

STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING PREFERENCE (STUDY AT SMAN I BUA PONRANG PALOPO)

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to find out the students' ability in using preference and to reveal the problem faced by the students. The method of this research was descriptive method. In this writing, the data were taken 40 students as sample through purposive sampling technique. Based on analysis through test and questionnaire, the writer concludes that the ability of the students in using preference is classified as "very poor" category. It is mainly caused by the lack of the students' preference mastery and the lack of the reference book possessed by the students and the library.

Keywords: *Students' ability, using preference.*

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a vehicle of ideas in human life. Therefore, it can be used as a means of communication. It is very difficult for us to make interaction in daily life without language. That is why language is the most vital means for human being, especially for making relationship to others, also with language people can gain knowledge and understand other people's way of thinking, way of life and culture. English is an international language which is used not only in the Englishman but also by other people all over the world, in diplomatic circle, business, bilateral and other international relationship. It is also used as a language of science as most scientific book are written in English consequently it becomes more important for Indonesian, especially for the students. As we know that, in Indonesia English as the first foreign language has been learned starting from junior high school up to university.

As a foreign language, students encounter many problems or difficulties in learning it. Tarigan (1982) said that there are four language skills should be mastered are listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The four skills above must be learned successfully and simultaneously. They cannot be neglected because they are supporting each other. Sometimes we find students can speak fluently but cannot write in good structure. Writing or speaking is one of the four basic skills is considered to be the most difficult one because it is connecting with expressing ideas, opinion or feeling. In addition, someone should organize his or her ideas by using correct structure, appropriate vocabulary and good punctuation.

Preference is one of English learning which is used to express wish or choice either in speaking or writing. Someone uses it to choose the certain thing or activity more than another else. Preference is a part of grammatical which has the certain structure. This preference has four types where each of its structure is different one another. The usage of preference in English is very important to study by the students because in passing some examination this case often appear and as we know students in village seldom get formal guidance from their teacher. And as we know that the goal of teaching English is mainly to enable the students to use English for communication and to read book and reference written in English. Thus, the

writer interests to discuss about the students' ability in using preference especially at SMAN I Bua Ponrang Palopo.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Language is an integral part of human life because in daily living people use language in expressing their ideas, wishes and feeling perfectly. There are some definitions of language that given by linguists. Language is the most important and characteristic forms of human behavior (Aulia, A., Muhajir, Sulaiman, R., 2023). Language is a means of communication among the society which consist of symbol of sounds that is produced by organ speech (Andini, F., Muhajir., Syarifuddin, S., 2024). Based on the opinions above, it can be said that language has many important roles in human life because its function as a means of communication either in speaking or writing. It can be seen in the level of sound, morphology, syntactic and semantic if a language is not systematic it has no meaning at all. Languages are divided into two models namely spoken and written models. Spoken model is called primary and written model is called secondary. Both of them cannot be separated because they have tight relationship.

Writing Ability

Writing is one of the language skills as an indirect communication without facing the other people. In writing activity, the writer have to be competent in using graphology, structure and vocabulary. Writing skill is not easy but through training and practicing regularly. In modern era writing skill is much needed because it is one of the characteristics of educated nation. In this case, Tarigan, (1982) stated that writing is used by educated people to make a note/record, to make sure, to report, to tell and to influence, if the writer can arrange his/her thinking, and convey it clearly then the aim can be reached because the distinct depend on the thinking, organization, vocabulary understanding and structure in the sentence. The experience, time, opportunity, training, skill is demanded to be a writer. The idea has to be arranged logically, expressed it clearly and follows the pattern. Based on the definition above, vocabulary is the basic of language, without having vocabulary there is not function of language. Thus, vocabulary is needed to convey anything. Sarah, St., Muhajir., Sulastrri. (2023) distinguishes two types of vocabulary are active and passive vocabulary.

Speaking Ability

Speaking is known as oral skill that play essential role in human interaction and communication when people communicate their ideas, mind and feeling to others. Oral skill is what people say, how to say it and where the speakers and listeners are, they express what they are feeling at the moment and the listeners just keep listening and understanding in order to give response (Sarah, St., Muhajir., Sulastrri., 2023). Oral skill is the language expressed from mouth. He continuous that when the students or language users in conversation activities, it is reality of oral skills (Teana, A., Muhajir., Sulaiman, R., 2023). All of definitions above convey those oral skills as the words which are expressed by mouth where there are speaker(s) and listener(s). When the activity of oral skills takes place, there should be the speaker(s) and the listener(s).

To deal with speaking ability, it can go along with another skill namely listening for comprehension. During the communication process there will be speaker and listener who take part to listen and understand what the speaker says, what he means and give responses. The speaking as oral communication can be classified into three categories:

1. Oral communication with direct responses. In this case, the speaker and the listener talk to one freely. The speaker says what he wishes and the listener keeps on listening and understanding then gives some responses.
2. Oral communication with indirect responses. This communication commonly takes place in formal situation. In this case all of the speech from the speaker to the audiences will be conducted by a moderator. It means moderator as the motor of communication.
3. Oral communication without responses. The speaker deliver speech in front of many audiences and there is no chance or asking question, such as the priest stand on the pulpit to deliver speech of religious teaching or a rector deliver speech about the story of national heroes in national anniversary.

METHOD

In this research, the writer used descriptive method, it aims to describe the ability of the students in using preference. The population of this research was taken by the third-year students of SMAN I Bua Ponrang Palopo which consists of IPA and IPS classes and the number were 280 students. The writer used purposive sampling technique by taking six persons from seven classes. So, the writer has determined that numbers of sample were 40 students. They were 20 students of IPA and 20 students of IPS. It was considered as representative of the whole population.

FINDINGS

The Students' Ability in Using Preference

The students' ability in using preference of SMAN I Bua Ponrang Palopo was very poor. It caused by the students found some difficulties in using preference. The data of students' ability in using preference were about the scores they could obtain after doing the test. The written test consists of 15 items and the score of each item is six. The students score were tabulated into a parent table and the data were represented in appendix. The data which represented in the appendix were simplified and represented in the table, as follows:

Table1. The Multiple Choice Tests

No	Questions	Answers	
		Correct	Incorrect
1	When I am hot and thirsty, I prefer cold drinks.....hot drinks	to	Than, would rather, prefer
2	They prefer swimming.....skating	to	better than, better, than
3	She prefers to stay at home.....to go to the concert	than	Like, to, rather than
4	I would rather study at night.....study in the morning	than	To, better than, prefer
5	in the class right now, I like chicken.....beef	than	To, better than, prefer
6	He likes a motorbike.....a car	better than	Better, to, prefer
7	I like running.....swimming	better than	To, rather than, prefer
8	Ann would prefer to stay at home.....go to the cinema	better than	To, rather than, better

9	John would prefer to study history.....to study biology	rather than	Prefer, better than, to
10	My sister likes her math class.....her biology class	rather than	better than, to, like
11	I prefer visiting my friends in the evening.....watching TV by my self	rather than	better than, to, like
12	My parents would rather work.....have rests. They enjoy their jobs.	better than	To, better, rather than
13	When I choose a book, I prefer nonfiction.....fiction	to	better than, than, prefer
14	She likes fresh vegetable.....canned vegetables	than	To, rather than, prefer

Table 2. The Raw Score of the Students Ability in Using Preference

No	Total Items	Total correct answer	Score of each item	Score
1	15	14	6	84
2	15	2	6	12
3	15	4	6	24
4	15	2	6	12
5	15	4	6	24
6	15	6	6	36
7	15	2	6	12
8	15	5	6	30
9	15	7	6	42
10	15	8	6	48
11	15	4	6	24
12	15	1	6	6
13	15	9	6	54
14	15	4	6	24

The result of the multiple-choice test can be seen on the table above. There were many various answers and the high score is 14 correct answers (84). It can be answered by four students. Next, the correct answer is 12 (72). It can be reached only by three persons. There was one person can get 11 correct answers (66) and also only one person can get 10 correct answers (60). Then, there were five persons get 9 correct answers (54). While, only two persons can get 48 score because they only answered 8 correct answers. Next, for the students who can get 7 correct answers (42) can be reached by five persons and four persons can give 6 correct answers (36). There were four persons can give 5 correct answers (30), and seven persons can give 4 correct answers (24). The second last level can give 2 correct answers (12) answered by three persons and the last or the lowest level who can give only 1 correct answer (6) from 15 items of multiple choices is one person.

The calculation above shows us that the means score of the students' ability in using preference is forty-three (43). According to the classification, it includes into very poor category.

Table 3. Rate Percentage of the Students Score in Doing the Written Test

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	80 – 100	4	10
2	Good	70 – 79	3	7,5
3	Fair	60 – 69	3	7,5
4	Poor	50 – 59	4	10
5	Very poor	0 – 49	26	65
Total			40	100

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that from 40 students who have been researched there were 4 persons got excellent score, 3 persons got good score, 3 persons got fair score, 4 persons got poor and 26 persons got very poor score.

The Problems that the Students Faced in Using Preference

The questionnaire was distributed to 40 students. The questionnaire consists of 20 items. 16 closed items and 4 opened items. Number 8, 12, 19, and 20 are open items. The opened items analyzed after analyzing of the closed items.

Table 4. The Students' Frequency in Learning English (Item 1)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ever	40	100
2	Never	0	0
Total		40	100

According to the students' responses in the table above, the data indicates that 40 students (100%) ever studied English. It means they have known English subject.

Table 5. The Students' Opinion of Difficulties Level of English Subject (Item 2)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Difficult	8	20
2	Easy	2	5
3	Quite Difficult	28	70
4	Very difficult	2	5
Total		40	100

The table 5 indicates that most of the students found that English is quite difficult to be learnt. It can be seen on the table above that there were 28 students (70%) chosen the answer.

Table 6. The Students' Frequency in Learning Preference (Item 3)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ever	40	100
2	Never	0	0
Total		40	100

The table above shows that preference is not strange for them anymore because 40 students as sample of this research have been learnt about the usage of preference.

Table 7. The Place of the Students Learn Preference Subject (Item 4)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	School	39	97,5
2	English Course	1	2,5
Total		40	100

The table above shows that most of the students for the first time got preference subject from their school. It can be seen that from 40 students, there were 39 (97,5%) of them chosen the answer and only 1 person got it from English course.

Table 8. The Students' Response about Preference (Item 5)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Dislike	34	85
2	Like	6	15
Total		40	100

The table above shows that from 40 students, 34 students (85%) dislike learning preference and 6 students (15%) answered like. It means that they have no high interest in learning preference.

Table 9. The Students' Opinion about Mastering Preference (Item 6)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Easy	1	2,5
2	Difficult	39	97,5
Total		40	100

Table 9 above also shows that most of students found difficulties to learn preference. It can be seen that only 1 student (2,5%) answered easy to master it and 39 students (97,5%) answered difficult. Based on the table above, the writer can interpret that preference is one of English subject that difficult to be mastered by them.

Table 10. The Students' Opinion about the Difficulties Level in Learning Preference (Item 7)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Difficult	5	12,5
2	Not Difficult	5	12,5
3	Quite Difficult	29	72,5
4	Very Difficult	1	2,5
Total		40	100

The table 10 indicates that there were 5 students (12,5%) answered difficult, and also 5 students (12,5%) answered not difficult to be learnt. There were 29 students (72,5%) answered quite difficult and only 1 student (2,5%) said very difficult. The writer concludes that most of students of SMAN I Bua Ponrang Palopo found that preference is quite difficult to be learnt.

Table 11. The Students' Mastering In Using Pattern of Preference (Item 9)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	4	10
2	No	36	90
Total		40	100

Table 11 shows that from 40 students only 4 students (10%) know the pattern of preference well and 36 students (90 %) of them didn't know the pattern. The writer concludes that most of them rarely study about preference.

Table 12. The Frequency of the Students in Using Preference in their conversation (Item 10)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ever	15	37,5
2	Never	0	0
3	Rare	24	60
4	Often	1	2,5
Total		40	100

Table 12 above shows that 15 students (37,5%) said ever practice it, 24 students (60%) answered rare practice it and only 1 student (2,5%) answered often practice preference in their conversation but none of them answered never.

Table 13. The Frequency of the Students in Using the 4 Types of Preference (Item 11)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Prefer + to	10	25
2	Would prefer	2	5
3	Would rather	8	20
4	Like + better than	20	50
Total		40	100

Table 13 indicates that from the 4 types of preference, LIKE is the easiest form to use because 20 students (50%) choose it and prefer is the second level, it can be seen 10 students (25%) choose it. Whereas the usage of would prefer and would rather can be said difficult because only 10 students ever used it.

Table 14. The Students' opinion about the explanation of their English Teacher (Item 13)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Clear	0	0
2	Unclear	40	100
Total		40	100

The table above shows that none of them ever got clear explanation about the usage of preference from their English teacher. It means the teaching of preference is not successful yet.

Table 15. The Students' Opinion about the Teacher Technique in Teaching the Usage of Preference (Item 14)

No	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Agree	15	37,5
2	Disagree	25	62,5
Total		40	100

Based on the table above, the writer can interpret that the teaching method of preference is not successful yet. This is because most of the students disagree of the teaching technique of their teacher. It can be seen that 25 students (62,5%) choose it.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the writer presents the discussion of the result of the data analysis. The discussion will be presented into two parts, those are: (1) Students' ability in using preference and (2) The problems that the students faced in using preference.

The Students' Ability in Using Preference

After analyzing the data which intends to find the students' ability in using preference, the writer found that the third-year students of SMAN I Bua Ponrang Palopo have low ability in using preference. This is indicated by the result of the calculation of the data analysis that the mean score of the students is only forty-three (43). According to the classification of scores, which have been determined in this research that the mean score is categorized as very poor.

The Problems that the Students Faced in Using Preference

Based on the analysis of the data collected through the test, the students' ability was categorized as low score. This might be caused as follows:

1. The students have no high interest in learning English and preference particularly (item 2 and 5).
2. The students are lazy to study about preference and seldom practice it in their daily conversation at once. So, they cannot master it well (item 6, 10, 11 and 12).
3. The teacher frequency in giving explanation is inadequate (item 4, 13 and 20). In addition, the students disagree with their teacher technique in teaching (item 8 and 14).
4. The lack of books either talking about preference possessed by the students or the library of SMAN I Bua Ponrang Palopo (item 15, 16 and 17).

As the result of the fact most of the students consider that preference is one of the difficult subjects in English (item 7, 8 and 9) but they want to improve their English by doing some efforts (item 18 and 19).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis of this research, the writer formulates some conclusions, as follows:

1. The ability of the third years students SMAN I Bua Ponrang Palopo in using preference is low.
2. The factor causing the students have low ability to use preference can be specified as follows:
 - a. The lack of students interest in learning English
 - b. The students seldom practice it either in speaking or writing
 - c. The teacher did not give the clearly explanation about the usage preference
 - d. The lack of the students in reading some reference to improve their preference mastery
 - e. The lack of English book possessed by the students and the library of SMAN 1 Bua Ponrang Palopo.

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