

Grammar Translation Method In ELT: Hindering The Development Of Communicative Skills At Secondary Level

Umeesa Mazher¹, Mumtaz Ahmed^{2*}, Mehwish Aslam³

^{1,3}M. Phil English scholar, University of Sargodha Women Campus Faisalabad Pakistan

²Govt. Post graduate College of Science Faisalabad Pakistan

webmumtaz@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the communication skill of students in English who were taught by Grammar Translation Method (GTM) at secondary school level in Pakistan. There is not usually any listening or speaking practice in GTM. Very little attention is placed on pronunciation or any communicative aspect of language. The skill exercised is reading and then only in the context of translation. Examinations also consist of translation of classical text. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 15 teachers of Govt. schools of district Faisalabad who were using this method in the schools. The quantitative data were analyzed by simple frequency count and percentage, and qualitative data through the description of the classroom observation and interview. Analysis of the data shows that GTM put more emphasis on learning English words, phrases, sentences and structure pattern; but it has failed in practical use of English in real life situation. Students learning through this method at secondary school certificate level Pakistan are unable to communicate even a basic conversation in English. It is suggested that the teachers should adopt communicative approach in ELT so that the communicative ability of the students may be enhanced.

KEYWORDS: Grammar translation method (GTM), ELT, ESL, L1 (First language), L2 (Second language), communication, secondary level

INTRODUCTION

To improve communicative skills in second language is very important. Its concern is to find appropriate methods to facilitate learning process. The question arises that what is the best method for the acquisition of second language at secondary level in Pakistan. Some teachers consider first language (L1) in class room harmful to get knowledge of the second language (L2) while other teachers consider the use of L1 very necessary to acquire L2. Their debates do not have any conclusion yet for the understanding of English grammar and translation GTM is helpful. Schffner (2002) lists the following benefits of translation: "(a) Improve verbal ability (b) Expand the students vocabulary in L2 (c) Develop their style (d) Improve their understanding of how language works. (E) Consolidate L2 structure for active use (f) Monitor and improve the comprehension of L2". (p.125). As four skills in any language are very important. The grammar is very important. Hedge (2000) states that teaching English grammar provides explicit framework to guarantee producing correct structures and expedite the learning process. So teaching grammar should have a tremendous concern with regard to any L1 teaching process.

GTM is widely used to teach English as second language (ESL) not only in Pakistan but throughout the world. This method is easy to use and has tremendous advantages to teach English grammar but its emphasis on communication skill is very less as Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979), mentions the important aspects of GTM as, (1) The native language is used to teach L2 which emerges by some exercises, (2) Starting with reading literary texts, (3) then, the students apply the grammatical rules on read texts, (4) Translation a variety of sentence as the use of GTM, (5) A little concentration on communication activities. The main attention is placed on reading, translation, and grammatical rules with a notable ignoring to the pronunciation.

Many studies have been conducted on the use of GTM in the ESL classes and have focused on the communicative skill of the students at secondary level in GTM. The main focus is placed on reading, Translation

and grammatical rules with notable ignoring the pronunciation and speaking ability of the students. Brown (1994) on this principle of language learning and teaching, states that GTM does not virtually enhance student's communicative ability in the language.

Yingcai (1991) describes that language is like an ocean consisting of, so to speak, so many syntactic and lexical details that definitely no second language learner is able to cover them all in his or her study. This is especially true of the students trained under the Communicative Approach, since they are bound to sentences' particular functions. Thus, they are sometimes unavoidably required to express what they have never come across in their study. In this case, they are forced to create something of their own. As they lack the lexical details as well as so many functional and notional possibilities that obviously no second language learner has knowledge of grammar, they are likely to make grammatically incorrect sentences. Therefore, The Communicative Approach encourages some grammatical inaccuracy.

Ellis (2006) states the definition of grammar teaching as it involves any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it meta-linguistically and process it incomprehension so that they can internalize it. Brumfit (2000) argues that one may have a million bricks, but do not make a building without a plan. Similarly, if a person knows a million English words, but he doesn't know how to put them together, then he cannot speak English. Translation in classroom is a useful tool for learning a second language, although it has also some negative effects.

Stern (1992) indicates "a contrastive analysis, just as the comparative linguistics studies, is indeed very important for the second language learner. Therefore translation in one form or another can play a certain part in language learning".

Chang (2011) conducted a contrastive study of GTM and communicative approach in teaching English grammar, to compare between the approaches; the study was conducted in Taiwan. 86 students from applied foreign language department participated in the study. It is founded out that GTM is better than communicative approach in accuracy but the latter is better than fluency, so he concluded that the ideal approach can be produce by emerging the two methods in teaching.

Mondal (2012) agrees with Chang (2011) that the GTM is appropriate method. Its combination with communicative approach will create beneficent methodology which will fill the gaps of each previous method. The Grammar translation method was a good attempt to uphold these traditions to the requirements and overall environment of schools. Its basic aim was to make language learning easier and interesting. Traditional texts were replaced by exemplary sentences.

Damien (2003) states that as a teacher the use of GTM is useful because through GTM a teacher could assume the intelligence of the students. Teachers and students can talk about the grammar and vocabulary which was teaching. The use of simple language and familiar phrases for communication would be helpful to speak in target language.

Dagilience (2012) hold a survey in Kaunas to see the role of translation in learning English. The sample was 78 third year students. The result was that translation is useful tool in English learning which increase the spill of students which were interested in learning second language.

Al Refaai (2013) concluded a research about suggested guidelines for using translation in foreign language and teaching. The study was carried out in English language center in King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. The sample consisted of 19 teachers who were the native speaker of Arabic and who were learning English at basic level. The findings show that the translation enhances the competence and performance of language. My research is based on the view that GTM which is used in our school mostly to improve communicative skills is not enough for this purpose because students can only learn grammar rules but cannot speak English to communicate even their simple ideas. To present ideas fluently in English they need not only to read their text books through GTM but we have to change our old methods so that we can achieve some positive results means to improve communicative skills of our students.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1: To investigate whether secondary school certificate level students respond to GTM while acquisition of English language.

2: To examine whether students speak English fluently.

3: To analyze whether GTM has some effects on communicative ability of students.

HYPOTHESIS

Grammar translation method is unable to develop communicative skill of English at secondary level in Pakistan. This study attempts to find out how the GTM can help students to move forward in learning process.

METHODOLOGY

The main study question is: Is GTM unable to develop communicative skills of English at secondary level in Pakistan? To answer this question and attain the objectives of the study, the researcher used a mixed method approach and used two instruments for data collection, a close ended questionnaire and observation. Questionnaires and observation are going to be used for investigating educational assessment. These methods can provide data of large population. In a structured questionnaire participants respond to predetermined answers (Cohen et al, 2007). These data are typically analyzed quantitatively.

Instrument:

1. Questionnaire

The question had 20 closed ended questions. The questionnaire targeted teachers who were teaching English through GTM. The questionnaire aimed to identify that GTM method is unable to develop communication skills in students. The questionnaire is designed personally and personally distributed to the teachers who were teaching at secondary level. A questionnaire is a type of measuring feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions and attitudes of some people of sample. Questionnaires are structured and unstructured. It is designed to yield specific information to meet a particular need for research and about a topic. It is a written form used in research. And advantages of questionnaire cannot be denied because there is a uniformity of questions. Same set of questions by the same respondent. Questionnaire yield data more comparable than information obtained through an interview (Cohen et al, 2007). It deals with one topic and seeks that information which cannot be obtained from other sources. So I decided to choose questionnaires to collect data for my research.

2. Observation

The male and female students of secondary level were keenly observed during their conversation and asked simple question from them, "To introduce yourself". In Observation, the observer attempted to discover the practices. By observing a group of people, the researcher sets out to identify the meanings people develop about their existence (Bowling, 1997). Actually observation is away to find out about the world around us, as we obtained information about the environment through the senses. Observation depends on the use of eye instead of ears and voice. It is a direct method to collect data or information. So it is study of human behavior. Data collected through observation is very accurate and reliable. It also resolves the problem of depending upon respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

Questionnaire

Table 1: Comments by the respondents on the questionnaire

Q. No.	Yes (frequency/%)	No (frequency/%)
1.	3 (20%)	12 (80%)
2.	12 (80%)	3 (20%)
3.	4 (26%)	11 (74%)
4.	3 (20%)	12(80%)
5.	3(20%)	12(80%)
6.	5(34%)	10(66%)
7.	3(20%)	12(80%)
8.	3(20%)	12(80%)
9.	4(26%)	11(74%)
10.	3(20%)	12(80%)
11.	12(80%)	3(20%)
12.	5(34%)	10(66%)
13.	4(26%)	11(74%)
14.	3(20%)	12(80%)
15.	3(20%)	12(80%)
16.	12(80%)	3(20%)
17.	5(34%)	10(66%)
18.	4(26%)	11(74%)
19.	3(20%)	12(80%)
20.	12(80%)	3(20%)

1: Is GTM able to improve English pronunciation of students?

There are three teachers out of fifteen who respond “YES”(20%) and twelve teachers respond “NO”(80%) because according to them GTM is not improving English pronunciation of the students.

2: GTM is useful only for teaching grammar?

Twelve teachers out of fifteen answers “YES” (80%) and three teachers answers “NO” (20%). There is no doubt that students can learn better grammar rules through GTM not can improve their communicative skills.

3: Students learning through GTM can speak fluent English?

Four teachers out of fifteen respond “YES” (26%) and eleven teachers respond “NO” (74%) because after learning the rules of grammar fluency cannot be achieved.

4: GTM enhances confidence of secondary class students?

Three teachers out of fifteen respond” YES” (20%) and twelve teachers respond “NO” (80%). It means that to learn grammar is not necessary for improving confidence.

5: GTM improves English thinking ability of students?

Out of fifteen teachers three answers “YES” (20%) and twelve answers “NO” (80%). Through GTM can apply the rules but not think in English.

6: GTM is basic method to teach English language?

Out of fifteen teachers five answers “YES” (34%) and ten answers “NO” (66%). GTM is not the basic method to teach English language.

7: GTM is favorite teaching method of most of Government school teachers?

Out of fifteen teachers three answers “YES” (20%) and twelve answers “NO” (80%). GTM is not favorite teaching method of most of the teachers in Government sectors.

8: GTM is easy to use?

Out of fifteen teachers three answers “YES” (20%) and twelve answers “No” (80%). This method is not easy to use in developing communication skill.

9: GTM does not require any teaching aids except white board and duster?

Out of fifteen teachers four answers “YES” (26%) and eleven answers “NO” (74%). GTM requires A.V.Aids for its better execution.

10: Slow learners can easily learn English by GTM?

Out of fifteen teachers three answers “YES” (20%) and twelve answers “NO” (80%). Slow learners cannot easily taught English by GTM.

11: GTM is unable to develop creativity of students?

Out of fifteen teachers twelve answers “YES” (80%) and three answers “NO” (20%). GTM enhances creative ability of the students.

12: In GTM, PMT (manner, place, time) sequence is followed?

Out of fifteen teachers five answers “YES” (34%) and ten answers “NO” (66%). In GTM time, place, manner, sequence is not followed.

13: Using GTM, a dialogue in English can be setup between two or more students?

Out of fifteen teachers four answers “YES” (26%) and eleven answers “NO” (74%). Through a dialogue situation is difficult to establish.

14: GTM only works for teaching grammar and unable to develop speaking ability of secondary class students?

Out of fifteen teachers three answers “YES” (20%) and twelve answers “NO” (80%). GTM can develop speaking ability of Secondary school students.

15: GTM improve reading habits of students?

Out of fifteen teachers three answers “YES” (20%) and twelve answers “NO” (80%). GTM is unable to improve reading habit of students.

16: Lesson planning and getting specific objectives is easy in GTM?

Out of fifteen teachers twelve answers “YES” (80%) and three answers “No” (20%). Through GTM specific objectives can be achieved and lesson planning is also comparatively easy.

17: In GTM, students can paraphrase and summarize lesson in writing rather than speaking?

Out of fifteen teachers five answers “YES” (34%) and ten answers “NO” (66%). Through GTM students cannot paraphrase and summarize lesson while speaking.

18: No discussion is maintained during the use of GTM?

Out of fifteen teachers four answers “yes” (26%) and eleven answers “NO” (74%). While using GTM discussion is not maintained.

19: No speaking practice is held in GTM?

Out of fifteen teachers three answers “YES” (20%) and twelve answers “NO” (80%). In using GTM speaking practice is not held.

20: GTM does not develop speaking ability of students?

Out of fifteen teachers twelve answers “YES” (80%) and three answers “NO” (20%). GTM cannot improve speaking ability of students.

The analysis of data shows 15 teachers who were teaching GTM were given the above questionnaire. 80 % of the sample gives answer “No” which shows that GTM is not fulfilling the speaking requirement of secondary class students and in Pakistan.

The analysis of data shows 15 teachers who were teaching GTM were given the above questionnaire. 80 % of the sample gives answer “No” which shows that GTM is not fulfilling the speaking requirement of secondary class students and in Pakistan.

Table 2: Analysis of data

Sr. No	No. of male students	No of female students	% of students who could not speak English properly
1	19	28	86.46%

Observation

Through random sampling 19 male students of secondary class were selected, they were asked to “introduce yourself in English”. Only two students were able to speak a single sentence in English. Then 28 female students were asked the same question. Only three girls were able to introduce themselves in English language in proper manner.

DISSCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Findings

From the above results major findings of the study are:

Firstly, GTM is more effective in improving students learning confidence and motivation. As according to the need of time communication problem is the major issue because this is largely faced by the students who cannot talk only some sentences in English fluently. They should be trained in early classes to speak in English through very small sentences so their confidence would be improved. And a teacher should create an environment in classroom that students can practice to speak in English with peers freely without any hesitation. For this group discussion can be conduct.

Secondly, GTM is basically to learn grammar rules and procedure.

Thirdly, GTM is not able to develop communication skill of students.

DELIMITION OF RESEARCH

Although the research has been carefully design and implemented and it gives actual results yet there are still some inevitable limitations in the study.

Firstly, the sample of the subject is limited as the sample is the students of secondary level and the results cannot be applied to higher and lowers secondary level.

Secondly, duration of the observation is not large enough.

Thirdly, as the study is conducted in local circumstances, soo its findings cannot be applicable globally.

CONCLUSION

In GT, the teaching of the second language starts with the teaching of reading. Little attention is paid to the content of text. More importance is on Grammar rules than on meaning. There are no miracles on the way to learn a language. No matter how students are taught grammatical concepts, Syntactic construction and stylistic devices or language convention and concepts, students will not make use of all these in there talking it is needed that to improve students English speaking skill a mixture of grammar translation method and other teaching methods need to be used. It will bring revolutionary changes in communication skill of the students of secondary level in Pakistan.

REFERENCES

Al Refaai, K.I., 2013. Suggested guidelines for using translation in foreign language learning and teaching. Educational Research (ISSN: 2141-5161) January 2013. International Research Journals. 4(1): 12-20.

Austin J Damiani. (2003). The Grammar Translation Method of Language Teaching: London: Longman.Matters.

- Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Brumfit, C. J. & K. Johnson. (2000). *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Celce-Murcia. (1997). Direct approaches in L2 instruction: A turning point in communicative language teaching? *TESOL Quarterly*, 31: 141-152.
- Chang, S.C., (2010). A contrastive study of grammar translation method and communicative approach in teaching english grammar. *ELT*, 4(2): 13-24.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*, Routledge.
- Cunningham, C. (2000). *Translation in the classroom-: A useful tool for second language Acquisition*.
- Dagilienė, I., (2012). Translation as a learning method in english language teaching. ISSN 1648-2824 *Kalbu Studijos*. 21 Nr. *Studies About Languages*. 2012(21): 124-129.
- Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: an SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40 (1): 83-107.
- Hedge, T., (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mondal, K.N., (2012). English language learning through the combination of grammar translation method and communicative language teaching. *Academia Arena*, 4(6): 20-24.
- Schäffner, C., (2002). *The role of discourse analysis for translation and in translator training*. Clevedon, Buffalo: Multilingual
- Stern, H. H. (1992). *Issues and options in language teaching* (edited posthumously by Patrick Allen & Birgit Harley). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Xu Yingcai. (1991). *A Comparison between the Audiolingual Approach and the Communicative Approach in Second-Language Teaching*. In Li Yinhua. ed. *Fudan workpapers on the Teaching of English to Non-majors*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.