

An experience of teaching grammar using Grammar Translation Method and Direct method.

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In the name of Allah

The Most Compassionate

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An experience of teaching grammar: by mixture of Grammar Translation Method and Direct method.

Chapter 1: Introduction

I am Arifa Roshid Khan. I have done my internship at PenField School, in Lalmatia . It was an English medium School. The school has two branches one was at Dhanmondi another one was at Lalmatia. I have done my internship in Lalmatia branch. It was a two storied white color building. It has a big play ground. There was a pool besides building. It increased the beauty of the school. The class started at 8 am. The duration of each class was 50 minutes. There I took English classes both the literature and language class. I was assigned only for the class three students. In the class the numbers of the students were 22. The seating arrangement is fixed. There were rows where students sit and there were gaps between the rows for teacher to move around the class. In the front, there is a white board, and the teacher is to stand front and teach the students. The classroom was very colorful. There was a birthday chart of the students was hanged on a corner of the class. On the wall students hang different types of chart based on their text book. For example for the science class there was a chart which consisted some new vocabulary of science. The principle sir was my supervisor; he was very helpful and cooperative. Other teachers of the school were also very cooperative. They suggested me whenever I go through any difficulties regarding my work. Though I was very junior to them, they considered me as a teacher not as an intern teacher. I was like a part of the school. I also join all their meeting and activities to increase my knowledge.

There are certain methods in ELT such as grammar translation method, Audio lingual method, TPR, Desuggestopedia, the silent way etc. All the methods of ELT have some pros and cons. All the method of ELT cannot be applied in a classroom on the same students. I tried some of the methods on my students but Grammar Translation Method and Direct Method were mostly used during my internship. In the class, I used mixture of GTM and direct method.

Chapter 2: Literature review

A teacher has to decide on a method to be used in a classroom, which is suitable for the students. Therefore, it is important to know different methods and techniques to use. There are many approaches and methods in ELT, among them I used mixture of two methods .The methods are:

- Grammar Translation Method
- The Direct Method

2.1 Grammar Translation Method:

In the book of *“technique and principles in language teaching”* it is said the teacher, who uses the grammar-translation method, a fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to read literature written in the target language (Larsen-freeman, 2004 p.17). As it was used for the first time in teaching of the classical language like Greek and Latin and its main motive is to read classical literature so grammar translation method was known as classical method. The origin of this method lie in an attempt to teach language by grammar and translation where the

learners have to gather knowledge of foreign languages by studying a number of grammatical rules and applying these knowledge to the interpretation of text with the use of a dictionary

(Peters, 1934, p.528). While the study of the grammar of target language, students would become more familiar with the grammar of their native language and that is familiarly would help them speak and write their native language better (Larsen- Free, 2004).

The grammar translation method derived from traditional approach to the teaching of Latin and Greek in nineteenth century. It is “a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge through the task of translating sentences and text into and out of the target language”(Richards and Rogers, 2002). Students in this method develop the ability to read prestigious literary texts. They also learn to read and write in the target language accurately, which is a necessary. However, this method is a particular analysis of the written target language, especially its grammar and vocabulary that are learned from bilingual words lists, which can be boring as a main task. In addition, the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction, would not work for any form of teaching listening and speaking skill. This method believes that students should be taught grammar of the target language. In the Grammar Translation method the instruction is given in native language. It is also emphasized on the grammar rules, and provides vocabulary with direct translations and also gives importance in memorizing. (Peters, 1934, p.528)

2.2. The principles of grammar translation method:

The principles of Grammar Translation method are given below:

- A fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to learn to read its literature.
- Its main goal is to enable the students to read or write in the target language. No emphasis is given on oral or aural skill.
- Items of vocabulary are memorized from bilingual lists.
- Grammar taught deductively.

(Peters, 1934, p.528)

2.3. Key features:

The key features of Grammar Translation Method are given below -

- Little or no attention is given on pronunciation.
- Often the only drilling is exercise in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue.
- Long elaborated explanation of the grammar rules.
- Classes are taught in the mother tongue, with little activity use of the target language.
- Grammar provides the rules for putting words together.(Larsen-freeman 2000)

2.4. Techniques:

The teaching techniques in grammar translation method are as follows-

1) Translation of literary passage: learners are required to translate reading passage from target to native language. Use of vocabulary items and grammatical structure are emphasized (Pregment , 1927)

2) Reading comprehension: They are given a reading comprehension and “students answer question in the target language based on their understanding of the reading passage,” (Larsen-freeman, 2000). Finding information, making inferences and relating to personal experience are main objectives.

3) Cognates: Basically, cognates are words related to one in another language. Learning spelling that corresponds between L1 and the target language. Sometimes there are similarities among the languages like sound patterns, items of vocabulary etc. that are known as cognates. Students may be taught Cognates by learning spelling and sound pattern by comparing the language. They have memorized also the cognates, only if the languages have cognates. “They are also asked to memorize words that look like cognates but have meaning in the target language that are different from those in the native language,” (Larsen-Freemam, 2004).

4) Deductive application of rules:

Rules of grammar of the target language are explained first and then the examples of the rules are given. Students are required to find out more examples which are similar to the given example (Baker, 1975).

5) Fill in the blanks:

Fill in the gaps in the sentence with new words or items of a particular grammar point. Students provided with a series of sentences with missing words and ask the new items of vocabulary that they have learned. (Baker, 1975)

6) Memorization: students are asked to memorize the bilingual list, grammatical rules and grammatical paradigms.

7) Use of words in sentence: After students have to make sentences with the new items vocabulary. (Baker, 1975)

8) Composition: Students are required to write an essay or composition in the target language. Sometimes students asked to summarize the passage (kirch, 1967).

9) Vocabulary practice: students create sentences to illustrate them known the meaning and use of new words. (Austin, 2003)

10) Antonyms and synonyms: Students are provided with a set of words and required to find out the antonyms and synonyms (Austin, 2003).

Austin (2003) in his paper “The Grammar Translation method of Language teaching” said that as a teacher he liked to use grammar translation method because it will made his students comfortable to talk and discuss in the class. His student will be more comfortable to ask question in L1 and he believed that this process will help him to teach in a batter way.

2.5. The Direct method:

As a response to the failure of the Grammar translation method , the Direct method emerged which believes that a foreign language is to be taught by conveying the meaning directly in that language through demonstration and visual aids with no use of students' native language (Kirch , 1967). Thus using direct method or natural method second or target language can be learnt the way first language of communication. It is said that “the direct method has one very basic rule: No translation is allowed” (Larsen- Freeman, 2004).

2.6. The principles of Direct Method:

The principles of direct method are given below-

- Unlike grammar translation method, direct method emphasized on oral communication and correct pronunciations of the learners.
- Oral communication is viewed as basic. Reading and writing exercise are based upon what the students practices orally first.
- Grammar rules are taught inductively .after giving the examples rules is explained.
- Items of vocabulary are taught through demonstration, picture or through association of ideas. (kirch, 1967).

2.7. The techniques of direct method

Techniques of direct methods are given below-

Reading aloud, Question and answer exercise, self- correct and dictations are some of the effective techniques of direct method (Kirch, 1967) .

- **Reading aloud:** students are required to read aloud a text, passage or dialog one by one, the teacher explains the context of the text by using gestures, picture and another meaning.
- **Question and answer exercise:** Students are asked question and they are required to answer to those question in full sentence by using target language.
- **Self –correct:** teacher helps the students to find out the errors and correct it by themselves. For this, teacher can repeat the student’s error using a question voice. Another way of correcting is that the teacher can stop repeating the sentence just before the error occurred and that he can correct himself.

(kirch , 1967)

- **Dictation :** teacher can read a passage several times and students required to write them as they listen to it , At first the students listen to the speech ,then they write it down and finally students check their writing . (Larsen-freeman 2004; 30-31)

Chapter 3: Implementation

To complete my dissertation, I decided to do internship because working experience in school will help me in the future as I want to be a teacher. The school I have chosen for my internship program is Pen Field School which is located in Lalmatia , Dhaka, Bangladesh . It is an English medium school that follows Edexcel syllabus. It is a renowned school establish in 2005.

I started my internship on 22nd October and ended on 10th January, 2014. The educational levels of the school start from play group to O level. This school has two branches. As a teacher of Penfield School, It was a great experience for me to be a teacher .There I teach the students of class three. I took English grammar and literature classes. There I found that in English medium school English is use not only to teach but also to give instruction or for any kind of communication. As I am a student of ELT, I have done courses on testing and evaluation, teaching technique and I have some knowledge about material Designing. From the very first day, I tried to relate my study with my intern. I observed how students learned grammar and second language, how students accept a method. And I also try to observe their learning ability. At the time of my internship I observed that they followed some principles of grammar translation method. In “*techniques and principles in language teaching*” Larseen-Freeman said “according to the teachers who use the grammar translation method, a fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to read literature written in the target language”. The grammar translation method derived from traditional approaches to the teaching of Latin and Greek in 19th century. It is a way of studying grammar rules, followed by application of this

knowledge through the task of translating sentences and text into and out of target language (Peters, 1934) students of this method learn to read and write in target language. In my internship I also noticed that these students followed grammar translation method to read and sometimes to produce sentence. Though they do not follow all the principles of grammar translation method, some techniques of grammar translation method are followed there. For example reading comprehensive, fill in the blanks of missing words etc. these kinds of task are practiced there. During my internship, I learned many new things about teaching technique and student's behavior. My students have different level of learning ability. When I give them tasks, some students cannot do their work properly. For those I could not complete schedule work on time. I cannot say that those are weak who are unable to understand the lesson in class. They have different way of learning. Sometimes I call them in their break time and help them to do the work properly. It is a time consuming process I cannot help more than two students. Some students catch lecture by hearing teachers some are visual learner. Visual learners feel more comfortable when I write on board. Most of them are visual learners. I have to write down the bullet points on the board to make them understood.

3.1. My first experience:

I worked as an English literature and language teacher of class three. The school had their own syllabus and routine. The school followed semester system, there was three semesters, and I worked in 2nd semester. I took classes of standard three. In my class, the number of students was 18. The times allocated for each was 45 minutes. The first day was an exciting experience for me. Since they were very young learners and I was new teacher so I had to be friendly with them in first few weeks. Then eventually everything was settled in the classroom and I come to know them. The previous class teacher handed me over their syllabus, and asked me to complete that

within 3 months as after 3 months they would be sitting for their half yearly exam. This was quite challenging for me because it was my first time to teach students in a school and I was puzzled about how to start. I had to prepare them for class test , half yearly exam , making lesson plan ,checking copies attending meeting ,making question paper and all the other activities .After few weeks I realized that all the things are in my hand .

3.2. Choosing topic:

After observing them for few classes, I decided to teach them through a mixture of GTM and direct method, because their teaching style was very typical. They only memorized their lesson but never tried to understand it. On the other hand, I also had to finish their syllabus on time and make them more fluent in English. For this reason I applied direct and GTM method. I thought by using direct method they can be more fluent in English and by using GTM they can get good marks by memorizing rules. The book and syllabus of English language was fixed in the lesson plan that is why I had to follow the lesson plan but the literature part was not fixed. They had two books for literature one is fiction and another one is nonfiction, I started with the nonfiction book. I started my lesson with a story called “Basia’s Birthday Present”.

3.3. Arranging the class room:

Their seating arrangement was typical, there were rows where students sit and there were gaps between the rows for teacher to move around the class. The teacher stands in front of the board and from there I teach them. In GTM, a teacher holds all the priority. There are very few or no

scope of student- student interaction. The sitting arrangement indicates that Grammar translation method can apply in the class but the color full decoration of the classroom indicates Suggestopedia. The classroom was very colorful. There was a birthday chart and passport size picture of the students is hanged on a corner of the class. On the wall students hang different types of chart based on their textbook.

3.4. Learning a new topic

When I started reading the story from their book, I realized that most of them could not understand the meaning. At that time, I did not translate that as grammar translation method. But here I followed direct method, I demonstrated the meaning in English and I provide some example in target language to understand the word and the context of the story. “The direct method has one very basic rule: No translation is allowed” (Larsen- Freeman, 2004).

3.5. Teaching grammar:

For grammar teaching I used their course book “Grammar Builder” where there were different types of exercises like fill in the blanks, re-arrange the words, underline the grammatical items, and tick the correct form of verbs etc. for example I tried to make them understand where to put have/ has . But I noticed that some of them could not understand my lecture. Therefore, for those students I converted the target language in to L1 and after that, they understand everything. By GTM, I taught them grammatical rules. Most of the time, I gave rules first then the example. Because their exam was near and I have to complete the syllabus and the students has to get a good marks. Therefore, I choose GTM to complete my syllabus within the given time. To attempt all the exercises I had to clear their concept in both target language and in L1.

In my teaching maximum technique of the grammar translation method are covered –

3.6. GTM technique which I applied:

1) Reading comprehension: “In Grammar translation method students have to make inferences and they also have to find particular information from the text” (Kirch, 1967). Finding information in a passage, making inferences and relating to personal experience is a part of grammar translation method. From their text book I gave a passage and they had to make inferences, they had to find information from the passage. Here I gave a sample of reading comprehension.

Sample of a reading comprehension

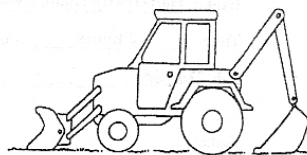
Sample : 1

2. Read the passage and answer the following questions.

Wheels were invented over 5000 years ago. The first use of the wheel was to make clay pots. A potter's wheel stays flat and turns round, and round but does not go anywhere.

Soon, people saw that a wheel could be turned on its side. It still went round and round but now it moved along.

We still use wheels to help us travel around today.



The wheels of a bicycle are light and strong.



Car tyres are filled with air to help them go smoothly over bumps in the road.

Tractor tyres are very large to stop the tractor sinking or slipping in the mud.

Train wheels are made of metal. They have a groove in the middle to keep them on the track.

A. Choose the correct answer.

[.5x4=2]

a) When were the wheels invented?

I) two thousand years ago

II) four thousand years ago

III) five thousand years ago

b) The wheel of a potter _____

I) turn on its side

II) stays flat

III) filled with air

c) Which material is used to make the wheels of a train?

I) metal

II) wood

III) plastic

d) What are the wheels of a bicycle like?

I) large and strong

II) heavy and metallic

III) light and strong

After reading the comprehension students choose the correct answer.

2) Deductive application of rules: All the rules in GTM are taught by deductive approach (Baker, 1975). Rules of grammar of the target language are explained first and then the examples of the rules are given. In earlier I said that I used deductive rules. It takes short time to cover the syllabus. As there is a time limits to finished all the topic at that context grammar translation method is best to apply.

5) Fill in the blanks: Fill in the gaps in the sentence with new words or items of a particular grammar point are also a part of GTM (Baker, 1975). I also used this technique to test their understanding of grammar point.

Sample of a Fill in the blanks

Sample : 2

1. Fill in the blanks with 'a', 'an' or 'the':

[.25×8=2]

- (a) An Ostrich is a bird.
- (b) Rakib wants to be a engineer.
- (c) An airport
- (d) A baton
- (e) An hourglass
- (f) A racquet
- (g) ~~A~~ A gorilla
- (h) A woman

2. Fill in the blanks with the words in the boxes:

[.5×2=1]

- (a) We saw an adult and a child on the stage.

child	adult
-------	-------
- (b) Maraz drew an igloo and a tent in the sketchbook.

igloo	tent
-------	------

6) **Memorization:** Students are asked to memorize the bilingual list, grammatical rules and grammatical paradigms. When I teach them, I gave them a list of words to memorize.

7) **Composition:** According to grammar translation method, Students are required to write an essay or composition in the target language (Kirch, 1967). I also asked them to write a composition about father or letter to your friend about visit to a zoo.

A Sample of Composition writing of my student.

Sample: 3

3. Write a short paragraph on any one of the following. [4]

1. My father 2. Healthy food 3. My weekly holidays

My father

My father's name is parvee. he is a kind man. He is a teacher of a school. He brings me what I want from him. He helps the other people from danger. He takes me many place. He loves all of us in our family. He do a lot of hard work for us.

3.7. Memorizing and writing:

Memorizing is a major aspect of grammar translation method. In GTM method the teacher gives something to memorize and students have to memorize those and have to write. In my class I also gave the answers to memorize but in a different way. At first I asked the students to write on their own from the text, then they wrote the answer by their own with lots of mistakes and then I wrote answer in board and they copied that and memorized. In grammar translation method there is a link between memorizing and writing.

3.8. Error alteration through direct method:

Corrections are very important for students because through task students would get to know about his mistakes and correct themselves. From my point of view the students should be able to correct the mistakes by themselves. I tried to find out their errors and try to correct it. Though it was very difficult as they are young learners but by help of my I tried to correct their error by themselves. But unfortunately I couldn't continue this process as the school has a different rules. Similar to all subject teachers I had to correct the error or spelling and students had to write it thrice besides the correct spelling.

3.9. Student teacher relationship:

In GTM method a class should be controlled by the teacher but it does not mean to dominated over the class and behaved very strictly. However, it varies from class to class how to behave with students. As they are beginner level of learners so I come to their level. Sometimes I behaved strictly and sometimes friendly to motivate their learning ability. I tried to create a

friendly environment. As environment is very necessary for a student to learn and grow so I do a friendly behavior with which I could attract the students and teach them their lesson. Punishment is sometimes necessary to control a class because children are supposed to be naughty. But this mischief should not be lead to misbehavior. So sometimes I had to be quite strict so that I could handle my students.

3.10. Contrast between theory and practice: Direct method

1) Reading aloud:

Students are required to read aloud a text, passage or dialog (Pargment, 1927) when students read aloud one by one; the teacher explains the context of the text by using gestures, picture and another meaning. I also used this technique when I teach them literature. I demonstrated a meaning I gave example different context when they cannot understand any particular situation.

2) Self –correct: Teacher helps the students to find out the errors and correct it by themselves (Pargment, 1927). I also tried to use self-correction on my students but for institutional rules, I had to change my method.

3) Dictation: Teacher can read a passage several times and students required writing them as they listen to it. At first, the students listen to the speech, then they write it down and finally students check their writing. It is a very common thing in our educational sector. I also applied it. In the final exam, they had 5 marks for dictation.

Chapter 4: Recommendation

GTM is one of the very effective methods for Bangladeshi students because from the very beginning students and parents are conscious about marks and exam. For the patterns of our educational system grammar translation method is one of the best methods. By using this method the students are being able to know the meaning of the whole lesson. As students are more conscious about their grades GTM helps them to get a good grades buy allowing them to memorize rules. Our text books and way of thinking is also in favor of grammar translation method. In our country we consider that if a boy get a good number then he is a good student, we consider that he knows a lot he is a ideal student. On the other had if a boy knows a lot about the text but he cannot get a good mark that made him a bad student. For this exam system grammar translation method is a perfect method.

Grammar translation method has some draw backers. For this reason I also tried to apply some technique of direct method.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In our educational system we can use grammar translation and direct method to get a good result. Our text book is also in favor of these methods. During my internship I experienced how grammar translation and direct method influenced over my students. After completion, I have gathered a lot of experience as a teacher. I gathered experience as a full time teacher, because they treated me as a regular teacher of their school. The faculty members along with the principle helped me a lot.

I tried to create a friendly environment among my students. I enjoyed teaching my students. I know that it is not possible for a teacher to create a student's speaking fluency by using grammar translation methods. But in our country's atmosphere and culture perspective most of the teacher used grammar translation method but there should be some activity of speaking. In our context, it is not very easy for a teacher to apply any other method in the class, because parents and students only want a good result.

In my opinion, it will be always fruitful if we use any method in a positive way and students have to adopt it. I want to mention that I was really happy with my internship. It was an enormous experience and it will help me to go further.

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