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## Grammar Based Translation Method in Translation Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

Translating ability requires mastery over two languages. Although this training is not aimed at shaping the participants into professional translators, translation skills are needed for academic excellence. To have these abilities, students should comprehend the language structure in L1 and L2. Therefore, this article elaborates on the use of Grammar Translation Method in teaching translation to students who are not majoring in translation. The sample of this research consists of 62 students from the Department of Economics and Engineering, University of North Sumatra. The research method used is experimental method with pretest and posttest design. The results of the data analysis show that translation teaching by the GMT method can improve the students' ability to render the text from L1 to L2 and vice versa. The students' commentaries implied the willingness to improve their vocabulary in L2.

**Keywords:** *Teaching, Translation, Translation Skills, Grammar Translation Method, Professional Translators*

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### 1. Introduction

In an increasingly connected world today, much of the information comes from foreign language sources, especially English. Information from foreign languages is acceptable by translating and is usually done by the translators. However, the process of translation is a series of actions in an attempt to render any text from a certain language (source language) to another language (target language) to produce a translation. This process involves cognitive process and mastery of two language as well as cultures. In this respect, Barnwell (1984: 13) reveals two stages of translation: (a) the analysis of the meaning of the source language, or exegesis and (b) revealing the similar meanings possible in the form of natural or what is called restructuring.

The ability to translate is influenced by the vocabulary and language structures acquisition though vocabulary acquisition may be improved through reading. So the problems faced by students in translating are the lacking of English sentence structure and vocabulary in to the L1. Therefore, it is assumed that one of the ways to enhance the students' ability in translating is by improving teaching of English language grammar.

As it is widely noticed, the grammar translation method is often used in foreign language teaching and learning. In this case, one aspect that becomes the scourge of most language learners is the grammar. Therefore, DeCapua (2008) argues that grammar is a goal that language learners need to achieve to be a good speaker and writer. Focusing on meaning, Grammar refers to a structured regulation of language that is composed of sentences, phrases, even words. Focusing on teaching methodology, one of suitable methods in teaching translation is by using the Grammar-Translation Method. Thus, the goal of this study is to describe the teaching of translation by using grammar translation method (GMT) and observe the effect this method can have on students' skill in translation before and after the use of GMT to teach translation.

### 2. Literature Review

Translation is the oldest component of all the teaching methods used in ancient Greece and Rome and elsewhere in the ancient world. Grammatical aspects are rather minimal and limited at that time, while grammatical knowledge was also limited. With the growth of grammatical knowledge, grammatical components play a

greater role in teaching, which ultimately dominates the translation aspect.

The GTM learning had become a popular method used in language learning in the European region from the 1840s to the 1940s (Richards 1993: 4). It is still frequently used by foreign language teachers around the world. Research also refers to grammar-translation method as the classical method as this method of learning English is considered the first time used in various parts of the world. The growth and development of grammatical components is seen even until today.

Grammar-Translation Method is a conventional learning method which focuses on L2 grammar and uses the mother tongue as the medium of instruction (Prator and Celce-Murcia in Fauziati, 2008: 12). The use of mother tongue in teaching grammar makes it easier for students to comprehend the rules of grammar for early and middle level foreign language learners as it involves giving grammatical examples of bilingual sentences, phrases, and vocabulary as the first step of grammar learning. That is why, Dykes (2007: 5) explains that grammar is a language that studies itself. She emphasizes that while communicating, students can learn their language beginning with vocabulary, sentence pattern, phrase, and its meaning so that they finally produce correct written and oral language. Leech (1982: 3) also believes that grammar refers to mechanisms corresponding to the work of language used in communicating. It is implied that grammar is an important component to form a correct sentence in order to communicate appropriately.

The Grammar-Translation Method has certain characteristics. These include-

1. students first learn the rules of grammar and bilingual vocabulary lists that are closely related to the reading material in the lesson
2. Although the rules and vocabulary are learned, the grammatical explanations are still given.
3. Understanding of rules and reading material is tested through translation (from L1 to L2, and vice versa).
4. The mother tongue and the target language are compared constantly, and
5. There is little opportunity to practice listening and speaking as this method focuses more on reading and translation exercises.

In GTM, language is presented in a brief grammatical lesson, each containing some grammatical rules, compiled and

illustrated by examples. Grammatical features are the focus of attention in the book of learning and the teaching given by the teacher is not hidden or covered up. Grammatical technical terms are not avoided. Learners are expected to review, and memorize certain rules and examples, such as verb paradigms or preposition lists.

According to Brown (1989), the characteristics of grammar-translation method are as follows:

1. The unit of teaching is word, not a sentence. It means vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated words.
2. It considers grammar as a soul of language.
3. Grammatical rules of teaching of English are explained into mother tongue.
4. This method does not help in development of linguistic competence of learner.
5. English grammar is taught through rules, translation, definition and comparative study of mother tongue grammar.
6. Grammar is taught deductively.
7. The main function of language learning, communication is ignored.
8. Reading and writing are the major focus.

Observing these characteristics, one can say that the GMT has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of GTM include- 1) large classes can be taught, 2) non-eligible teachers can be used, and 3) suitable for all linguistic levels of students (beginners, intermediate, advanced). Students may acquire significant language aspects with the help of books without the help of teachers. The disadvantages of GMT are: (1) linguistically trained teachers are required, (2) most subject matters are not about a particular person, and are isolated and isolated from others, and (3) unsuitable for illiterate people, such as small children or immigrants. Certainly, very few languages are spoken for personal communication; therefore, opportunities for speech opening or spontaneous testing are limited (Steinberg, 1993:223).

Focusing on empirical studies about GMT, a study by Al Refaai (2013) found that GMT had positive results on translation competence and the performance of language of Saudi Arabian EFL learners. It was also found that GMT was a preferable method for both teachers and students as it fulfilled the needs of the students. Another comparative study GMT and CA by Chang (2011) conducted in Taiwan found that the Grammar-Translation method was better



than the Communicative Approach in accuracy. Cunningham (2000) also argues that translation can contribute to the students' acquisition of the target language at all levels.

On the other hand, results of relevant studies in Indonesian context have shown that students still have difficulty in arranging the English text into Indonesian and vice versa. Thus, students need to do more practice in conveying the meaning of words, phrase or sentences. However, students have positive attitude towards peer reviews in the translation class. (Suteja, 2012).

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Place and Participants***

The populations of this study are the students of Economics and Engineering Department of Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. The sampling was done by purposive sampling technique. Classroom classification uses criteria that show the equal treatment on the students' performance, the availability and willingness of student to attend the course. Following this, the present study employed the pretest and posttest to control group. The purpose of this design was to examine the presence or absence of cause-and-effect of teaching method before and after application of class action.

#### ***3.2 Procedures of GTM Teaching***

The GTM method is the one that focuses on grammatical language rules involving the mother tongue as the language of instruction. In addition to focusing on grammatical rules, this conventional method requires students to translate the vocabulary in the sentences as an exercise (drill) so that students feel easier to distinguish the rules of grammar, especially those related to time/tenses. With these benefits in mind, the participants were taught using GMT. The steps followed are summed below-

#### **The steps of GTM teaching-**

1. Introduction- this stage involved asking the students their opinion about translation. They were asked to tell the benefit from the course. (Siregar, 2017: 323).

2. at this stage, the instructor provided Pretest consisting of 10 multiple choice questions. This pretest work took 15 minutes to complete for an individual. After that, the instructor gave a second assignment of text with general topics about everyday activities. Students were asked to present as many sentences as possible and identify the grammar in the sentences. At the end of the meeting, students were given the task of translating the text at home.

3. At the second meeting, the pretest sheet was collected. The instructor delivered the material about Tenses. By considering the limitation of time, examples of simple present tense and simple past tense in Indonesian were given. Total ten multiple choice questions were discussed together.

4. by the end of the meeting, students were given the task at home to write daily activities in English using simple present tense and simple past tense. At the third meeting, the teacher collected the homework and held question and answer session.

For the purpose of comparing the evaluation of learning, a posttest was given using a multiple-choice question model. In exercise session, students did the posttest and completed the exercise of the questions with the correct vocabulary and grammar.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

As mentioned in the earlier section, GMT teaching steps also included instructor raising question about the element of the formula before providing the example and their translation as well. The participants were asked to find the passage with similar tense in the material and prepare its translation in L1. It took 15 minutes. The instructor had to make sure that the students' answers were correct. A sample procedure was as follow-

#### ***Simple Present Tense***

It is English grammar rule to express daily activities or daily routines that are usually marked with annotations such as: always, usually, after, sometimes, every day, etc.

Formula: Subject (noun)+Predicate (verb 1)+Object (noun)

Examples:

1. I like chatting (*saya suka mengobrol*)
2. Mira checks her phone every five minutes (*Mira memeriksa telepon selulernya setiap lima menit*)
3. We enjoy the translation class (*kita senang belajar penerjemahan*)

The instructor pointed out the rules that resulted the variation or change in the verb when subject was she, he or it. The verb was added with *-s*, *-es*, or *-ies*, depending on the verb. The teacher gave example of verbs that could be added with *-s*, *-es*, and *-ies*.

Examples:

1. He likes chatting (Dia suka mengobrol).
2. She checks her phone every five minutes. (*Dia memeriksa telepon selulernya setiap lima menit*)

3. It takes four years to complete the bachelor degree in Economic.  
(Dibutuhkan empat tahun untuk menyelesaikan pendidikan S1 Ekonomi)

The instructor suggested the participants to find out more example and usage of Present Perfect Tense from the internet.

For examples:

1. My younger sister always goes to office by Grab car.
2. Rose listens to the radio every morning.
3. That girl usually drops a coin to the beggar.
4. I don't watch Indonesian Idol anymore.
5. Does the school-bus stop on Saturday?

Based on the example above, it can be concluded that there are 3 Simple Present Tense sentence patterns that must be understood by the students, namely:

A. Affirmative form

1. The using of *To Be* (*is/ am/ are*):  
*S + To Be + Adj/ N/ Adverb*
2. The using of *Verb 1* :  
*S + Verb 1/ Verb 1+ s/es*

B. Negative form

1. The using of *To Be* (*is / am/ are*):  
*S + To Be + not +Adj/ N/ Adverb*
2. The negative form using of *Verb 1* :  
*S + Don't / Doesn't + Verb 1*

C. Interrogative form

1. The using of *To Be e* (*is/ am/ are*):  
*To Be + S + Adj/ N/ Adverb ?*
2. The negative form using of *Verb 1*  
*Do/ Does + S + Verb 1 ?*

*Simple Past Tense*

The function of Simple Past Tense is to declare the activities performed or that have occurred in the past. Simple past tense is usually accompanied by the adverbs such as: yesterday, yesterday morning, last ..., last week, ... ago, and two days ago.

For examples

1. I visited them last week.
2. He was in Jakarta yesterday.
3. They were not in the cinema last night.
4. You didn't meet him last week.
5. Did the students listen to the teacher?

Based on the above examples, it can be concluded that there are 3 simple past tense sentence patterns that must be understood by the students, namely:

A. Affirmative form

1. The using of *To Be* (*was/ were*):  
*S + To Be + Adj/ N/ Adverb*
2. The using of (*Verb 2*):  
*S + Verb 2*

B. Negative form

1. The using of *To Be* (*was/ were*):

*S+ To Be + not + Adj/ N/ Adverb*

2. The using of :

*S + Didn't + Verb 1*

C. Interrogative form

1. The using of *To Be* (*was/ were*):

*To Be + S + Adj/ N/ Adverb*

2. The using of : *Did + S + Verb1 ?*

**Assignment:** This involved asking student to fill in the blanks with the appropriate form. When it was needed, the instructor let the students work individually or in pairs to complete the exercise first. The instructor watched and observed the participants. The instructor was ready with answers for any question and provided corrections. Some samples are listed below-

Fill in the blanks with suitable verbs and prepare the equivalent for each passage.

1. The kittens..... (Cry) every night. I .....(lost) my sleep
2. The students..... (practice) Translation.
3. My brother....(love) his job much, but grumbling about the pay
4. Willy.... (Like) photography. He.....(study) Engineering in ITB
5. We.....(know) our governor candidates well

The instructor introduced list of vocabulary and the equivalent translation so that the student could practice making sentences in simple present tense. This was done by introducing a matrix as follows.

*Table: 1 List of Vocabulary and the Equivalent Translation*

English	Verb variations	Indonesian
I	Verb	<i>Saya</i>
She, He, Mira, Willy My brother It	Verb+s, es, ies	<i>Dia Mira, Willy</i>
The kittens The students We	Verb	<i>Anak-anak kucing Para mahasiswa Kita</i>

The instructor asked the student to translate from Indonesian to English. This exercise was then continued but by introducing a simple reading passage for translation. No class time was allocated to allow students to produce their own sentences, and even less time was spent on oral practice. The reading was sometimes





used to communicate the culture of the target language.

Table 2 Translate task from Indonesian to English

Indonesian	English
<i>Dia bekerja 10 jam per hari, 6 hari per minggu.</i>	.....
<i>Para mahasiswa mengendarai sepeda motor ke kampus.</i>	.....
<i>Bu Siti memasak sarapan untuk kami tiap hari</i>	.....
<i>Fahmi menonton bioskop dua kali sebulan meski ia hanya seorang penganggur</i>	.....

The GTM is an old method in EFL teaching. This method is still widely used in Indonesia, particularly in formal schools. Some English teachers still like to teach English through the GTM. It seems that they prefer to use the method because it is easier to present language materials in classroom and to evaluate the process of language teaching. Classroom management is also not a problem since language teachers can teach English to a class of 40 students sitting in rows.

Table 3: Assignment Result

Pair-1	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	54.76	11.44989	1.45413
Posttest	75.61	9.32452	1.18421

Teaching using Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was experimented with 62 students of Faculty of Economics and Engineering of the University of North Sumatra. The test used to determine the success of GTM method in improving the ability to translate was paired t-test comparison. Table 3 above is the descriptive statistics of pre-test and post-test scores of 62 students. The mean of pre-test was 54.76 with a standard deviation of 11.44989. The mean of post-test was 75.61 with a standard deviation of 9.3245. Based on these results, the pre-test value is lower than the overall post-test value and based on the standard deviation value, the spread of pre-test is greater than the post-test value, which implies more pre-test variation. The average error value for the pre-test value is 1.45413 and the average error value for the post-test is 1.18421.

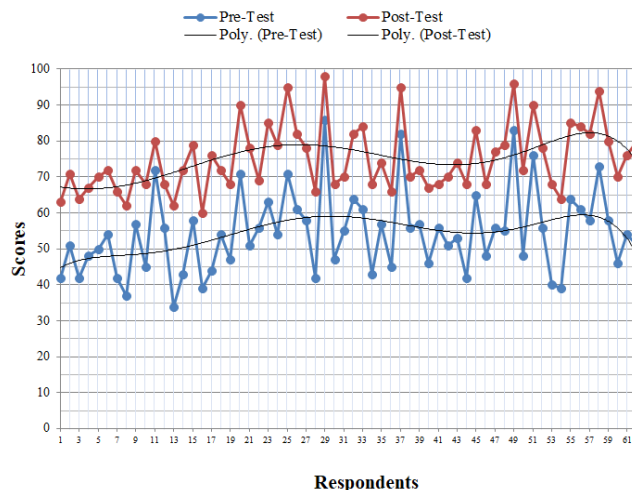


Figure 1: Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores

After offering the GTM, the scores of 62 students increased compared to the pre-test scores. In this case, the teaching of grammar was using mother tongue. However, the gap of pre-test and post-tests scores indicates that grammar is a common problem for students despite of this subject already taught for years in formal schools.

It was also noted that when English grammar was presented in the class, some students found it very difficult. Their commentaries revealed that the lack of vocabularies was the primary cause to this problem. Similarly, if students apply simple present tense and simple past tense materials in daily conversation after studying the material Based on table 4, the significance value of 0.476 sample correlation is greater than the critical value of 0.05 or 5% rejection, which means there is no relationship between both of data. Based on table 4, the effect of GTM on the ability to translate was 33.29% due to lack of grammatical knowledge, and the remaining 66.71% was caused by other factors.

Table 4: Paired samples correlation

Pair-1	N	Correlation	Sign
Pretest-Posttest	54.76	0.627	0.476

Table 5: Paired sample test

Pair-1	mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	ign. (2-tailed)
Pretest-Posttest	-0.024	9.32452	1.45413	15.417	0,00

From the observation during training, it was seen that there is a need for mastery of English vocabulary which can help students translate more quickly. This will be a concern in the next training session.

In terms of interaction, question and answer activities and giving examples of sentences in turn can make students more active and creative in learning so as to

reduce the frequency of boredom of students. With these activities, the instructor can also know the level of understanding of each student.

The lack of GTM as proposed by Patel and Jain (2008: 77) requires researchers to be more creative in teaching when students are in a state of boredom because teachers tend to be more dominant in delivering the material.

Based on table 5, the difference in average before and after given learning by GTM is -0.024. The standard deviation from the difference between before and after giving learning by GTM was 9,20997. A value smaller than a critical value of 1.96 was always acceptable at the sig level. 95%. The t value is also smaller than the acceptable 2.56 critical value at the sig level. 99%. The value of sig (2-tailed)  $0 < 0,05 = 5\%$  which means there is significant difference between before and after done learning process by method of GTM.

### 5. Conclusion

The purpose of the translation teaching is to enable students to apply theories of translation that have been studied previously into real works. This translation theory is very important to learn in basic translation training. In the present study, the average value of pre-test is 54 students which as a research subject is higher than post-test value that is 75.61. Therefore, it can be summed up that Grammar Translation method succeeded in improving students' grammar ability. The average score of students, who were low before being handled by the GTM, shows serious problems for students in English grammar. Although the influence of Grammar - Translation Method is not very significant, i.e. 39.31%, this method can be one of the recommended methods for teachers to improve students' grammar skills. Apart from the shortcomings of GTM, this is because in the learning process students are more responsive and understand the delivery of English grammar materials in the Indonesian language.

Instructors need to make some innovations in the GTM or incorporate those methods with other methods such as reading to improve grammar skills as well as increase the number of students' vocabulary. In the field of interaction, the use of English in a question and answer session and giving examples and exercises repeatedly and alternately from student (individual) to other students, as well as groups to other groups increases the transfer of knowledge and

maintains the spirit of participants in training. The tedious grammar material can reduce the focus of students in learning. It is undeniable that the trainee's attention can be maintained by conditioning a comfortable, relaxing classroom environment with some humor. It can foster the continuity of training and cooperation between instructors and trainees.

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