



Theory of Grammar Translation Method in English Language Teaching

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Abstract: In English language teaching methodologies, they are very crucial elements to make teaching learning more effective. They were started by different scholars hundred years before due to the time and the importance of them. Thus, they were made due to the difference of one method over the others and selections were made relay on the contents taught in the classroom and the situation where the teachers and students were. And it is believed that there are no absolute methodologies available everywhere and they all are important based up on the contents to be taught. However, it was considered as traditional methods of teaching that was not important for methods of teaching and didn't have any collocations with others methods. Hence, grammar translation method is one of the methods used before those all method and it is considered as traditional or classical method because of the reason that its focus is on teaching Latin and Greek language. The fail of this method open chances for the others methods and currently it is one of the methods used intact with all methods. In nut shell, this paper gives information of the grammar translation method different from the others method uniquely and might give adequate ideas on the bases of teaching and learning context. Hence, every contents of this paper will give subsequent ideas about the theory of grammar translation method in language teaching.

Keywords: Methodologies, Grammar Translation, Classical, Tradition, Teaching, Learning

1. Introduction

Methodologies are very crucial in language teaching and learning for the students to develop their desired skills. Thus, language learning has gone through several of these methods. One of these methods is Grammar Translation Method. It has been used by language teachers for many years. It was also called the classical method since it was first used in teaching of classical languages; Latin ('lingua franca') throughout much of Europe at that time and Greek [4]. Earlier in this century, it plays great roles for students to read and appreciate foreign language literature and mainly gives focus on grammar rules and translation of sentences from native to target and vice versa. Besides, students would become more familiar with the grammar of native language that grows students intellectually. Hence, this paper will discuss up on the Grammar Translation Method in details.

The Background

Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14] explored the grammar translation method emergence in America as Prussian method

and it's widely distribution to some European schools to teach classical languages. According to Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14], the practices of the method derived from the teaching of Latin. This is because Latin was the most widely spoken and studied foreign language. It was very important for reading and the more emphasis is on written texts. On the top of this, the author [19] stated 'Valentin Meidinger', as the originator of the method, a German teacher of French and Italian as well text book writer based in Germany.

Besides, he also indicated it has also come under the names of 'The Grammar school Method' and the 'Prussian method' due to its wide application in grammar schools in what is formally known as Prussian towards the beginning of the 19th -century.

Thus, it is an old language teaching method whose historical roots reported up to today's teaching and learning process. In the same vein, the author [4] stated that:

As other languages began to be taught in educational institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the

classical method was adopted as the chief means for teaching foreign languages. Little thoughts was given as the time teaching someone how to speak the language, after all, languages were not being thought primarily to learn oral/aural communications, but to learn for the sake of being 'scholarly' or in some instances, for gaining a reading proficiency in foreign languages.

According to the author [2], Grammar Translation Method is the primary method of teaching and an input for modern teaching methods. It is aimed to teach writing and reading and these help the students to develop their reading and writing proficiency than focusing or giving attention to speaking that enhancing the students' communicative competence than grammar competence. Besides, the method is the source for all methods and known by its different names like classical method and even known to teach classical languages (Latin and Greek).

Moreover, Howatt [5] explained it as a method of teaching foreign language by translating sentences from the target to the source and vice versa. According to Howatt [5], the method develops a vast vocabularies and then learn the grammatical rules of the language so that it becomes easy for them to make the word to word translation of sentences. i.e. It showed that the method is significant in teaching grammar rules, teaching of bilingual lists of vocabularies for memorization and passing into translating sentences.

Consequently, Larsen-Freeman, D. [8] introduced the methods used in teaching modern languages was from the classical languages (Latin) that come in subsequent of the classical method or Grammar Translation Method of teaching by lying emphasis on the written texts. Thus, the students were tested their cognitive abilities by learning formal grammar rules and translating sentences using the source/target languages. However, the author [17] stated that the modern languages teaching and learning methods are due to different assumptions or propositions in economic, social and political issues that brought the modern languages like English, Italian and french. As such, it would not be wrong ideas to emerge Grammar Translation Method and later moving to subsequent methods such as Reading Method and Direct Method.

2. Methodology

2.1. Grammar-Translation Method Theories of Learning

Language learning is tenet of structural linguistic that the primary medium of language is oral, and students ought to engage in listening and repetition practices, drills and dialogues [14]. These is when the students are developing communicative abilities or capacities through the task- based activities and intact together to develop their communicative competence.

And also when the students are encouraged to learn a language using the target language with less attention of having deductive teaching approach than inductive teaching approach.

Nevertheless, the Grammar-Translation approach grew out of the approaches used to teach classical languages and instruction was given in students' native language and there was little use of the target language. High emphasis was focused on morphology; students had to read difficult classical texts and to translate sentences from the target language into their mother tongues [18]. Moreover, behaviorist learning theory forms the basis of the traditional learning environment geared for the efficient transmission of the information in well-organized manner [13]. For behaviorism in learning classroom, behaviors are learned habits seen for how such habits are formed to affect the learning process.

Thus, teachers with behaviorist mindset take classroom as a teacher-centered areas, with teachers, text books and others enrichment materials as the major sources of knowledge. Accordingly, concept of behaviorist contains the theoretical underpinning of the Grammar Translation Method according to which human beings are capable of fulfilling various tasks due to shortage of knowledge that hinder to acquire the wanted proficiency [16]. As a result, in order to do on students' learning abilities, it is better for the teachers to make their students to grasp and memorize the rules of the detailed grammar and that of difficult literary texts of the target language.

Moreover, the grammar translation method adopts the deductive instructional approach to learning in which the teacher has to task with overtly giving the students rules, new concepts, explaining these rules and then making the students practice the rules and concepts in different ways with a variety of examples and exercises for the purposes of reinforcement.

2.2. Grammar-Translation Method Theory of Language

The traditional approach to language shapes the view about language in the Grammar Translation Method.

The major focus is on the written form of the language with a perspective attitude toward grammar [12]. According to the author [12], the grammar-translation method is weak in teaching the language. Thus, the grammar translation method is more of language usage and give priority to the grammar rules of the target or native language use.

Moreover, its main focus is giving correctness for the writer or teacher and they are correcting every errors made by the students and the students don't have any interaction independently.

Besides, oral communications receive very little attention because language is conceived of as a means to be used in the act of understanding the target literature.

To support such learning, students wanted to be inculcated in translating in and out the target and source languages. On the top of this, translation is the activity of the method that give more awareness of the structures and word stock of their own language. On the contrary, the method is more focused on difficult literary texts that challenges the students and which the students are unable to understand and translate it into their source of language because of the reason that the

focus is only for those target language students and they only can grasp.

2.3. Assumptions Beyond Language Teaching and Learning

Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [15] have defined the grammar-translation method as “a method of foreign or second language teaching which makes use of translation and grammar study as the main teaching and learning activities.” The grammar-translation method was originally called the classical method because it was mainly used in the teaching of Latin and Greek in the 16th century.

In the early 19th century, which saw the decline of Latin and its relegation to an academic language, the grammar-translation method was adopted to help target language learners to read, study, and translate foreign languages and language literature. Based on these issues, Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14] set two key assumptions of this methodology.

That is, language learners must develop a good knowledge of learning and memorizing grammatical rules of the grammatical systems of their first language and second languages, and they need to be able to develop the ability to translate texts from their source to the target and vice versa.

And ability to accurately translate texts which was associated with the ability to learn the grammatical system of the target language. The grammar-translation method viewed the study of a language as the memorization of rules to be able to manipulate its morphological and syntactical system. Grammar is taught deductively, by the presentation of rules followed by translation practice, and accuracy in translating sentences and texts is the main focus of this methodology.

Thus, Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14] have pointed out that “Grammar Translation dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s, and in modified form it continues to be widely used in some parts of the world today.” The target language is primarily interpreted as a system of rules to be observed in texts and sentences and to be related to first language rules and meanings. Language learning is implicitly viewed as an intellectual activity involving rule learning, the memorization of rules and facts related to first language meanings by means of massive translation practice. The first language is used as the points of references in teaching learning system in the acquisition of the second language within this method. In nut shell, the Grammar Translation Method is the method that give clear justification on modern languages sourcing Latin and Greek as a mental training even if language of teaching and learning is their mother tongue.

2.4. Classroom Activities in Grammar Translation Method

Krashen, S. D. [7] recognized class room activities in grammar translation method classroom: these activities are; for instance, grammar rule; with example sentences. This activity is deductive application of an explicit grammar used as pedagogical techniques where students have to be conscious of the grammatical rules of the target or native

language and grammar rules are presented with examples for the students in the classroom. Moreover, it helps the students to memorize the rules and that rules help the students to translate the words, phrases or disconnected sentences in to the target or the native language.

The other one is vocabulary presented in form of bilingual lists. That is, vocabulary that is learned through direct translation from the native language to target. Thus, vocabularies are taught in a separate places in equivalent manner of both language. And also reading selection emphasizing the explanation of grammar rule and lists of vocabularies and exercises designed to provide practice on the grammar and vocabulary of the lesson. These exercises emphasizes the conscious control of structure and include translation in both directions, from mother tongue to target language and vice versa. Regards to this issue, students are allowed to read difficult literature in order to enhance the reading ability of the students where even the students can develop writing and these help them to increase their proficiency in reading and writing as the same time they increase their accuracy in writing.

From the above point of view, the contribution of Grammar Translation Method to language teaching has been limited since it has shifted the focus from the real language to linguistic categories such as nouns, adjectives, prepositions with less attention to the communicative ability in the foreign language. Besides, it limits learning to grammar rules through translation that doesn't lead students to interact with each others and learning habit of among them.

And give chances for the teachers to act as s/he is knowing all things and authoritative for them in writing, teaching, correcting errors and manipulating all things. Thus, the above limits of its inability to create communicative competence in learners give rise to direct method.

2.5. The Objectives of the Grammar-Translation Method

Larsen-Freeman, D. [9] distinguishes the main objectives of Grammar Translation Method in teaching process. According to Larsen-freeman, the objectives of the method in learning of English language are mainly enabling to read the literature of that language, to get benefit from intellectual development, to learn detailed grammatical rules of target language and enables to translate into and out of the target language, to read and to write the skills which are focused while listening and speaking skills are totally ignored.

Thus, from the points of discussions, the method has its own advantages and disadvantages that the advantages of the method is the line for the method where reading and writing is the main skills that the learners can develop through their learning process.

And implicitly, the students can develop intellectually and they are benefited from the explicit grammar taught where the structure and steps of the method lies on teaching grammar rules and meaning and teaching vocabularies in separate areas with equivalence of source language and target language and then continued with translation of sentences from source to target or vice versa. Richards, J., and Rodgers,

T. [14] indicated objectives of the the method on his book similar to Larsen-Freeman, D. [9] that, vocabulary items are memorized with the help of their meanings in the native language with or without knowing the exact meaning of the words in target language. On the top of this, sentenced is the basic unit of teaching and language practice in the method that the learners are enabled to do detailed analysis of a sentence which is more governed by rules that is set and enabled them to translate a sentence into and out of the target language. As a result, while the students are eager to take the responsibilities in writing and analysis detailed sentences, accuracy is emphasized rather than fluency. Thus, accuracy is when the students don't get any tolerance to treat any mistakes and the mistakes are corrected by their teachers. Basically, the basic purpose of this method used to be able to pass the written examinations. i.e. nothing as to do from the teacher or else from the students to learn more detailed elements for understanding than doing exams. The other [14] objectives in line to [9] is that students understanding of the instructions from the directions and instructions given from their teacher and finally their building capacities of their understanding between source language and target language in their learning process using this method.

2.6. Basic Principles of Grammar-Translation Method

According to Larsen-Freeman [10], the grammar-translation method is made of the main principles which represent the building blocks of this language teaching methodology.

One of the principles is teachers' assertion of their authority, as their role is to transmit knowledge to learners and the learners' native language is the medium for instruction. The second one is very little teaching done in the target language.

It is an extremely teacher-centered method of teaching. i.e. Learners' need read the literature written in the target language and learn all the relevant vocabulary and grammar. Learners do not play any active role and there is little learner-learner interaction. The third one is literary language superior to the spoken language where learning a language consists of being able to read and translate a text into and out of the target language. The main focus of teaching here is to develop the learners' ability to read, write, and translate. Thus, teachers would not direct learners' attention to the content of the text which is treated as a translation exercise. Reading of very complex classical texts begins early to be able to communicate using the target language is not an important goal for learners. Fourthly, the focus is on accuracy and not fluency where the grammar is taught systematically following a sequencing grammar syllabus through explicit extensive and elaborated teaching of grammatical rules.

The main assumption is that a second language is learned through the deduction of the grammatical properties of a target language. That is, when learners have developed a conscious and explicit representation of that language, they can apply this ability in the production of sentences through translation from one language to the other. The other one is

error correction where errors are corrected by the teachers. If learners answer a question incorrectly, the teacher would select somebody else to give the correct answer and/or he/she replies directly. Lastly not the end, learners should memorize vocabulary in the form of isolated word lists that vocabulary in the target language is learned through translation from the native language [11].

3. The Unique Features / Characteristics in GTM in Classroom Context

According to Celce-Murcia, M. [3], the key features of Grammar Translation Method were noted clearly: firstly, classes are taught in students mother tongue, with little active use of the target language. This is when there is no chances for the students to use the target language and the teachers are not worry for making mistakes and the same for their students and also don't forced to use the target language, too.

In one way or another students are learning by their mother tongue or native languages and teachers are instructing by students language. Secondly, much vocabularies is taught in the form of lists of isolated words where the vocabularies are in separate lists in addition to grammar rules for memorization, equivalent to their mother tongue. Thirdly, long elaboration explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.

Here, the grammar rules are taught for translation or understanding of the lessons by their mother tongue and the rules were memorized that help the learners to translating and dictating easily. Further more, the learners are initiated to use mother tongue than target language. Fourthly, it provides grammar for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and words. That is, the students are taught grammar to put words together to form disconnected sentences and those sentences are connected together to give instruction or rules oriented for the students to govern translation.

On the top of these, since the major issue Grammar Translation Method is reading and having reading proficiency, firstly, difficult and challenging literature given to the students to to read especially classical period earlier. As a result, the students are going through reading difficult text in target language and change in to their native. The other one is, little attention is paid to the contents of the texts, which are treated as exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language in to native. Thus, language is taught by translation focusing on teaching grammar rules and the students eager to learn the grammar rules to translate in to their native language easily. So, often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences fro the target language to native. Finally, little or no attention is given to pronunciation. From the Grammar Translation Method point of view, it is more of writing and reading and that don't include speaking and listening.

Hence, if the students are not allowed to learn the languages and inhabited learning through target language and

the focus is more of mother tongue, the pronunciation is neglected that the students use their first language only. That is, the main focus of learning is on accuracy than fluency.

4. The Materials in Grammar-Translation Method

This proposed method basically employs the basic principles of teaching materials presentation of GTM. i.e. In the classroom, the teachers are important to start teaching the learners with grammar elaboration of a specific rules. The explanation have to be performed in learners' first language. This is took in to action to eradicate challenges in grasping the grammar presentation. A text pattern that includes vast repetitively used vocabularies and the grammar rule application is then supplied to the learners as an activities. The text is provided in the students' first language which must be translated into the language used for learning perfectly and correctly.

The translated text is then discussed collaboratively between the students. The collaborative discussion is intended to give the students opportunity to practice and finally to master the rule and vocabularies which they use for future communication [9].

5. The Roles of Learners and Teachers in the Classroom

According to Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14], the grammar translation methods have roles on teachers and students in the classroom. The teacher is the "sage on the stage:" the students learn from him/her but it doesn't work the other way around. Little or no interaction occurs between the students during the class either [9].

Moreover, teachers' roles are to provide translation of new grammatical items, to answer students' questions about the meaning of items, to monitor students' work for grammatical accuracy, to develop translation activities, to guides translation to deal with the memorization of rules and to manipulate of the morphology and syntax of the foreign language. Besides, it requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers because test of grammar rules and translation are easy to construct and be objectively scored and the main function is that of observing the learners than the learners to correct themselves.

On the top of this, Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14] discussed also as the learners have their own roles via Grammar Translation Method to try out new grammar items in spine and written texts. These common classroom activities indicated by Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14] were: translation of sentences from one language to another, writing sentences using the new grammar, memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary, and production of almost perfect translations.

This method is not experienced by the students that always creates fear for them. The main activities and controls are

stated by the students that students are using their native language and they make mistakes and they don't worry for language use and making the target language under control and they are not allowed able to correct their error. The teacher is the one who provides the course of the learning process and the status of knowledge as well. As a result, the work or roles of the teachers and learners bring clear structure or organization of the method. However, it doesn't fit today's learning shift.

6. Structure and Organization of Grammar-Translation Method in the Classroom

Richards, J., and Rodgers, T. [14] underlines some important issues about the structure and organization of the GTM in Language teaching classroom. Accordingly, as method is the traditional approach to learning a language and basically on grammatical competence more in source language with less knowledge of the target language, teachers build different techniques/structures in which students are eager to learn the language basing this traditional or classical languages for more understanding of reading and writing skills. Thus, students were taught to build skill in grammar through repetitive practice and drilling and then apply the grammar on their own in translating and forming sentences. For instance, translation of a literary passage where students translate a reading passage into and out of the target language.

The translation in the passage is written and the students were engaged in the literary activities out from the that passage and here learners are expected to understand their meanings. Besides, a passage particularly comprehension questions for reading and understanding is given to the students and they have to answer the questions given at the end of the passage in the target language. These questions are matched with the information extracted from the passage, inferences rely on students' comprehending of the given passage and the passage that the students match with their own experiences. A technique is the decision a student obtains to give a specific learning challenges.

Thus, when learners come up with difficult reading passages, skimming, scanning it first for gist and specific of the content before reading it more related, is an example of a reading techniques. On the top of this, antonym and synonyms are the key structures where students are given a list of words and a passage. Based up on the given words or passage, the students have to find out the antonyms of those words in the passage. Similarly, the students can also be given a list of words and can be asked to find out the synonyms of the given words from the passage.

Further more, the ability to attain a high proficiency standard in translation and grammar accuracy does not require teachers to be native speakers. That is, classes are not taught using the target language and that does not require a lot of preparation. This is because the ability to communicate using the target language is not the main goal for instruction.

Wong. [20] elaborated that, these structures in this method seemed that there is no need to help the students in varieties of contexts because the methodology main principles are more on the memorization of grammatical rules and translation, and the lack of attention to the development of comprehension and speaking proficiency. According to [20], this methodology was rejected due to its insufficient structure and organization in the classroom. Thus,, teachers decided to direct their attention toward methodology such as the direct method that fostered listening and communication skills in teaching and learning process of the language.

7. Advantages and Disadvantages of Grammar-Translation Method

Abdullah, S. S. [1] distinguishes the advantages of Grammar-translation method. According to Abdullah, S. S. [1], GMT has a few advantages. The first advantage is translation. This is the processes by which the teachers or the students are translating the grammar rules as well as the the bilingual lists of vocabularies from source to target languages or vice versa. The second one is vocabulary explanations where the students or the teachers themselves give vast explanation of the meanings of phrases and words of the target languages equivalent to the source languages.

The other advantages of GMT is linguistic problems that do not create hindrance to the communication between students and teachers because not only the students but also the teachers be able to use their mother tongue in the classroom in teaching and learning process. hence they don't get challenges in speaking between the teacher and the students and the communication is very smooth. i.e. teachers who are not fluent in spoken English can easily teach English to students using grammar-translation method. Since mother tongue is also used while teaching a foreign language in the method and also students feel comfortable developing the concepts of grammar, understanding the teachers' instructions and responding to questions.

Finally, the stress being laid on texts, students are not required to communicate in a foreign language while learning through this method and students are able to learn a new language without having any contact with the native speakers of the language.

Though, the natural way of learning a language is through listening, speaking, reading, and writing and this is how a child begins to learn a language. However, [6], stated few disadvantages of Grammar Translation Method as well one of this is, it is an improper way to teach a foreign language because language teaching is not to help the students with communicative competence than meaning or translation competence. The other one is, the process of learning begins with reading and this creates problems for many. Since the emphasis is laid on written texts and reading, the necessity to speak in the target language is ignored completely.

Consequently, the students who have learned English through this method feel very uncomfortable communicating

in English afterwards in or outside the classroom due to their proper use of their mother tongue while learning through this method; they feel comfortable and thus develop a habit of speaking in their mother tongue only and later on in their life find themselves unable to communicate in the target language. Another disadvantage of learning a foreign language through grammar-translation method is the extensive need of memorizing vocabulary, grammatical rules, and verb conjugations.

As a result, students become so conscious of keeping the sentences grammatically accurate that they lose the natural flow of the language. Besides, the correct usage of vocabulary in correct positions results destruction for them. In addition to this idea, the relationship between teacher and students within the method is inadequate. A good many countries in still use grammar-translation method to teach English to students and as a result though the students are able to write in English, they do not develop the skill to communicate in English.

Since Grammar-translation method basically focuses on vocabulary memorization, rules of grammar and sentences formation, teachers only need to elaborate rules and regulations of the non-native language to learners, focusing the need of vocabulary learning. Skillful abilities of students is not as such important to teach students within this method as taking a test using this method is simpler to do and scores can also be delivered objectively. The roles of students includes learning by interest a vast list of vocabularies, grammar rules, grammatical paradigms, native similarities and indicating those rules to exercise by forming sentences as accurately as possible.

8. Conclusions

Grammar-translation method is significant medium to learn a language. It is the oldest method that is used in teaching and learning process of Latin and Greek language since classical era many years ago.

Its emphasis on the need of learning a language through developing grammar rules and vocabulary memorization and then applying the knowledge in translating sentences from source language into the target one and vice versa. The steps of the teaching process begins with explanations of grammar, memorization of vocabulary and translation of sentences which are very significant in learning process. It also helps students to develop accuracy in sentence constructions but doesn't help them acquire fluency in communication and find themselves unable to use the language in real life situations because the mastery of this method is how to read and write the target language in short time.

Moreover, it results in lack of confidence in speaking than developing the required grammatical accuracy in target language. In one way or another, the emphasis is on developing grammar competence that the students fail in communicate with target languages. With this regard, although it has disadvantages in speaking competence, it is very efficient in the reading and writing. Moreover, the

advantages is in applying the results in effective ways. To sum up, it is based on explicit teaching of prescriptive grammar rules: as such, it is not a precognitive method and activities rely on behaviorist that habit the learners in using their native language in contrary to the target language use.

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