
Evaluating Grammar Translation Method and Direct Method in Teaching English Language at Secondary Level

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ABSTRACT

The English language is being taught in most of the schools of Pakistan from the initial level which is kindergartens. It is a drawback that most of the students face difficulty in learning English as well as in speaking and writing up to the secondary level. They are not much fluent or accurate. This happens due to several reasons including lack of interest and/or the burden of a foreign language. The most important of all reasons is the method of interaction between students and teachers that are considered as not much appropriate. Teaching is not a mild case or a thing that can be neglected. It is a need to find a better method of teaching to improve the scenario of Teaching English at the secondary level. The most widely used methods are Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Direct Method (DM). This study particularly focused on the evaluation of these methods to assess the suitable method of teaching English in the context of Pakistan and improves the proficiency of students in the part of two major skills, i.e. writing and speaking. The survey method was adopted to conduct the study using a questionnaire. A total of 20 Teachers from public and private schools were selected to collect the data. The findings and results based on the questionnaire revealed that DM is the most favoured method of teaching the English language. It was also revealed that the major problem faced by teachers and students was the lack of aids such as Audio Visual aids.

Keywords: Language learning and teaching, GTM, DM, Secondary level.

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INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan, the national and regional languages are acquired and it is not as difficult to deal with such languages as in the case of English as a second language. This may have multiple causes, initially still in the 21st century English language is considered an alien language and is adopted by a few people at present although the trend is increasing day by day yet it will take time to be fully adopted. Secondly, for the students who are studying in the local or government schools, they are not able to get a compact environment to learn English. A language is learnt

and acquired are two different concepts and they must be dealt with accordingly. The English language runs like blood in the veins of nations worldwide (Ahmed & Rao, 2012).

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Direct Method (DM) are two main methods which are being used parallel from the late 19th century to and beginning of the 20th century. In one method the role of a teacher is dominant while in the second method the role of the teacher is recessive. Being a developing country, we have to follow the superpowers which are none other than English speaking countries.

This study shows the weaknesses in GTM and how they can be improved. The focus of Reading, Writing, Speaking and listening skills vary in both methods. Mainly, there are two divisions of schools in Pakistan. One is Local/Public (Urdu Medium School) and the second one is Private (English Medium School). The former is having a national language as a medium of education while the latter one is having English i.e. an International language as a medium of communication. Thus, the problem faced by local school students is much greater than the private ones. Even the lower class cannot afford such schools which are teaching the English language better than others so they have to admit their children into the public schools willingly or unwillingly.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The study explores the difference between Grammar Translation Method and the Direct Method in learning and teaching and it evaluates the suitable method to teach the English language at the secondary level in Pakistan.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of the research are to:

- Investigate the suitability of methods of teaching and learning in the Pakistani context
- Explore the problems faced by students and teachers in GTM and DM
- Highlight the role of teachers in both methods

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines grammar as “the study of the use of the rules by which words change their forms and are combined into sentences”. In the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, grammar is referred to as “the study or science of, rules for, the words into sentences (syntax), and the forms of words (morphology)”. Grammar is “multi-dimensional” (Batstone, 1994) and has multi-meanings. It is generally thought to be a set of rules for choosing words and putting words together to make sense. Every language has grammar and if a language is a building, the words are bricks and the grammar is the architect’s plan. In other words, grammar is a framework to describe languages. 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 (Brumfit, 2000). In Pakistan, the English language is taught as a compulsory subject at all levels of education (Shoukat & Ghani, 2015).

Many studies have been conducted on closely related issues such as conditions under which English is taught in Pakistan (Warsi, 2004), English language teaching in the public and private

sector (Channa, 2017), elite and non-elite schools (Khattak, 2014), problems related to English language teaching in Pakistan (Shamim, 2017), writing problems faced by the learners (Aqeel & Sajid, 2012), second language reading instruction in Pakistan (Bhatti, 2013) and teaching reading skills difficulties (Rasheed et al., 2011). However, as per available records, no study has been conducted on teaching English language reading and writing skills practices and problems at the Secondary (SSC) level in non-elite schools or public schools, which provides room for this study.

The first method was GTM (Grammar Translational Method) which came into being in the 19th century. Teaching and learning methodologies in this regard are related to written materials and more focus was given to translation from the native language to the target language. Whereas, Direct Method is the production of modern techniques in which a proper environment is provided to the students and a single medium of communication is preferred. The most prominent name in this regard is Lanson Freeman.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Research methodology deals with the knowledge of data collection. How the data is collected and arranged and what types of results occur in front of us so that we can draw a calculated conclusion.

Sample of the study

The teachers of secondary schools teaching 9th and 10th classes were randomly selected from district Sargodha to respond to the questionnaires. They answered the questions related to language learning in teaching with the two distinctive methods of GTM and DM.

Sample size

Data from 10 different schools were gathered. 2 Teachers from each school were selected randomly to respond to the questions in the questionnaire.

Types of Data

The data was collected based on the responses of the participants provided on the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed using quantitative methods to explain the response of participants. The responses based on the questionnaire were explained and interpreted using statistical techniques to evaluate the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Question wise tables are drawn and statements along with percentages are shown respectively to discuss the results and findings.

- Do you think teaching methods are of any importance in teaching?

Table 1

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	20	100
02	No	0	0

After looking forward to the results of the questionnaire whole percentage of teachers agree that the teaching methods play an important role in teaching. Further debate is exceptional that, which one is the best method either Grammar Translation Method or Direct Method. This thing also shows the concern of teachers towards teaching, sincerity and enthusiasm.

- Are you aware of GTM and DM?

Table 2

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	17	94
02	No	03	06

The next question about the know-how of the two most prominent methods is answered as most of the teachers knew about the methods only a few of them were unaware. We are having teachers from both elite schools (Private) and non-elite schools (Public). The response of the elite school teachers shows that they are having higher education and vast knowledge whereas non-elites are not having the level to cope with them.

- Which of the two methods is more suitable?

Table-3

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	GTM	18	96
02	DM	02	04

The most suitable method according to teachers is Grammar Translation Method they think because English is a non-native language and most the children have to learn the language more than acquiring. In GTM the native language plays a major role in translating ideas into one's language which according to GTM supporters is more beneficial for learning. If we see a practical example of GTM's importance we can easily understand by having an eye on our English exam question paper of Secondary Level. There are two major questions of 15 and 10 marks which are of translation. The former is to translate the passage into Urdu language and the latter is the translation from Urdu to English.

Thus shown from the above example it is clear why teachers prefer GTM more suitable as compared to DM.

- Do you agree that GTM improves English?

Table-4

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	11	55
02	No	09	45

Improvement of English through Grammar Translation Method or Direct Method is the question which teachers have to think more about. The teachers who are teaching in schools where the Direct Method is preferred say that DM is more appropriate to improve English while those who are teaching through GTM say this Method is more appropriate to improve the English Language. Thus the result is not demarcated as the ratio is almost equal. According to

the research point of view, we are bound to learn the English Language because we are a developing nation and such nations have to follow the dominant ones. That is why English is considered important and students are learning it through various methods.

Some schools, excluding Government (Public) Schools usually give their students a Creative Writing task, which is not the teacher dominated and students themselves have to think about any topic and try to write their point of view. This is a healthy improvement toward Direct Method and self-progress where teachers are not the major figure rather students are struggling on their own.

- Do students like to be taught through DM?

Table-5

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	10	50
02	No	10	50

The likeness of the Direct Method is again the same as when we asked teachers about improving English by using a certain method to teach. Those students who are being taught in a medium where the translation is preferred think GTM is the best method while those who are learning through the Direct method think it is the one which is more suitable for learning. We all know learning at this level is not the favourite thing for students, but still, they wanted to give their opinions. Some students who are having rural backgrounds have to speak two to three languages a day which influences the learning of non-native languages due to which most of the students with that background prefer the Grammar Translation Method because they are at ease learning a language which is connected with their language. A new language cannot be learnt easily. If a student has to speak the Punjabi language at home or in the friend zone, Urdu in school and English in English subject's class only how much he can learn from a class of forty to fifty minutes times a week. At any point, the mother tongue influences a student's speech.

While on the other hand, those students who are likely to speak the English language for appropriately six hours a week can learn English faster than the former ones. Such speakers are mostly exposed to two languages a national language and an international language.

- Do you think teachers should use both methods (GTM & DM) as per requirement?

Table-6

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	11	55
02	No	09	45

Using both methods when they are required is another option to learn the English language as it is also known as the **Eclectic approach** which is the mixture of various approaches and methods as per the requirements or goals. This mingling of two or three methods may have positive results. Again the result is not demarcated as half of the population is in favour of mixing methods and half is neglecting this idea. The purpose of neglecting can be the lack of training of teachers as those teachers who are teaching for decades or two decades how can

they cope with this new technique and the process of replacement includes various other issues as these experienced teachers are habitual of Grammar Translation Method and can teach students the rules on fingertips.

- Grammar Translation Method is only for passing the exam?

Table-7

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	14	70
02	No	06	30

Cramming is the major issue in the Grammar translation method, today most schools are competing with one another to achieve an award of the best school of the year for that they started feeding the students and the only purpose of this method is to clear the exams. Once the school clears all students, the very school is to be considered a well-established school without looking at the inner situation of the school that how the students are being treated there. Either they are learning themselves or they are just cramming the sheets placed in front of them. The result of this question about passing the exam the only purpose of the Grammar translation method shows that most of the teachers think that yes, it is only for passing the exams.

- Do you agree that translation of English text is essential for students at the Secondary level?

Table-8

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	12	60
02	No	08	40

At the secondary level, the very first task of our teachers is that: Students are asked to open the books and start reading the text to translate.

Text translation is considered the most important task for students' knowledge and each word is being translated into the native language. Not only this has had our students, but they also had to attempt a question of maximum marks on paper which is based on text translation. And most of the teachers themselves agree with this point of view that yes Text translation is essential for the students at the secondary level.

- Students can easily understand the lecture delivered in DM?

Table-9

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	12	60
02	No	08	40

Direct Method is the one in which the students are bound to listen and speak in the English language for the whole period, which is beneficial for the learning of the English Language. The question is whether the student can easily understand the lecture delivered in English or not. So, the students who are freshly experiencing this technique would have to face difficulty

in understanding and running with the pace of other students. Because exposing to something new and absorbing it completely takes time while the students who are habitual of this listening and speaking in English do not feel uneasy about it. For this purpose, we have to think about students' habits from the initial level i.e. complementary level, where our students' minds can get more and more knowledge.

- DM is boring?

Table-10

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	11	55
02	No	09	45

As shown above the answer of this question is not clear cut, half of the teachers think that Direct Method is boring for students as they are teachers who have to deal with students and to teach them properly. If they start losing interest how can a teacher teach? The remaining half of teachers think that it is not boring to teach in the Direct Method as certain pictures and audio visual aids are present to attract students' attention. Our labs are an example of such orientation of learning. But not every school is having labs: the biology lab consists of various biological items including animals and plants that students can easily identify by seeing, however, chemistry and physics labs consist of various apparatuses and chemicals to help students in learning the content properly. The same is the case with English but only few of the schools have faculty to teach the students through this technique because of a lack of budget or lack of experience. Thus, this is the answer of above placed question.

- Should English lessons be delivered in English without interference of any other language?

Table-11

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	12	60
02	No	08	40

Dealing with a foreign language is a sensitive issue which is to be dealt with accordingly. We can learn English language if we teach it properly and if we are using various other languages while teaching the target language. How can it be learnt properly? Most of our teachers think that during English language class no other language should be used. Such teachers focus on *accuracy*. While looking at our results, we came to know that there is some percentage of teachers who cannot be neglected as they say that other languages most often the native languages can also be used in classes. Their focus is not on accuracy. Such teachers' goal is *to understand things*. They are not concerned with accuracy or fluency and just understanding is important for them.

- Do you agree that students do not grasp the abstract ideas of DM?

Table-12

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	12	60

Being a human and using all the five senses we are more able to get the viewpoint of a particular object as compared to the abstract idea. Abstracts are just like things we made on our own and if we study things which are concrete and are able to see them in front of us it will be helpful for us to remember them again and again. Same is the case with the result of this question, most teachers say that students are unable to grasp the idea of abstract things in Direct Method for example unicorns. What will students understand about this word if they are unable to see the object physically?

Whereas, some teachers think that students can grasp abstract ideas. So, mostly it is assumed that the teachers who are in favour of the Direct Method say that it is not difficult for students to grasp abstract ideas and they can easily understand things while those who are teaching the Grammar Translation Method think that it is difficult for students to grasp abstract ideas.

- DM improves pronunciation?

Table-13

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	15	75
02	No	05	25

Pronunciation can be improved if we frequently use the words with repetition and drilling habit. In Direct Method, the possibility of repetition is more than in the Grammar Translation Method because in DM most of the time one has to speak in English Language which means that repetition of various words occurs at various times and this will increase confidence. If a word is mispronounced once or twice it will be corrected for the third time. Whereas in the Grammar Translation method if a word is translated again and again in native language just to understand its meaning and concept, then how can it be repeated with focused pronunciation. Most of the teachers in report given also agree with the point of view that Direct Method increases the pronunciation ability.

- GTM improves speaking fluency?

Table-14

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	09	45
02	No	11	55

Grammar Translation Method focuses more on translation than any other thing. The question arises that whether GTM improves the speaking fluency or not. Fluency can be improved if the words are spoken repetitively. Repetition in the Direct Method is in such a way that students are bound to speak in English language for more than half an hour a day which improves their habit of speaking English Language. On the other hand, if we move towards GTM, it is the process which involves learning of new language by using the previous language proficiency. This method is not a newly formed one rather late in previous centuries it is also used for learning Spanish as well as Latin language. Thus the fluency ratio according to teachers in GTM is not the one that can be neglected rather we should keep it into consideration.

- GTM develops cramming habit?

Table-15

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	11	55
02	No	09	45

The workload on teachers and burden of syllabus completion indeed push the learners and teachers towards the habit of cramming. In order to move with the fast running world schools have to adapt methods which help cram to cover the syllabus. Although the trend is changing day by day and various schools are heading towards creative writing and promoting the concept of self-study, not all the schools are doing so. It can be clearly distinguished through the ratio of responses given to the above-mentioned question by the teachers who are teaching through the Grammar Translation Method and the Direct method as well.

- Should English language students think in English?

Table-16

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	16	80
02	No	04	20

A very healthy step towards language learning is to think in the very language you are learning and because of this habit, we develop new ideas and then can easily apply them in the required situation. In answer to the above question, most teachers think that it is beneficial to think in English for learning it properly. Once a learner starts taking his learning seriously he can improve in a better way. Thinking habit can develop a connection between thinking and context which help learners a lot.

- Which method is more suitable at Secondary Level?

Table-17

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
02	GTM	04	20
02	DM	16	80

The more suitable method at the Secondary level is the Direct Method according to teachers because they think that up to this level students should be able to understand English in connected speech. It means they can easily speak and learn. Learning English from Kindergarten Level should be helpful for students to speak, learn, write and listen English at secondary Level. On the other hand, few of the teachers are in favour of the Grammar Translation Method. According to them, students should stay in touch with the native language and should prefer the translation method. So, there are two schools of thought moving simultaneously from the past to the present.

- Second language should be taught through GTM?

Table-18

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	09	45
02	No	11	55

First language acquisition and second language learning are different concepts and therefore should be dealt differently. According to teachers, the ratio is not clearly defined. Half of the teachers think that Grammar Translation Method is suitable for learning second Language while the other half think that Direct Method is more suitable for learning second language. Acquisition and learning are for first and second languages respectively. Although, second language rules can also be acquired to some extent if not wholly. Further, two major figures describe these points Noam Chomsky talks about acquisition through innate ability, while, B. F. Skinner promotes the concept of behaviourism which says that the stimulus-response relationship is helpful for learning. Moreover, drilling is also important because it stresses repetition.

- Urdu medium students can easily understand DM?

Table-19

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	02	10
02	No	18	90

In Pakistan, there are two distinguished schools which depend on elite and non elite categories. The former one has an English medium as a mean of communication and learning. While in the latter the medium of communication is Urdu. Now the question arises that whether Urdu medium students can easily understand DM or not. Then, most of the teachers agree that they can understand DM while a few of them disagree.

- Teachers are cooperative with the students who face difficulty?

Table-20

Sr. No	Response	Numbers of Responses	Percentage
01	Yes	19	95
02	No	01	05

Obviously it is teachers' duty to help students in their problems. In both schools, teachers put their best efforts to help out the students. While if any of the teacher acts rudely there must be some genuine issue behind such behaviour.

CONCLUSION

In Pakistan, many languages are used at the same time and most of the time users are being trapped to choose between their mother tongue and national or foreign language. On provincial level, the local or regional language is considered as first and mother language. On national ground, Urdu is understood as national language and in some cases it is considered as second language. In terms of foreign language or what the status of English language in Pakistan is, it is understood to be second or foreign language as it is being learnt. The very phenomenon of English as second language is the concern of this study. Teaching of English language at

secondary level is evaluated on the part of methods used for the teaching. It is really important to understand this concept and to deal with these questions accordingly. In questionnaire there were two types of statements. One is a general statement and the other one is Specific which is why major concern in this project is with the English language and its teachers. About 81% teachers want to teach their students through DM. That means they are having potential to teach language properly just the drawback is lack of opportunities. Thus, this research will help the teachers and students to understand the viewpoints of others because it will be beneficial for the language learning and teaching.

The summary of the analysis provides the evaluation of two main methods (Grammar Translation Method and Direct Method) that are being used to teach English language at secondary level. The results have implications for the teachers' concern over the use of a suitable method and they help to lessen the apprehensions of the teachers. Teaching and learning is a critical process which is not taken seriously in Pakistan. We have to be serious about this and should take necessary measures.

Findings reveal that GTM is most widely used method to teach English in Pakistani schools. It is considered that translation into first language/mother-tongue helps students in learning the second language because it has been anciently used for learning languages such as Latin, Greek, and Spanish. Results show a mixed trend regarding whether GTM or DM should be used as the most suitable method for teaching English. There are different reasons for the suitability of both methods in the perception of teachers to use for teaching second language. For example, GTM involves the use of the first language. According to teachers, it is more useful as students are more eager to learn in their mother tongue. On the other hand, DM involves only the target language to teach as it is based on improving the fluency and accuracy in the communication.

The findings of the result indicate that DM is more adaptive method to teach English language at secondary level in Pakistani context in order to improve students' proficiency in communicating in second language. The findings further show that using both the methods at the same time is even more useful to provide assistance to students in learning the second language. Using GTM and DM collectively in the form of eclectic approach gives students the liberty to communicate accordingly in the second language.

The research done in comparison of the Grammar Translation Method and Direct Method concludes that in most of the schools in Pakistan teachers want to teach through DM. Although it is a modern method of teaching students yet it needs certain instruments which are not affordable for lower schools such as AV-aids and posters pictures and all concrete objects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should use both methods i.e. GTM and DM when needed.
- Teachers should use AV aids as much as possible.
- Teachers should provide comfortable environment to the students in class.
- Participation of Students should also be involved in the classroom.

LIMITATIONS

A very limited amount of data was collected due to prevailing COVID situation and it was not possible to visit all the schools and teachers personally. On this ground, only ten schools and twenty teachers in total were selected to conduct the study.

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