



LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH “GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD” (GTM); A SECOND THOUGHT.

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ABSTRACT



Grammar-Translation Method is the oldest method to learn a foreign language. With time new methods are invented, still the importance of grammar learning holds a unique place to obtain accuracy in the target language, specifically in the development of reading and writing skills. The purpose of this research paper is to eradicate the fear of learners by introducing innovative use of learning-teaching material to create a trauma-free grammar learning environment for the contemporary learners. In this study a chronological order of the evolution regarding the language learning method, approach & technique is maintained for the benefit of the learners & academicians in order to understand the actual position of grammar with its advantages. It is also an attempt to overcome the disadvantages through a moderate method, the summum bonum of this authentic analysis. The trend of learning a foreign language (for example English) is increasing day by day but the contradiction among nineteen learning methods is always there, that's why this is an attempt of the present writer to focus on a learner-friendly module with a crystal clear outlook on the importance of the technical aspect of English language learning.

Keywords: *Classical, Limitation, Reactions, Advantages, Facilitator, Lexical, Cost-effectiveness, Reading, Writing, Remodulation, Task.*

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THE CONCEPT OF METHOD

Method is *a particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one.*¹ The classical method in foreign language teaching is Grammar-Translation Method which is originated in an attempt to learn Latin in early 1500s due to its importance in Government, academic and business arena. Later modern language learning is left out of the modules of the educational programme as it is not treated as accommodating enough to accept the advantages of intellect, will and emotion.² But at the beginning of the 19th century when language learning comes back in school modules, the said method is used in foreign language classrooms of Europe including United States of America.³

GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD: AT A GLANCE

Grammar is basically the study of the system and structure of a language. Any standard language has its own grammar. If one knows the structure of a particular language, she/he can easily learn that language, as the common notion we have. Translation is the process to translate the user's mother tongue to the foreign language by using the grammar based rules and regulations. First the learners learn the grammatical rules and later they translate the words from their native language in sentence formation follow the regular structure of that target language to improve their aptitude. This is the oldest method to learn a new language for the non-native learners.

THE LIMITATIONS OF GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

The limitations of Grammar-Translation Method that are found from the beginning are the lack of any listening and speaking activities along with other communicative aspects like accurate pronunciation, accent, pause, stress etc. The contexts

of reading, writing, translating and focusing on the accuracy of grammatical norms and regulations are learned and recalled or recognized. At first Montaigne, Comenius, John Locke and later Passy and Jespersen try to reform this method in order to teach the language, not to learn about the language. The emphasizing on text than speech, absence of active participation of the learners, dearth of listening and speaking activities, burden of a large number of grammatical rules, the rift between literary text and practical exposure, use of bilingual word list, small-scale interaction between the students, teachers' shortfalls in specialized competence in language learning module, elimination of social-subject related exposure as learning-teaching is not done in the target language, too much strain on translation and error correction, boring and non-stimulating language learning, absolutely no chance of approaching communication competences, violation of the natural order of learning in the form of listening, speaking, reading and writing, failure of expressing in spoken English adequately, difference of community based modes of behavior, practice and heritage in time of translation, absence of pattern practice, importance on grammatical norms than on meaning, slow learning rate, incompatibility of modern demand and expectation of speaking and understanding, dependence on grammar-oriented syllabus, use of mother tongue etc. influence the transformation of language teaching methods from Grammar-Translation Method to Principle Eclecticism in order to reflect the changes in the required competencies of the learners i.e. the shift from reading and comprehension based study to the practice of viva-voce in twenty-first century.

REACTION AGAINST GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

The emergence of different methods, approaches and techniques basically reflect their contemporary responses but they are not free of errors as mentioned below:

- 1) Direct Method blooms as a result of reaction against GTM but this method relies on the proposition that auditory or oral-aural senses like ears and tongue are stronger

¹ Method. (n.d.). In Oxford Dictionary Online. Retrieved January 10, 2017 from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/method>

² Bull, William E. (1999). *Methodologies in Foreign Language Teaching*. Retrieved January 10, 2017, from <http://www.linguistics.com/methods.htm>

³ Djigunovic, Mihaljevic J. and Krajnovic, Medved M. (2017). *LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION*. Retrieved January 12, 2017, from <http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c04/e6-91-13-01.pdf>



than visual but many learners depend on visual medium more.

- 2) Audio-lingual Method relies on repetition which discourages anything new or spontaneous from them.
- 3) 'Directed Practice'⁴ or 'Teacher-Directed-Practice'⁵ entertains the assessment by the teacher or instructor only. The assessment carries out as summative only excluding formative evaluation and neglects the qualitative aspects of the learner's progress.
- 4) The Series Method trusts on the child's capability of organizing concepts sequentially on the basis of time but the method depends on a three-year-old child's behavioral observation and Francois Gouin⁶ did not observe the learner's previous development of naming words or the importance of story-telling method.
- 5) The absence of grammatical context, systematic approach offers disorderly feeling to the users of Communicative Language Teaching.
- 6) Oral Approach, developed between 1930s and 1960s emphasizes on vocabulary but Chomsky⁷ criticizes this approach as it does not explain the elementary characteristics of language which is against the unique creativity in language.
- 7) Post-language Immersion seems difficult to many students as foreign language is used as mode and partial immersion is not suitable for long run as the grasp and its gradual development does not occur in partial form.
- 8) The Silent Way possesses the cons of the teacher's way of teaching as they only

shows but the learners need to learn themselves as the teacher does not talk and quite naturally the learners do not learn to pronounce.

- 9) Community Language Learning with its inductive way of learning in the primary phase of language learning is not very effective and communication depends on the knowledge base of the fellow learners.
- 10) Suggestopedia⁸ entertains noisy classroom and thus not effective for shy learners and large classroom containing 35-40 students.
- 11) Natural Approach ensures fluency, not accuracy and the instructors need to arrange a number of learning-teaching aids which may seem hectic sometime.
- 12) Total Physical Response Method does not influence the students to express their own views and everything cannot be explained with this method.
- 13) In Reading and Story Telling Method the choice of story is a challenge as taste varies. If the teller does not utter the interesting plots and incidents it will not attract the students.
- 14) Maley⁹ approaches Dogme¹⁰ Language Teaching as "the constraints on teachers"¹¹ and Christensen¹² observes that its practice may welcome cultural problem and also seems problematic where specific syllabus is not implemented.

⁴ Maloney, Michael. (2012). *The Role Practice in Learning: Directed Practice*. Retrieved January 15, 2017, from <https://www.maloneymethod.com/resources/the-role-of-practice-in-learning-directed-practice/>

⁵ Teacher-directed-practice. (n.d.). In Wikipedia online. Retrieved January 15, 2017, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_pedagogy

⁶ Gouin Series. (n.d.). (February 10, 2012). In Wlc Classroom online. Retrieved January 16, 2017 from <https://wlclassroom.com/2012/02/10/using-the-gouin-series-is-the-foreign-language-classroom/>

⁷ Cook, Vivian. (2007). *Chomsky's Universal Grammar and Second Language Learning*. Retrieved January 16, 2017 from <http://www.viviancook.uk/Writings/Papers/AL85.htm>

⁸ Bowen, Tim. (2011). *Teaching Approaches: What is Suggestopedia?*. Retrieved January 17, 2017 from <http://www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/methodology/teaching-approaches/teaching-approaches-what-is-suggestopedia/146499.article>

⁹ Whitehead, R. (October 01, 2001). *Review. The Language Teacher's Voice. A Maley*. Retrieved January 17, 2017 from <https://academic.oup.com/eltj/article-abstract/55/4/410/401827/Review-The-Language-Teacher-s-Voice-A-Maley?redirectedFrom=PDF>

¹⁰ Dogme Language Teaching. (n.d.). In Wikipedia Online. Retrieved January 17, 2017 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogme_language_teaching

¹¹ Adellabu, Bola. (August, 2013). *Coinstrains of English Language Teaching and Learning in Benue State Secondary Schools*. Retrieved January 18, 2017 from <http://www.ijird.com/index.php/ijird/article/viewFile/36506/29478>

¹² Christensen. (n.d.). In Wikipedia Online. Retrieved January 17, 2017 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogme_language_teaching



- 15) Bilingual Method Seems confusing to the learners in time of understanding the characteristics of two different languages and it may take longer time in learning.
- 16) "Learning by Teaching"¹³ is another method where the student and the teacher both need to work more than natural discourses and the anxiety of repetition is always there.
- 17) Being a conceptual approach, Principle Eclecticism may seem complex to the facilitators as it impacts on all the applicable and probable parts of the previously used methods for the benefits of the learners and this may confuse both the teacher and the learners.

APODICTIC ADVANTAGES OF GMT

In this aspect if we look back to the classical method of Grammar-Translation Method, we may find the following advantages over other methods:

- a) The co-operation between the first language i.e. the mother tongue in most of the cases and the second language offer a good level of understanding to word and sentence meaning.
- b) Understanding grammatical norms is essentially an advantage in language learning.
- c) Literary texts are helpful to develop reading and writing skills.
- d) The role of teacher is like a facilitator or a guide.
- e) The learners can easily use these methods without any special skill and translate foreign language and literature easily.
- f) Learners' acquire accuracy in using synonyms, antonyms, nearest words etc.
- g) Text books are taught in mother tongue, so comprehension based questions can be easily answered

by the learners without much difficulty.

- h) Learners will be able to read literature written in foreign language.
- i) English is treated as the Second Language (ESL) and students can easily translate any difficult text from their mother tongue to the target language as they know the basic principles.
- j) To implement the method the teacher requires only few specialized attributes like knowledge in grammar.
- k) It is easy to evaluate grammatical rules and translation texts.
- l) Grammar, sentence pattern, phrases, idioms, formulas are easy to understand.
- m) In developing countries GTM is effective for its cost-effectiveness and easy to handle large classrooms with so many students.
- n) Time is also saved due to the presence of translation.
- o) Teachers who are not verbally fluent in the second language can teach it easily.
- p) Translation is the easiest and shortest way of exploring meaning of words and phrases.

A SECOND THOUGHT ON REMODULATION OF GMT

Despite a set of drawbacks, Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) has been the popular method to learn foreign languages for centuries. Oral aspects along with speaking and listening skills are neglected in traditional implementation of GTM but little bit of reformation can reconstruct the difficulties and reshape this method as per the expectation of our contemporary genre. The following recommendations can be effectuated for the re-modulation of GTM module:

- I. Speaking and other spontaneous outputs can be expected if more formulas (based on situation, greeting, formalities) and

¹³ Everding, Gerry. (August 12,2014). *Students learn more if they'll need to teach others*. Retrieved January 18,2017 from <http://www.futurity.org/learning-students-teaching-741342/>



- structure (i.e. grammatically correct) related modules are incorporated on the basis of practical exposure. At the same time the knowledge of grammar will help the learners to differentiate between correct and incorrect uses of sentences, phrases, idioms etc.
- II. Instead of correcting each other's written and comprehensive works, the teacher should stress on fluency in time of writing and speaking both. The teacher is not an inactive person here but she or he is the supervisor of the process called class room activity.
 - III. After the development of digital learning teaching material (LTM), there is no place to blame the scarcity of GTM-based-LTMs.
 - IV. To eradicate the inactive, dull environment of the method we may incorporate digital lectures, lessons, debates, digital exercises along with classical literatures to help the learners to acquire expertise and accuracy both.
 - V. If we use grammar and translation as the base of proficiency in the target language, the learning environment will be more accurate and effective.
 - VI. The role of translation can be limited in the form of drill as the students will practice only the prescribed set as per their standard from mother tongue to foreign language and they will use of those sets in the specified verbal session first and broad sessions next.
 - VII. Attention is already paid in reading and writing but by introducing story-telling, re-telling or motivating the students to narrate a story, incident or accident can assist them in advance learning of other skills namely, speaking and writing.
 - VIII. In case of translation we should offer more flexibility to minimize the learner's panic and the unique lexical items of one language can be learned by creating effective situation inside the class room or through real life exposure. Oral practice is as helpful as written practice in this concern.

INNOVATIVE USES OF GMT IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

In a student-centric classroom the learning teaching process is completely learner centric. So it is the basic responsibility of the teacher as the supervisor of the classroom to make the learning process innovative and interesting. The traditional learning process of Grammar-Translation Method is not very interesting, rather boring. But the same rules of Grammar we can be represented in the form of games, pair activities, group activities or digital demonstration to make them learner friendly and interesting, as mentioned below.

ACTIVITY ONE

Role of the teacher: She/he will ask the students to describe her/his right hand side class mate by using three words only.

Role of the learners: They will try to do so. In time of describing they enjoy it as it is funny.

Role of the teacher: At the end of the activity the teacher can easily describe the use of adjectives as the learners already practiced it in reality. Teaching proper noun is also possible through this interesting activity.

**ACTIVITY TWO**

Role of the teacher: Build an alphabet chart, as mentioned below.

M	A	U	E	O	D	Q	Z	K	V	G	L	U	C	J	W	E	W	E
S	T	V	F	P	U	N	I	V	E	R	S	I	T	Y	Y	F	X	F
C	T	E	G	Q	E	R	A	L	W	H	M	V	S	D	O	G	Y	G
A	S	W	C	R	F	S	B	M	X	I	N	W	D	E	W	H	Z	H
B	R	X	H	H	E	R	O	X	E	N	O	X	E	E	L	I	A	I
C	G	Y	I	S	G	T	C	B	U	L	L	Y	F	R	O	Y	A	L
D	R	O	J	T	H	U	D	N	Y	J	O	Z	G	K	R	J	B	I
E	E	Z	D	E	D	I	C	A	T	E	T	A	H	L	A	K	C	O
F	A	N	T	W	I	V	E	O	Z	Y	U	B	I	M	T	L	E	N
G	T	O	O	T	H	W	F	P	A	E	S	E	A	N	O	M	L	J
H	E	A	K	X	J	X	O	R	P	H	A	N	M	O	R	N	E	K
I	S	B	L	Y	K	F	O	G	A	N	G	A	E	P	Y	O	P	L
J	T	O	E	X	N	O	T	A	B	L	E	N	R	Q	Z	P	H	M
K	Q	C	M	E	L	C	F	Q	B	O	P	C	I	N	D	I	A	N
L	P	D	V	A	M	E	G	R	C	T	Q	I	C	R	A	Q	N	N
M	O	A	N	B	N	A	H	S	D	U	R	E	A	S	B	R	T	O
N	E	V	E	N	O	N	I	T	E	S	S	N	N	T	C	S	D	P
H	E	R	O	C	P	Y	J	U	F	K	T	T	O	W	D	T	E	Q

Role of the learners: They will observe the alphabet chart carefully.

Role of the teacher: She/he will ask the learners to find out meaningful words, hidden in the chart (either side by side or top to bottom or across the columns and rows).

Role of the learners: It's time to use appropriate articles in front of the words.

In this way the learners can improve their word stock along with their sense on the use of appropriate article.

ACTIVITY THREE¹⁴

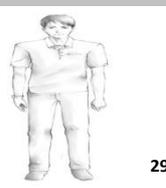
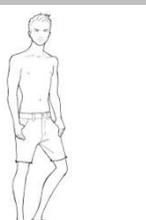
Role of the teacher: She/ he will write near about twenty six verbs on the board and ask the learners that those words are from a well known story. So the learners should try to form the story with the help of the verbs.

Put	Ran	Saw
Put on	Went in	Said
Went out	Ate up	Jumped out
Walked	Put on	Ate up
Stopped	Lay down	Heard
Picked	Came	Came in
Saw	Knocked	Killed

¹⁴ Rinvoluceri, Mario. (2005). *Grammar Games* (26th printing, p.129). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**ACTIVITY SIX**

Role of the teacher: She/he will motivate the learners to find out the synonyms and antonyms through pictures. Instead of telling simple words the teacher will give the print out of different pictures to complete the task. An exemplary picture sheet is mentioned below,



¹⁹ Boy Face Sketch. (n.d.). In *Prinsterest Online*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/169659110940889229/>

²⁰ Cullian, John F. (December 31st, 2009). *Iraq's Holy Innocent*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <http://chaldean.org/CommunityPages/ChaldeanChurches/MarAddaiMIUSA/tabid/118/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/504/categoryId/12/Iraqs-Holy-Innocents.aspx>

²¹ The State Tower Building. (n.d.).Retrieved May 16,2017 from <http://syracusethehandnow.org/Dwntwn/HanoverSq/StateTwr1.htm>

²² Spicer,Jake. (2006). *How to sketch and draw feet*. Retrieved May16, 2017 from <https://www.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/how-to/Article/1471/how-to-sketch-and-draw-feet->

²³ DA, Vimes. (Mar 10,2011). *Biro Head Sketch*.Retrieved May 16,2017 from <http://vimes-da.deviantart.Com/art/Biro-head-sketch-200427663>

²⁴ Thin Man. (June 05,2013). *How to draw a male fashion figure*. Retrieved May16, 2017 from <http://www.finalfashion.ca/2013/06/how-to-draw-a-male-fashion-figure/>

²⁵ Entry. (n.d.). *Combiboilerslead Online*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <http://combiboilersleeds.com/keywords/entry-1.html>

²⁶ Fat Man Sketch. (n.d.). *Pinterest Online*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <https://www.pinterest.com/nitzanshaked16/mexico/?lp=true>

²⁷ Dad, & Geek. (July 20,2009). *More Daily Drawings (Dad)*.Retrieved May 16,2017 from <https://geekanddad.wordpress.com/category/drawings/>

²⁸ Johnson, Chris-sternal, & Estaugh, Ben. (March 07,2012). *Tutorial-Sketching:Human Hand*.Retrieved May 16,2017 from <https://theartistdreamer.wordpress.com/2012/03/07/sketching-human-hand/>

²⁹ Standing Man. (n.d.). *Wiki How Online*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <http://www.wikihow.com/Draw-People>

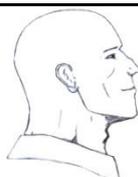
³⁰ Exit Sign. (n.d.). *Mycarparking Online*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <http://www.myparkingsign.com/Parking-Signs/Exit-Only-Signs.aspx>



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Role of the learners: They will simply find out the opposite pictures and paste them in their activity book.

ACTIVITY SEVEN

Role of the teacher: The teacher presents a time table in front of the learners and asks them one by one to describe her/his activity on a particular time. The teacher may ask about present (today), past (yesterday) or future (tomorrow) activity to enhance tense related knowledge of the learners.

TIME TABLE												
6.00 A.M.	6.30 A.M.	7.00 A.M.	8.00 A.M.	9.00 A.M.	12.30 P.M.	1.30 P.M.	4.30 P.M.	5.30 P.M.	6.00 P.M.	7.00 P.M.	9.30 P.M.	10.00 P.M.

Role of the learners: They will describe their activity in a particular time and the teacher will make necessary correction, if required.

ACTIVITY EIGHT³⁵

Role of the teacher: For the better understanding of the learners on suffix or prefix the teacher may provide them the cut & join game where the words and either their suffix or prefix is in jumbled up order. The learner will simply cut the word with the suitable suffix or prefix (whichever is applicable) from the paper and paste them in their activity book.

Faith	Extra	Frost	Infra	economics	able	RE	cycle	marine	Dis
Affection	Child	ful	Friend	Other	ful	ify	Help	Sub	Sub
De	Cheer	Un	Just	merge	Semi	ate	Structured	ful	Honest
Dis	Macro	Wise	circle	cover	ordinary	Uni	balanced	ish	ly

³¹ Kswann. (May10,2014). *Argyle Sittin'*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <https://combatart.wordpress.com/tag/man/>

³² Happy Face Sketch. (April 15,2017). *Goldberry Again*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <http://www.waysoftheworld.net/sketchbook/?m=200704>

³³ Head Sketch. (n.d.). *Sketch of human head*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from http://img01.deviantart.net/836c/i/2011/057/8/7/sketch_of_human_head_by_atigr-d3afx6y.jpg

³⁴ Girl Face Sketch. (n.d.). *Pinterest Online*. Retrieved May 16,2017 from <https://in.pinterest.com/explore/girl-face-drawing/?lp=true>

³⁵ Rinvoluceri, Mario. (2005). *Grammar Games* (26th printing, p.42). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



THE CONCLUSION

Being an effective and feasible method, Grammar-Translation module is more productive and advantageous in developing countries like India, Indonesia, China, Thailand etc. as less infrastructure is required and constructive study provide accuracy in using and learning English as a foreign language for the up skilling or as the medium of communication. The use of Grammar-Translation Method, in revised manner with 'Task'³⁶, 'Activity'³⁷ will be able to elevate speaking, listening, reading and writing skills for the progress of the non-native language learners.

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WEBSITE OR WEBPAGE

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