with the adversity context, the results show that the number of passive responses was significantly higher than the active responses (See Table 11).
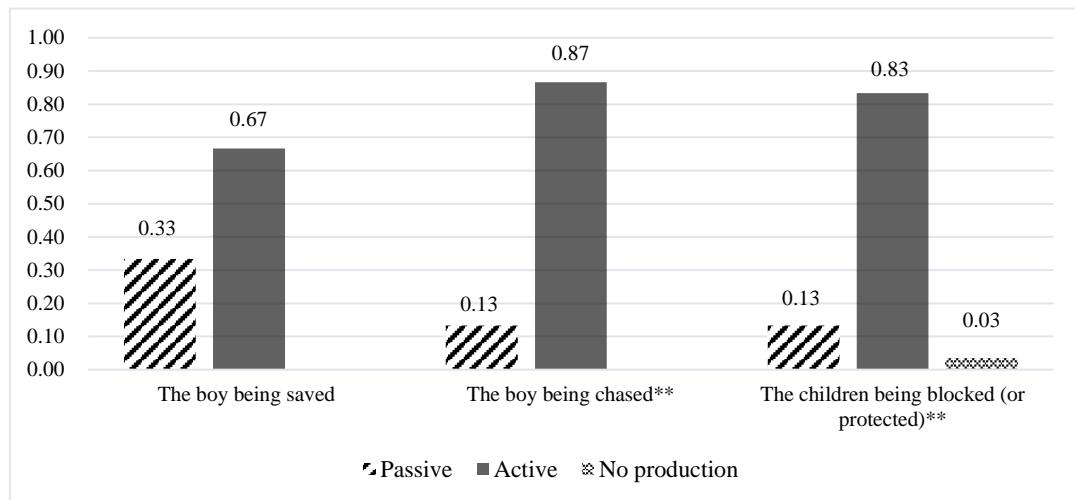
Figure 5: Percentage of Passive and Active Responses in the IPE Task with the
Non-Adversity Context
(Note: ** = P<0.00)

Figure 5 shows the percentage of active and passive responses for each picture with the non-adversity context. Among them, the respective production number of active responses in 'the boy being chased' and 'children being blocked or protected' (See pictures 5 and 7 in Appendix D) was significantly higher than that for the passive, but in the picture of 'the boy being saved' (See picture 1 in Appendix D), even though the production of the active responses is still higher than the passive responses, the result does not show a significant difference. In the survey of adversity/non-adversity categorisation as shown in Footnote 17, it can be found that one third of the participants considered 'the boy being saved' as an adversity context, but two thirds considered it was a non-adversity context. The participants who saw it as an adversity context may take the view that even though the firefighter was holding or saving him, the boy must have suffered from some disaster or was still suffering some physical or emotional pain. The others focused on the fact that the boy was saved or was being saved by the firefighter. Therefore, even though the active responses (0.67) were higher than the passive responses (0.33) in the production of 'the boy being saved', the picture context was still controversial for some participants, resulting in a non-significant difference. However, considering all the three pictures with the non-adversity context, the

participants produced significantly more active than the passive responses (See Table 11).

To summarise so far, the results clearly revealed that the participants would not avoid the English passive construction under the adversity context. However, there was a tendency for the participants to avoid the passive construction under the non-adversity context.

As mentioned previously, the Chinese passive is used to express adversity, indicating that the event has negative consequences for the patients. However, the English passive construction, especially the *be* passive, is used more as a stylistic preference, aiming to be an impersonal, objective, formal and technical communication discourse, thus not making adversity a basic feature of the English passive (Xiao et al., 2006). In the IPE task, the participants may sense the 'adversity' context and feel the 'negative aspect' of the patient in some pictures. Combined with the question directing their attention to the patient, the context which resembled the meaning of the Chinese passive seemed to strengthen the 'legitimacy' of using the passive for the production, leading to the non-avoidance phenomenon. The participants seemed to 'transfer' their knowledge about the meaning of the Chinese passive to their L2 production in the adversity context.

The reason why the participants seem to transfer the meaning of the Chinese passive to L2 English production can be explained from the transfer of training in the Chinese setting (Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972). As mentioned previously, the materials of teaching and assessment for L2 English learners primarily focus on the structural accuracy of the passive construction, leaving alone the use of the English passive in real life. Such *transfer of training* might lead L1 Chinese learners to subconsciously transfer their L1 knowledge of the passive construction into L2 English communication when it relates to the adversity context. This can be explained by the differences between English and Chinese textbooks when introducing the passive construction. For example, in the series of the *New Senior English for China* (People's Education Press, 2007), the

explanation of the English passive mainly focuses on the structural differences between passive and active, the passive in different tenses and sentence types (P87-88), without mentioning when to use the English passive in real life. By contrast, plenty of examples of the Chinese passive structures relating to the adversity context are listed in the Chinese language textbooks, e.g. *The Handbook for Basic Knowledge of Chinese Language* (Xue, 2007), as shown in (34).

(34) Examples of the Chinese passive construction in (2007: 133)

a. 身　　客死　于　　秦，　　　　　　　为　　天下　　　　　　　笑。
shēn　kè sǐ yú　qín,　　　　　wéi　tiān xià　　　　xiào
body　die　PART Qin Kingdom,　PSV land under heaven　laugh at
'Dying in Qin Kingdom, the King of Chu Kingdom was laughed at'

b. 风流　　　　　　总　被　雨　打　风　吹　　去。
fēng liú　　　　zǒng　bèi　yǔ　dǎ　fēng　chūi　qù
historical figure　always PSV　rain　drop　wind　blow　PART
'No matter how important the historical figures are, it is a pity that they would be blown by the wind and rain, and finally gone'

The historical background of (34a) is that in ancient China, the King of the Chu Kingdom (楚国) was victimised and imprisoned by a traitor, ending up dying in the rival kingdom, Qin (秦国). 为'wéi' is a passive marker and 天下 'tiān xià' is the 'land under heaven', also meaning 'all the people in the world', which is the agent in the sentence. 笑 'xiào' here means 'laughing at'. The meaning of (34a) is that the King of the Chu Kingdom ended up dying in the rival country (Qin Kingdom), which was shameful and laughed at by all the people. In (34b), 被'bèi' is the passive marker. 风流'fēng liú' means the distinguished figure in history, which is the patient, and 雨 'yǔ', 风'fēng' means 'rain' and 'wind', respectively, which are the agents. The action verbs 打 'dǎ' and 吹 'chūi' are action verbs, meaning 'beating' and 'blowing' respectively. The meaning of (34b) is that, no matter how important people in history are, they have no choice but to fade away with the wind and rain. Examples (34a) and (34b) explain that when acquiring the Chinese passive, L1 learners might be under the

influence of 'passive more or less equaling adversity' from their L1 textbook, and thus transfer this knowledge to their L2 English production.

Under the non-adversity context, i.e. 'the boy being saved', 'the boy being chased' and 'the children being blocked (or protected)', the participants might see them as 'neutral', leading them to apply a simpler voice construction (Selinker, 1972). As mentioned before, the complexities of the English passive reflect that it is the non-canonical mapping between the grammatical functions and thematic relationships, compared with the active, which is the basic, canonical structure (Pinker, 1996). Besides, the passive construction needs to add a form of the auxiliary *be* followed by the past participle (-ed participle) of the main verb (Quirk, 2010). Due to the above reasons, it can be seen that the passive construction seems more complicated than the active. Therefore, if the participants are not influenced by the context where the patients are suffering from the adversity context, they are very likely to turn to avoidance of the English passive construction in order to lessen the production effort because of the potential difficulty of producing the passive structure (compared with the active), even though the patients were induced by the 'stimuli'.

To summarise, the results from the FishFilm task and the IPE task revealed that the participants tended not to avoid the English passive construction, which went against Hypotheses 1 and 2. The reasons for the Chinese learners producing more passives than actives might be due to the task effect and the learners' familiarity with the English passive (Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj 2013, 2019). Due to a large number of the active responses and a marginal level of significant in the IPE task, this study investigated further the different contexts in the IPE task with respect to the participants' perspective of whether they consider the patients in the pictures were suffering from adversity or not. The results show that the participants tend not to avoid the English passive construction under the adversity context due to the transfer of training in the Chinese setting. The L1 Chinese learners are assumed to be influenced by their L1 knowledge. However, there is a tendency for the participants to avoid the

English passive construction under the non-adversity context due to the complexities of the English passive compared with the active construction. The results from both tasks, i.e. the FishFilm and the IPE task, therefore, support FNAH (Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj 2013, 2019).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the summary of this study in section 5.1, followed by the implications in section 5.2, and the limitations and the recommendations in section 5.3.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The current study was designed to investigate the avoidance of the English passive construction by L1 Chinese learners. Two research hypotheses were formulated:

(35) Hypothesis 1: L1 Chinese learners tend to avoid the English passive construction, and

(36) Hypothesis 2: The factors contributing to L1 Chinese learners' avoidance of L2 English passive construction are 1) L1-L2 differences based on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Chotiros & Pongpairoj, 2012; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Schachter, 1974); and 2) Strategies of learning based on Error Analysis (Selinker, 1972; Thiamtawan & Pongpairoj, 2013).

The participants in this study were thirty intermediate-level L1 Chinese learners (i.e. Level B2) and six English native speakers whose production formed the baseline data. There were three tasks used in this study. Task 1 was a comprehension task, which was designed to check whether the participants understood the target structure, i.e. the English passive construction, so that non-use of the passive by the participants could be attributed to avoidance, rather than ignorance. Two production tasks were employed in this study. Task 2, the FishFilm (Tomlin, 1995) task, was applied to see whether the participants tend to avoid the passive construction in dynamic, animated contexts. Task 3, the IPE task, was designed to investigate avoidance of the passive in a static context.

The results from the FishFilm task and the IPE task showed that the participants produced significantly more passives than actives, thus rejecting Hypothesis 1. The

reasons why the participants tended not to avoid the English passive construction might be due to the task effect and the learners' familiarity with the passive construction (Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj 2013, 2019). In the IPE task, a fair number of the participants produced the active constructions in the patient-cued situation. The reasons for this might be the learning difficulties of the English passive resulting from L1-L2 differences and the strategies of second language learning. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed by this point. This study investigated further the different contexts with respect to the participants' perspectives of whether they considered the patients in the pictures were suffering from adversity or not. The results showed that the participants tended not to avoid the English passive construction under the adversity context due to the transfer of training in the Chinese setting or, to be more specific, the participants transferred their L1 knowledge of the meaning of the Chinese passive into their L2 production. However, there was a tendency for the participants to avoid the English passive construction under the non-adversity context due to the complexities of the English passive compared with the active construction, where the participants did not transfer their L1 knowledge of the meaning of the Chinese passive. Considering the overall results from the FishFilm and the IPE tasks, the participants tended not to avoid the English passive construction, which was in support of FNAH. To be specific, L2 avoidance does not necessarily occur due to L1-L2 differences or non-existence of L2 structure in learners' L1 (Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj 2013, 2019).

5.2 Implications of the Study

This section presents implications of the study, i.e. Linguistic Implications in section 5.2.1 and Pedagogical Implications in section 5.2.2

5.2.1 Linguistic Implications

As mentioned in 2.3.1, Thiamtawan and Pongpairoj (2013)(2019) initiated FNAH to explain that "even though features in L1 and L2 are different, or L2 features are non-existent in L1, it does not necessarily mean L2 avoidance will occur" (2013:12). The factors which could account for non-avoidance in their study were 1) Task effect; 2) The learners' familiarity with the target structure; and 3) The simplicity of the target structure. In this study, it was assumed that another factor leading to non-avoidance was L1 transfer. As shown in the results of the IPE task with the two situations, even under the condition of the L1-L2 structural differences, the L2 learners tended not to avoid the target structure (i.e. the English passive) when the L2 production context (i.e. adversity) resembled L1 knowledge concerning the meaning of the target structure (i.e. the Chinese passive), leading to non-avoidance. The findings therefore led to linguistic implications with respect to SLA, in that it was not always the case that L2 learners would avoid L2 structures due to L1-L2 differences, as claimed by Schachter (1974)

5.2.2 Pedagogical Implications

The reason for investigating avoidance in SLA is to detect the learning difficulties of the target structure (Schachter, 1974), i.e. the English passive, which might manifest as avoidance rather than error-making. From the overall results of the FishFilm and the IPE tasks, it can be seen that the participants tended not to avoid the passive construction. However, considering the results of the IPE task with respect to different contexts, whereby the participants produced more passives than actives in the adversity context and more actives than passives in the non-adversity context, the participants in this study tended to transfer the knowledge of the meaning of L1 Chinese passive into their L2 English production as a result of the transfer of training in the Chinese setting. As mentioned in 4.2.2, textbooks for teaching English in China primarily focus on the structural accuracy of the passive construction, ignoring authentic ways and excluding

the influence of the learners' L1 knowledge of the Chinese passive. Therefore, in textbook design, the focus should be on including the production of the English passive and how to use it in different contexts in the teaching materials. Furthermore, CAH is still regarded as an effective method to investigate the potential difficulties for second language learners (Schachter, 1974). Therefore, it might be better if textbooks could include a comparison between L1 and L2 in order to provide a clearer picture for learners to see how to use the target structure and avoid negative transfer.

5.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

The following limitations and recommendations can possibly be developed and taken into consideration in future studies.

Firstly, the two production tasks used in the study, i.e. the FishFilm and IPE tasks, were controlled elicitation tasks. It is suggested that future studies employ natural production tasks, i.e. spontaneous speaking and/or writing tasks in order to investigate whether L2 learners would avoid the English passive. Secondly, this study investigated the influence of the context, i.e. the adversity and non-adversity context of the avoidance behaviour. Future researchers might add different verb types, for example, the regular past participle type (i.e. 'save'- 'saved') and the irregular past participle type (i.e. 'cut'- 'cut' or 'steal'- 'stolen') in the study to see the interaction effect of the context and verb type on L2 learners' avoidance behaviour of the English passive construction. Thirdly, this study employed purposive sampling, which may affect generalizability of the results. Future research could employ random sampling to make the results more generalized.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: The Comprehension Test

Multiple Choice Test

Instruction: Each question in this section is a multiple-choice question with four answer choices. Read each question and answer the choice carefully and choose the BEST answer to enter in the Answer column below. After that, please scale yourself about how sure you are (from completely unsure to completely sure) about the answer and enter a (✓) it in the related column. (Emphasis added: the passive items are in **BOLD**)

1. The world's longest cross-sea bridge, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, opened _____ October 24, 2018.

   A. at   B. on   C. by   D. in

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

2. — Oh, this is a really old school.

— Do you know when it _____?

   A. has been built   **B. built**   **C. has built.**   **D. was built**

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

3. In my opinion, _____ friends are more reliable than online ones.

   A. true   B. close   C. good   D. real

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

4. – Excuse me?

  – _____

– How can I get to the nearest post office?

   A. That's OK.   B. What's on?   C. Pardon?   D. Yes?

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

5. Teenagers shouldn't _____ alcohol because they can't be fully responsible for themselves.

   A. be allowed to drink   **B. allow drinking**

   C. allow to drink   **D. be allowing to drink**

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

6. –Tony, could you please play the guitar at the art festival?

– _____. I can only play the piano.

    A. Sure, I'd love to   B. I'm afraid I can't   C. Yes, I can   D. Not bad

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

7. Ben: Diana, have you sent the important letters?   **Diana: Oh, sorry, sir.**
Ben: Really? THOSE LETTERS _____ yet?

    A. haven't sent   **B. haven't been sent**   **C. are sent**   **D. will send**

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

8. –I will take a part in an English speech competition this Sunday. I feel nervous.

– _____!

    A. What a pity   B. Look out   C. Congratulations   D. Take it easy

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

9. Please make up your mind as _____ as possible, or you'll miss the good chance.

    A. earlier   B. earliest   C. more early   D. early

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

10. –You looked unhappy just now. _____?

–I missed the bus and arrived late for class.

    A. What did you eat for lunch

    B. How was your picnic

    C. What happened to you

    D. How did you go there

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

11. *Tom is writing the letter.*

The letter _____ by Tom.

Which one completes the sentence to have the same meaning?

    A. was written   **B. is being written**

    C. has been written   **D. has written**

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

12. –Where did you go last summer for a vacation?

–I _____ to New York with my family.

    A. go   B. have gone   C. went   D. was going

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

13. The Museum of Modern Art is such an interesting place that many kids have fun _____it.

    A. visiting   B. to visit   C. reading   D. to read

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

14. Jane: Nobody likes_____, so you'd better be kind to others.

    Ben: So sorry. I won't do it again.

    A. laugh at   B. to laugh   C. to be laughed at   D. laughing

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

15. One advantage of owning your own car is _____ you can go anywhere at any time you like.

    A. when   B. that   C. what   D. why

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

16. More than a dozen students from that school _____abroad when the passports were revoked.

    A. sent   B. have been sent   C. had sent   D. had been sent

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

17. *Everyone understands English.*

    English _____ by everyone.

Which one completes the sentence to have the same meaning?

    A. is understood   B. has been understood

    C. was understood   D. understood

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

18. The play _____ at the theatre next Sunday.
    A. will show   **B. will be showing**
    C. will be shown   **D. is shown**

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

19. Where _____ the test _____?
    A. was; wrote   **B. is; write**   **C. was; written**   **D. is; wrote**

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

20. — The school looked quite different from how it used to look.
    — Yes. Lots of trees and grass _____.
    A. have planted
    B. had planted
    C. are planted
    D. have been planted

Answer	Completely Unsure	Mostly Unsure	Unsure/Sure	Mostly Sure	Completely Sure

Appendix B: IOC Results of the Passive Items in the Comprehension Test
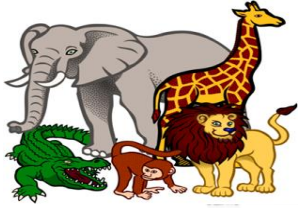
Objective (construct)	Items of passive construction	Rating scale		
		Very poor (-1)	Not sure (0)	Very good (+1)

To test the comprehension on passive voice in the simple past tense	—Oh, this is a really old school.
	 — Do you know when it _____?
	
	     A. has been built
	     B. built
	     C. has built
	     D. was built
				3

To test the comprehension on passive voice of the simple present tense	*Everyone understands English.*
	 English _____ by everyone.
	 Which one completes the sentence to have the same meaning?
	
	     A. is understood
	     B. has been understood
	     C. was understood
	     D. understood
				3

To test the comprehension on passive voice in future tense	The play _____ at the theatre next Sunday.
	
	     A. will show
	     B. will be showing
	     C. will be shown
	     D. is shown
				3

To test the comprehension on passive voice with a modal verb	Teenagers shouldn't _____ alcohol because they can't be fully responsible for themselves.
	
	     A. be allowed to drink
	     B. allow drinking
	     C. allow to drink
	     D. be allowing to drink
				3

To test the comprehension on passive voice in the negation and present perfect tense.	Ben: Diana, have you sent the important letters? Diana: Oh, sorry, sir.
	
	 Ben: Really? THOSE LETTERS _____ yet?
	
	     A. haven't sent
	     B. haven't been sent
	     C. are sent
	     D. will send
				3

To test the comprehension on passive voice in the present progressive tense	*Tom is writing the letter.* The letter _____ by Tom. Which one completes the sentence to have the same meaning? A. was written B. is being written C. has been written D. has written			3
To test the comprehension of passive voice in an interrogative.	Where _____ the test _____? A. was; wrote B. is; write C. was; written D. is; wrote	1		2
To test the comprehension on passive voice of an infinitive	Jane: Nobody likes_____, so you'd better be kind to others. Ben: So sorry. I won't do it again. A. laugh at B. to laugh C. to be laughed at D. laughing			3
To test the comprehension on passive voice in the present perfect tense	— The school looked quite different from how it used to look. — Yes. Lots of trees and grass _____. A. have planted B. had planted C. are planted D. have been planted			3
To test the comprehension on passive voice in the past perfect tense	More than a dozen students from that school abroad when the passports were revoked. A. sent B. have been sent C. had sent D. had been sent			3
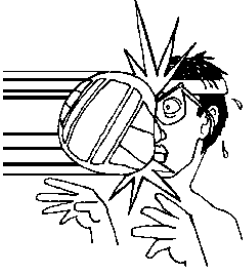
Appendix C: The IPE Task
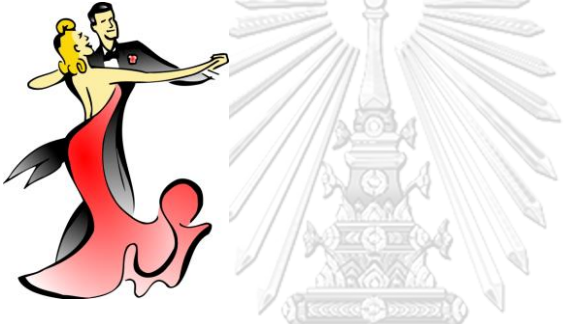
Q&A

Instruction: please answer the questions according to the given picture below.
(Emphasis add: the passive-elicited pictures are in **BOLD**)

Number	
1	What is happening to the boy?
2	How many animals are there in the picture?
3	Which country does the flag represent?
4	What is happening to the man in the blue jacket?

5	What's the man's job?
6	What does it mean for the sign?
7	What is happening to the boy?
8	What is the girl doing?
9	What is happening to the boy?
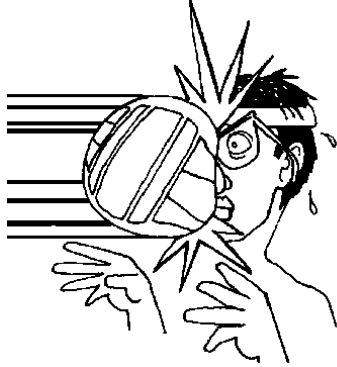
10	What is happening to the boy?
11	What is the man doing?
12	How many kinds of fruits in the picture?
13	What is happening to the boy with black hair?
14	What is the man doing?

15	What is happening to the old man's car?
16	What is happening to the man?
17	What is the man's job?
18	What is happening to the children behind the police officer?

| 19 | What is the girl doing? |
| 20 | What is happening to the tree? |

Appendix D: IOC Results of the Passive Elicitation Pictures in the IPE Task

Objective (construct)	Items		Rating Scale		
			Very poor (-1)	Not sure (0)	Very good (+1)
These pictures would INDUCE participants to produce sentence structures in the passive voice according to the questions.	1	What is happening to the boy?			3
	2	What is happening to the man in the blue jacket?			3
	3	What is happening to the boy?			3

	4	What is happening to the boy?			3
	5	What is happening to the boy with black hair?			3
	6	What is happening to the old man's car?			3
		A car thief Where is my car? 			

	7	What is happening to the children behind the police officer?	1		2
	8	What is happening to the tree?			3

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