A STUDY ON THE STUDENTS' MASTERY OF EXPRESSIONS OF PREFERENCES OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM AT STAIN BENGKALIS

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Abstract: *Grammar is one of the language components that should be learned well by students. However, most of students still make a lot of mistakes especially in mastering expressions of preferences ; prefer…to, like … better than, would rather… than, and would prefer … rather than. The aim of this study is to find out the students' mastery of expressions of preferences and the easiest and the most difficult preferences for them to master. Sixteen English education students of the second semester were the samples which they were given a set of multiple choices that they had to answer. The result showed that mean score of the students' mastery is 60.62 which is classified into fair. The students' mastery of expressions of preferences is 60.62 which is classified into fair. The easiest preference to master is preference prefer to (67.96) and it is categorized into fair and the most difficult one is preference would rather than (53.56) and it is categorized into poor.*

Key word: *mastery, expressions of preference*

INTRODUCTION

As a foreign language, English is difficult for Indonesian students to learn. This may be so because English is not used daily in environment and grammar itself is very complex. This complexity confuses the students in learning it. It also happens to the English students at STAIN Bengkalis. Although they have studied much grammar but the fact they still face some difficulties in understanding grammar. One of the difficulties for them is using expressions of preferences in English ; *prefer…to, like … better than, would rather… than,* and *would prefer … rather than.* Take a look for the following sentences in

Indonesian language in using preferences:

1. Ayah saya <u>lebih suka</u> memancing <u>daripada</u> berburu.
2. Para siswa <u>lebih suka</u> pelajaran Statistik <u>daripada</u> Matematika.
3. Mereka <u>lebih suka</u> minum kopi <u>daripada</u> teh.

Those three sentences above indicate the same form of <u>lebih suka…… daripada.</u> There is difference for three forms of using preferences. In contrast, English has its own rules in expressions of preferences. Those sentences in English should be in following forms:

1. My father <u>prefers</u> fishing <u>to</u> hunting.
2. The students <u>like</u> Statistics <u>than</u> Mathematics.
3. They would rather <u>drink</u> coffe <u>than</u> tea.

From the explanation earlier, it is interesting to do a research on the Students' Mastery of Expressions of Preferences of English Study Program at STAIN Bengkalis.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Related Theory

The Nature of Grammar

Swan (1996:410) states that grammar the rules that say how words change to show different meaning and how they are combined into sentences. Oxford dictionary explains that grammar is the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences.

The Nature of Preferences

Fahrurrozi (2003:120) states that preference is a sentence that is used to state a greater interest for something or someone than something or someone else. Betty (1992:119) states there are three kinds of preferences; *prefer…to, like… better than* and *would prefer … rather than.* According to Fahrurrozi (2003:120) there are four kinds of preferences: ; *prefer…to, like… better than, would prefer … rather than* and *would prefer … rather than.*

Rules for preference *"prefer … to"*

1. After "prefer" is followed by Verb-ing.
2. After "prefer" can be followed by noun.

Examples:

a. I prefer *painting* to *writing.*
b. Susan prefers *dancing* to *singing.*
c. Jimmy prefers *coffe* to *tea.*

d. Katty prefers *a novel* to *a magazine.*

Rules for preference *"like …better than"*

1. The pair of *like* is followed by *better than.*
2. After *like* could be followed by Verb-ing or nouns.

Examples:

a. John likes *watching TV* better than *listening to a radio.*
b. I like *singing* better than *playing the guitar.*
c. Sammy likes *Rina* better than *Rani.*
d. Debby likes *ice cream* better than *orange juice.*

Rules for preference" would rather … than"

1. The pair of *would rather* is *than.*
2. The verb following *would rather* is always in simple form (verb 1).
3. It is possible to add *have* after would rather and followed by nouns.

Examples:

a. Ellen would rather *go to a party* than *a movie.*
b. Leonard would rather *practise English* than *Arabic.*

c. My kid would rather *have* a bicycle than a motorcycle.
d. The students would rather *have* their handphones than the computers.

Rules for preference "would prefer … rather than"

1. The pair of *would prefer* is *rather than.*
2. After *would prefer* could be followed by to infinitive or Verb-ing.

Examples:

a. Katty would prefer *to watch TV* rather than *read her book*.
b. James would prefer *staying at home* rather than *going for a holiday*.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The study that used is descriptive which consists of one variable about mastering expressions of preferences of the second semester English study program students at STAIN Bengkalis. The number of students is 16 and all were the respondents in this study. The specific study is to find out the second semester students of English study program in mastering expressions of preferences and to find out the easiest and the most

difficult preferences for them to master. The instrument used to collect the data is a test which consists of thirty items of multiple choice. There are four options for an item and they had to choose the correct answer as the instructions. The data were analyzed individually which classified into five levels; *Excellent (90-100), Good (80-89), Fairly Good (70-79), Fair (60-69) and Poor (05-59).*

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A set of multiple choices was given to the respondents in order to find out the students' mastery on expressions of preferences. The result can be seen as the following table:

Table 1. The Frequency of Students' Mastery of Expressions of Preferences

No	Level of Mastery	Range	%
1	Excellent	90-100	0
2	Good	80-89	18.75
3	Fairly Good	70-79	18.75
4	Fair	60-69	37.5
5	Poor	0-59	25
	TOTAL		**100**

Table 2. The Students' Mastery of Expressions of Preferences

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
The Students' Result of Expressions Preferences	16	60.00	26.67	86.67	60.6250	4.56647	18.26589
Valid N (listwise)	16						

Table 2 shows the students' mastery of expressions of preferences. It can be seen that mean score of the students' mastery is 60.62 which is classified into *fair*. The lowest score is 26.67 which is categorized into *poor* and the highest score is 86.67 which is categorized into *good*.

Table 3. The Students' Mastery of Expressions of Preference *"prefer … to"*

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
The Students' Mastery of Preference "prefer...to"	16	75.0	25.0	100.0	67.969	6.1416	24.5666
Valid N (listwise)	16						

The table above identifies the students' mastery of preference "prefer … to" where the mean score of the students' mastery is 67.96 and it is categorized into *fair.* The lowest score is 25 *(poor category)* and the highest is 100 *(excellent category).*

Table 4. The Students' Mastery of Expressions of Preference

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
The Students' Mastery of Preference "Like... better than" Valid N (listwise)	16 16	87.5	12.5	100.0	64.844	6.2727	25.0910

Table above shows the the students' mastery of preference "like … better than". The mean score of the students' mastery is 68.84 and it is categorized into *fair.* The lowest score is 12.5 *(poor category)* and the highest one is 100 *(excellent).*

Table 5. The Students' Mastery of Expressions of Preference "would rather … than"

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
The Students' Mastery of Preference "would rather...than" Valid N (listwise)	16 16	71.4	14.3	85.7	53.566	5.2971	21.1884

Table 5 explains the students' mastery of preference "would rather … than" where the mean score of the students' mastery is 53.56 which is categorized into *poor.* The lowest score is 14.3 *(poor category)* and the highest one is 85.7 *(good category).*

Table 6. The Students' Mastery of Expressions of Preference "would prefer… rather than"

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
The Students' Mastery of Preference "would prefer...rather than" Valid N (listwise)	16 16	71.4	14.3	85.7	58.923	6.3721	25.4885

Table 6 identifies the students' mastery of preference "would prefer … rather than" where the mean score of

the students' mastery is 58.92 which is categorized into *poor.* The lowest score is 14.3 *(poor category)* and the highest one is 85.7 *(good category).*

Table 7. The Mean Score of Each Preference

Preferences	Mean Score	Category
Prefer … to	67.96	Fair
Like … better than	64.84	Fair
Would rather … than	53.56	Poor
Would prefer … rather than	58.92	Poor

From table above it can be seen the mean score of each preference. The highest mean score refers to the students' mastery of expression of preference *prefer … to (67.96)* and it is categorized into *fair.* The lowest mean score refers to the students' mastery of expression of preference *would rather … than (53.56)* and it is categorized into *poor.* From the calculation it can be concluded that the easiest preference to master is preference *prefer … to* and the most difficult one is preference *would rather … than.*

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

As it is stated in the earlier explanation that there are two aims of the study ; 1) to find out the students' mastery of expressions of preferences and 2) to find out the easiest and the most difficult pereferences for them to master. The findings state as follows:

1. The students' mastery of expressions of preferences is 60.62 which is classified into fair.

2. The easiest preference to master is preference *prefer … to (67.96)* and it is categorized into *fair* and the most difficult one is preference *would rather … than (53.56)* and it is categorized into *poor.*

Suggestion

Some suggestions can be stated as follows:

1. English students should pay more attention in using each preference by looking at its own rule.

2. According to the result, English students are hoped to focus more on using preference *would rather … than.*

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