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GRAMMAR-TRANALATION METHOD

As English teachers we are always on the lookout for effective and interesting ways to stimulate our language learners. Various teaching methods are aimed at this goal. The purpose of this report is to investigate the Translation Method that is widely used by a large number of teachers. This method is better known as the Grammar-Translation Method and 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 most relevant principles of this method can be summarized as follows:

- It emphasizes the study and translation of the written language, as it is considered superior to spoken language.
- Reading and writing are the main language skills.
- The student's native language is the medium of instruction and used as well to compare with the language studied.
- The structural patterns of two languages are compared and this comparison makes learning more clear and firm.
- The fundamental principle of proceeding from known to unknown is followed throughout.
- Successful learners are those who translate each language into the other, though they cannot communicate orally.
- Students have to know verb conjugations and other grammatical paradigms.
- The knowledge of rules helps the learners to avoid any types of mistakes.
- Teachers play an authoritarian role in the classroom and the predominant interaction is between teacher-student.

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 analysed.

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.

So, 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. The objective is that by the time they leave college, the students control the tools of the language which are the vocabulary, grammar and the orthography, they are able to read, understand and write texts in various contexts. Unfortunately, this method gives little attention to listening and speaking skills, and the result is usually inability of some students to use the language for communication.

We find that 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. We consider that the 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.

The list of references:

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