

History of Grammar-Translation

- Also called Classical/Traditional Method
- Originally used to teach Latin and Greek (medieval times – 19th century)
 - Knowledge for Latin to study bible & academic purposes: medical books & legal docs
 - Study focus on written classical texts from well-known ancient authors
 - Speaking Latin not important as it's dead & no authentic living people serving as model
 - Late 19th cent: learning modern lgs like French and English suggested -> same method used for learning Latin

Main Characteristics

1. Grammar is taught deductively—a meticulous/ careful analysis of the target written language, translation is a common technique; extensive memorization of vocabulary, rules, grammatical paradigms and verb conjugations.
2. Nature of the learner-teacher interaction. Primarily from teacher to students; little student initiation and little student-student interaction.
3. Vocabulary—learnt from bilingual word lists— isolated words and grammar are primary areas; reading & writing primary skills

Main Characteristics

4. Having learners get the correct answer is important; the teacher often supplies the correct answer when students don't know it.
5. A paramount/chief use of translation exercises
6. The mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction, with little active use of the target language.

Main Characteristics

7. Grammar provides the rule for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.
8. Reading of difficult classical texts begins early.
9. Little attention to pronunciation, speaking/listening skills, the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis

Teacher's Role

- Requires little training
- Control of classroom
- Follows text book format
- Little interaction with students

Student's Role

- memorize vocabulary
- learn rules of grammar
- take dictation
- translate written passages
- Right answers are expected
- Little interaction with teachers and other students

Types of Learning & Teaching Activities

- Translation of literary passage
- Reading comprehension questions
- Use of antonyms/synonyms
- Use of cognates
- Deductive application of a rule
- Fill-in-the-blanks
- Memorization
- Use words in sentences; and
- Composition

Advantages

- The method requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers.
 - Does not require teachers to speak good English or make good lesson preparations.
 - Only uses the textbook
- Tests of grammar rules and of translation are easy to construct and can be objectively scored.
- This method is successful in leading a student towards a reading knowledge in L2.

Disadvantages

- GTM does nothing to enhance a student's communicative ability in L2.
- Foreign language learning is a tedious experience of memorizing endless list of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translation of literary prose.
- The method has no advocates. There is no literature that offers a rational or justification for it.
- Little stress is paid on accurate pronunciation.
- Students work hard on vocabulary learning, translation, endless written exercises without much progress in the mastery of the language and with little opportunity to express themselves through it.