

GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD OF TEACHING ENGLISH

English teachers should always be on the lookout for effective and interesting ways to stimulate language learners. Various teaching methods are aimed at this goal. The Grammar-Translation Method is considered to be a classical method of teaching English. The philosophy behind this method is that the foreign language can be taught or learn through translation. Here each phrase or sentence of English is taught by translating it into mother tongue. The Grammar-Translation Method instructs students in grammar and provides vocabulary with direct translations to memorize. The Grammar-Translation Method derived from traditional approaches to the teaching of Latin and Greek and it was the predominant method in Europe in the 19th century. It was rather widespread for learning foreign languages, though by the end of the century moves towards the Direct Method were noticed.

The Grammar-Translation Method focuses on the teaching of the foreign language grammar through the presentation of rules together with some exceptions and lists of vocabulary translated into the mother tongue. Translation is considered to be the most important classroom activity. The main procedure of an ordinary lesson follows this plan: a presentation of a grammatical rule followed by a list of vocabulary and, finally, translation exercises from selected texts.

Other activities and procedures can be the following: answering comprehension questions on the text; students find antonyms and synonyms words in the text; vocabulary is selected from the reading texts and memorized; sentences are formed using new words; fill-in-the-blank exercises; writing compositions on the topic.

This method has a number of advantages given below:

1. By telling the meaning of the word or sentence in mother tongue, the teacher can at once make the students understand.

2. The students are able to learn many items of English by comparison with mother tongue.

3. The comprehension of the students can be tested very easily.

4. Knowledge is acquired gradually, by traversing the facts of language and the syntactic mechanisms, going from simplest to the most complex.

5. Learning grammar, the students examine the texts developing awareness that language constitutes a system which can be analyzed.

There are some very obvious disadvantages of this method:

1. No account of present-day language usage is presented. Norms are imposed from the great literary authors.

2. Secondary grammatical points, lists of forms and examples receive a lot of attention; some definitions and explanations are often incoherent because of their heterogeneous criteria. Thus, facts about the language are confusing for the students.

3. It gives a predominant place to morphology but neglects syntax. Therefore, rules enabling the learners to construct systematically correct complex sentences are not presented.

4. Translations are often unsatisfactory as they are done word by word.

5. Students have to learn a lot of grammatical terms and too much weight falls on their memories. Frustration on the part of students and lack of demands on teachers are the effects of this method.

The teaching of grammar consists of a process of training in the language rules which must make it possible to all the students to express their opinion correctly, to understand the remarks which are addressed to them and to analyze the texts which they read. This method has a few both merits and draw-backs. It can be successfully used at higher educational institutions for teaching foreign languages for professional communication, but it must be combined with other methods. Teachers should use a variety of methods to teach a second language as each student is unique and will respond well to a particular method. A good teacher should make use of the items that he or she has and the learning styles of the students. Adapting your style to your class can be an effective teaching method.