

## THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHODS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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### ABSTRACT

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is a method of second language instruction based mostly on the translation of passages from the native language into the target language. Along the way, students are explained the grammar rules, etymology, and syntax of the target language in a more linguistic than communicative way. In grammar–translation classes, students learn grammatical rules and then apply those rules by translating sentences between the target language and the native language. Advanced students may be required to translate whole texts word for-word.

**Keywords:** *Method of Teaching, Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching.*

### INTRODUCTION

In this method, while teaching the text book the teacher translates every word, phrase from English into the mother tongue of learners. Further, students are required to translate sentences from their mother tongue into English. These exercises in translation are based on various items covering the grammar of the target language. The method emphasizes the study of grammar through deduction that is through the study of the rules of grammar. A contrastive study of the target language with the mother tongue gives an insight into the structure not only of the foreign language but also of the mother tongue.

**Main principles of GTM are these:**

1. Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language.
2. Much vocabulary is taught in the form of a list of isolated words.
3. Long elaborate explanation is taught in the form of lists of isolated words.
4. Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.
5. Reading of classical texts is begun early.
6. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.
7. Often the only drills are drills in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
8. Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

### ADVANTAGES

The phraseology of the target language is quickly explained. Translation is the easiest way of explaining meanings or words and phrases from one language into another. Any other method of explaining vocabulary items in the second language is found time consuming. Further, learners acquire some short of accuracy in understanding synonyms in the source language and the target language.

Teacher's labour is saved. Since the textbooks are taught through the medium of the mother tongue, the teacher may ask comprehension questions on the text taught in the mother tongue. Pupils will not have much difficulty in responding to questions on the mother tongue. So, the teacher can easily assess whether the

students have learnt what he has taught them. Communication between the teacher and the learners does not cause linguistic problems. Even teachers who are not fluent in English can teach English through this method. That is perhaps the reason why this method has been practiced so widely and has survived so long.

### **DISADVANTAGES:**

It is an unnatural method. The natural order of learning a language is listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Speech is neglected. The Grammar Translation Method lays emphasis on reading and writing. It neglects speech. Thus, the students who are taught English through this method fail to express themselves adequately in spoken English. Even at the undergraduate stage they feel shy of communicating through English.

Exact translation is not possible. Translation is, indeed, a difficult task and exact translation from one language to another is not always possible. There are several lexical items in one language, which have no synonyms/equivalents in another language.

It does not give pattern practice. A person can learn a language only when he internalizes its patterns to the extent that they form his habit. But the Grammar Translation Method does not provide any such practice to the learner of a language. It rather attempts to teach language through rules and not by use.

### **CONCLUSION**

Although the Grammar Translation Method is greatly devoid of any reference to the present-day language usage, still today it is used in foreign language teaching, especially in the third world countries. Much of its popularity stems from its relatively simple teaching requirements. Anyone with good reading and writing skills can teach language as per the Grammar Translation Method, no fluency in the target language is required. Therefore, it is apparent that this method will always occupy its place in the field of foreign language teaching to some extent and its use will not cease that abruptly either.

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