Teaching methods

Why study methods of language teaching?

More recently, Larsen-Freeman (2011) provide a case for the study of methods in teacher education, claiming that such study may prove invaluable in at leastour ways:

1. The study of Methods can help teachers have clear ideas about what they do and why they do it.
2. The knowledge about methods can liberate teachers and allow them to break away with traditional patterns of thought.
3. Methods can provide teachers the opportunity to interact with others’ views to enrich their own conceptions of practice.
4. Knowledge of methods can help teachers have a varied repertoire of teaching techniques that can develop their teaching and also their students' learning.

**2. Approach, method and technique**

Approach: theories about the nature of language and the nature of language learning

Method it is concerned with the practical realization of an approach. it is a group of procedures that clearly explains how to teach a language (syllabus organization, skills, roles of teachers and learners.

Technique: it is a specific strategy that we use in the classroom.

**Grammar Translation Method**

Introduction

Grammar Translation Method (GMT aims to help students read and understand foreign language literature and train them to write the language accurately by translating it into their own language.

GTM was based on the premise that

1) by studying the grammar of the target language, students will become more aware of grammar in their native language, which ultimately makes them better at speaking and writing in their native language and

2) it is thought that the studying of a foreign language will help students grow intellectually (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 13).

1. Background

Grammar Translation Method emerged from the teaching of classical languages such as Latin and Greek.

The idea of Grammar- Translation emerged in the late eighteenth century, and has subsequently also been known as the Prussian Method, the Grammar Method, the Classical Method or the Traditional Method.

GMT requires learners

* to focus on grammatical points that are broken down and analyzed at the level of the words, phrases and individual sentences
* these points are taught deductively.
* They are then translated from and to the L2.

Richards and Rodgers(2001) suggest that

* languages are studied in order to develop learners’ mental abilities, and
* the study of grammar itself becomes the purpose of learning which, according to many researcher,
* implies that GMT leaves learners unable to communicate in the L2

However, GMT has survived and is used in many parts of the world today, albeit in modified forms. Cook (2008), posits that while many other methods do not focus on grammar explicitly, “students continue to believe that this (focus on grammar) will help them”. He also proposes that GMT carries with it a “seriousness of purpose” that may be lacking in other language teaching methods maintains a ‘traditional’ view of learning that advocates that knowledge is something that teachers’ transmit’ to learners ( rather that learners discovering or constructing knowledge for themselves).

2. Principles of Grammar Translation Method

The main characteristics of GMT include the following:

1. The goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign language study.
2. Reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking and listening.
3. Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used, and words are taught bilingual word lists, dictionary study and memorization.
4. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice.
5. Grammar is taught deductively- that is by presentation and study of grammar rules, which are then practiced through translation exercises.
6. The student’s native language is the medium of instruction. It is used to explain new items and to enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the student’s native language

**3. Classroom Activities based on Grammar Translation Method**

The classroom activities may include all or some of the following techniques

1. **Translation of a literary text:** students translate a reading passage from the target language into their native language.
2. **Reading comprehension questions:** students answer questions in the target language based on their understanding of the reading passage.
3. **Antonyms/synonyms:** students are given one set of words and are asked to find antonyms or synonyms. They may be also asked to give their equivalents in the learners’ native language.
4. **Cognates:** students are taught to recognize cognates (words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation) by learning the spelling or sound patterns that correspond between the languages.
5. **Fill in the blanks**: students are given a series of sentences with words missing. They fill in the blanks with new vocabulary or grammar items.
6. **Composition:** the students should write about a topic based upon some aspects of the reading passage