

TEACHING VOCABULARY THROUGH GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD

Abdurrahman Hi. Usman.

IAIN Ternate

Abstract

As a traditional teaching method, Grammar-Translation Mehtod is still currently used nowadays. Although it is very suitable to teach grammar, but it is suitable for certain materials in certain places as well. One of the suitable materials is vocabulary. Vocabulary is very important all languages because there is no language without vocabulary. Every language is bulit up by the smallest meaningful unit that is called morpheme. Morphemes bulid up words, and the words listed in certain groups are called vocabulary. However, vocabulary has a very close relationship with grammar. Vocabulary is derived from morphology, and morphology is categorized grammar. Therefore, teaching vocabulary through Grammar-Translation Mehtod is possibly effective.

Key words: teaching, vocabulary, words, language Grammar-Translation Mehtod

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the government of Indonesia have planned to increase the quality of education. It means that all elements of education have to be completed in order to reach the objective of education. One of the elements is educational institution. Educational institution should be paid more attention because it is the main vehicle to improve the quality of education. In educational institution, there are some aspects which is very important to be paid attention. One of them is the process of teaching-learning. Jeremy Harmer says that the saccess of language teaching-learning process is determined by some aspects. There are some others such as the motivation that the students bring, the teachers, and the methods and techniques used. The motivation is like extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Teachers here include their mastery on subject taught, their performance and attitude.

In managing teaching-learning proces, a teacher has to be able to apply all the procedures which have to be done in the clasroom. One of the procedures is mastering some methods and techniques that he or she has

mastered in every time of teaching. In English teaching-learning process, there are several methods which have to be mastered and applied by an English teacher. They are: Grammar-Translation Method, Situational Language Teaching Method, Direct Method, Total physical Response method, and Audio lingual Method. Every method has its own characteristics and procedures. Because of the different characteristics, an English teacher has to be able to differentiate them in order to apply the method in the teaching-learning process. Eventhough, there is only one method that would like to be researched by he writer in this study. It is Grammar-Translation Method. This study is meant by him to know the effectiveness of the method, because it is not used by most of the English teachers anymore.

To increase the quality of education in Indonesia, the government change the curriculum from period to period. One of the curriculum period is *Curriculum 1994* especially English. In Curriculum 1994, English teachers have to use Dierct Method (Communicative Approach) include in teaching Vocabulary. However, the writer thinks that it is effective and easy to teach Vocabulary through *Grammar-Translation Method*.

In order to know the effectiveness of Grammar-Translation Method in teaching Vocabulary, the writer is going to elaborate some theories concerning with Grammar-Translation Method.

Definition of Teaching, Method, and Technique

The word 'Teaching' is Derived from 'Teach' which means giving instrucion to somebody, or to know or be able to do something (Hornby, 1989: 1318). 'Teach' has the widest use in formal and informal situations and at all levels. It can refer to an academic subject or a practical skill (Hornby, 1989: 1318).

The word 'Teaching' can also be translated in to Indonesian, means 'pengajaran'. Accotding to Karo-Karo, pengajaran/teaching is a process of presenting maaterials done by someone to the others in order to make them accept, master, and develop the materials given. The word 'maaterial' here is 'something' which can be knowledge, skill, activity, and the results of human's culture (Karo-Karo, 1979: 4).

Method is a way of doing something (Hornby, 1989: 780). The way done here is giving instructions (subjects) to the students in the classroom at the moment of teaching – learning process. ‘Methode’ berarti jalan atau cara yang harus di lalui untuk mencapai tujuan tertentu (Karo-Karo, 1979: 3). These theories mean that if we would like to do something, first of all we have to know how to do it, because without mastering the way, we will not trech the result as well as possible.

Technique is a method of doing or performing something especially in the arts or sciences (Hornby, 1989: 1319). The term ‘technique’ cannot be separated from method. Technique of teaching can mean steps of giving instructions (teaching subjects) done by a teacher in the teaching – learning process.

Grammar-Translation Method

This method is also called *Traditional Method*. It does not mean that the method is the oldest one, but the term traditional is the reflection of the method used to teach the antique. Greek and latien language in some countries. Grammar-Translation method dominated european and foreign language teaching from the 1840s, and in modified form it continues to be widely used in some parts of the world today (Richards and Rodgers, 1993: 4).

The assumption in using this method is that, there is a universal logic as the basic principle of all languages on the world. The grammar of the language is the branch of the logic. That is why, in teaching a language, the grammar must be the priority and the standard of theteaching objective. The method also shows teaching language as including learning the rules, facts about grammar in order to understand the rules of sentences. The patterns of sentences are always taught firstly before the other components of language. The learners are always asked to memorize the rules of the sentences taught. Eventhough, Grammar Translation Method is not only used to teach grammar and/or structure but it can be used to teach vocabulary as well. Because it also can be used to teach vocabulary, the writer would like to apply it in order to know the effectiveness of the method. On the other hands, the writer wants to know whether Grammar

Translation Method is very effective in teaching vocabulary or not. If it is effective, the method can be used by the teacher to teach vocabulary as well, not only grammar/structure. For more explanation, especially the steps of presenting vocabulary by using this method will be written in this chapter.

a. The Characteristics of Grammar-Translation Method

As written before, every method has its own characteristics, so Grammar-Translation Method has the following principal characteristics:

1. The goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign-language study. Grammar-Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of the grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language. It hence views language as consisting of little more than memorizing rules and facts in order to understand and manipulate the morphology and syntax of the foreign language.
2. Reading and writing are the major focus ;little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening.
3. Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used, and the words are taught bilingual word-lists, dictionary study, and memorization. In a typical Grammar-Translation text, the grammar rules are presented and illustrated, a list of vocabulary items are presented with their translation equivalents, and translation exercises are prescribed.
4. The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. Much of the lesson is devoted to translating sentences into and out of the target language, and it is the focus on the sentence that is a distinctive feature of the method. Earlier approaches to foreign language study used grammar as the aid to the study of texts in a foreign language, but this was thought too difficult for the students in secondary schools, and the focus on the sentence was an attempt to make language learning easier.

5. Accuracy is emphasized. Students are expected to attain high standard in translation, because of 'the high priority' attached to meticulous standards of accuracy which, as well as having an intrinsic moral value, was a prerequisite for passing the increasing number of formal written examinations that grew up during the century.
6. Grammar is taught deductively – that is, by presentation and study of grammar rules, which are then practised through translation exercises. In most Grammar-Translation texts, a syllabus was followed for the sequencing of grammar in an order of grammar points throughout a text, and there was an attempt to teach grammar in an organized and systematic way.
7. The students' 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 students' native language.

The characteristics of Grammar-Translation Method above show us that the accuracy of the material presented is very emphasized. This is because of the assumption that learning a language is a process of forming a habit to the learners. The accurate grammatical rules of a language must be applied as soon as possible in order to make the learners master and use the rules correctly.

In addition, the medium of language used in the presentation is the learners' native language (source language). This can make the learners very easy to understand the materials explained by the teacher. In teaching vocabulary, especially, the students' native language is very important to use because the new words presented by the teacher can be translated directly into their native language.

b. The Steps of Presenting Materials through Grammar-Translation Method

We have known that every method has its own steps of how to present the materials in the teaching-learning process. In teaching a foreign language through Grammar-Translation Method, especially the steps of presentation will be described by the writer as follows.

1. The teacher explains the grammatical rules deductively, gives definitions, and other explanation about the exception.
2. The students are trained to translate the sentences, paragraphs, and then texts. The materials translated are taken from the literary works that have varies aesthetics.
3. The teacher gives vocabulary separatedly from the context. The students are asked to translate the vocabulary into and out of the target language.
4. The home assignments taken from literary books are given to the stuuents as the preparation for the text presentation.

There are some special techniques to teach vocabulary (new words) as said by Adrian Doff. These techniques arer very suitable to teach new words of English as a foreign language in Indonesia. The techniques are:

1. Say the word clearly and write it on the board.
2. Get the class to repeat the word in chorus.
3. Translate the word into the students' own language.
4. Ask students to translate the word.
5. Draw a picture to show what the word mean.
6. Give an English example to show how the word is used.
7. Ask questions using the word (Doff, 1988: 1).

After doing the steps in presenting new words, the teacher can give some examples to make the students master the new words which have been learned in the classroom. The followings are the techniques of giving examples in the teaching-learning process:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. market | You can buy food at the market.. |
| b. clothes | In the morning we put on our clothes. |
| c. noisy | Students are often very noisy. |
| d. look for | I'm looking for my pen. |
| e. visit | Last weekend I visited my uncle. |
| f. happiness | He was full of happiness. |
| g. impossible | Your plan is quite impossible. |

(Doff, 1988: 1)

The examples above look very easy for the teacher because the words taught have been translated into the students' own language. It is also very easy for the students to practise the words in the sentences.

c. The advantages and disadvantages of Grammar-Translation Method

1. The advantages of Grammar-Translation Method

As being said by the writer that every method has its advantages and disadvantages which should be paid more attention by every teacher in teaching through the method. Therefore, an English teacher will use Grammar-Translation Method has to know them. The followings are the advantages of Grammar-Translation Method as said by Tareigan:

1. The teacher can teach the large number of the students easily.
2. The class can be handled by the teacher who is not fluent to speak.
3. It is suitable for the students' linguistic ability (elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels); the students get many significant language aspects through books without any help from the teacher (Steinberg in Tarigan, 1991: 100). In addition, another expert has the other opinion about the advantages of the method which are so different from those ones presented by Tarigan. The advantages are:
 - a. The students possess a good mastery on translation skill from and/or to the target language.
 - b. The students can memorize the grammatical rules of the target language well which are presented in the source language. (Nababan, 1993: 13)

Because of the differences of the two theories presented by both linguists above, the writer can conclude them into one theory. It is about the advantages of Grammar-Translation Method when being applied by an English teacher in the teaching-learning process especially in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. The advantages of Grammar-Translation Method are:

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3. It is suitable for the students' linguistic ability (elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels); the students get many

significant language aspects through books without any help from the teacher.

4. The students have a good mastery on translation skill from and or to the target language.

The advantages of Grammar-Translation Method above can be the motivation of some English teachers who are very eager to use it in the teaching – learning process. Besides being easy for the teacher in presenting the materials, it is also easy for the students to understand and master the materials given by the teacher. This is because of the medium of language used in the process of the teacher’s presentation in front of the classroom, that is, the students’ native language.

2. The disadvantages of Grammar-Translation Method

Besides the advantages of Grammar-Translation Method, there are some disadvantages of this method as well. This is because of the existence of every method which has advantages and disadvantages. The followings are the disadvantages of Grammar-Translation Method presented by Henry Guntur Tarigan in his book, “Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa 1.”

1. It requires a trained teacher linguistically.
2. Most subject matters are not useful for certain student and it is separated from the others.
3. It is not suitable for the literature students, for example, children or immigrants: there is only a little bit of communication used inter-person.

(Steinberg in Tarigan, 1991: 100)

There are some other disadvantages of Grammar-Translation Method as presented by Sri Utari Subyakto–Nababan in her book, “Metodologi Pengajaran Bahasa”. The disadvantages are also quite different from those ones described by Henry Guntur Tarigan. The disadvantages mentioned are:

1. The grammatical rules analysis will be easy for the teacher but difficult for the students because of the complicated analysis.
2. Translating sentence by sentence often confuses the students to understand the whole meaning.

3. The literary works as the source of the subject are not the daily expression for real communication.
4. The grammatical rules presented by the teacher prescriptively may not be used or communicated by the people in daily communication.
5. The students do not learn to use the target language but they just talk about it (Nababan, 1993: 13–14).

The two theories presented by Tarigan and Nababan makes the writer concludes that those theories are different and they complete one another. That is why, the disadvantages of Grammar-Translation Method can be formulated as follow:

1. Grammar-Translation Method requires a trained teacher linguistically.
2. Most subject matters are not so useful for certain students and it is separated from the others.
3. It is not suitable for the illiterate students, for example, children or immigrants; there is only a little bit of communication used inter-person.
4. The grammatical rules will be easy for the teacher but difficult for the students because of the complicated analysis.
5. Translating sentence by sentence often confuses the students to understand the whole meaning.
6. The literary works as the source of the subjects are not daily expression for real communication.
7. The grammatical rules presented by the teacher prescriptively may not be used or communicated by the people in daily communication.
8. The students do not learn to use the target language but they just talk about it.

Vocabulary

a. Definition of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the total number of words that make up a language (Hornby, 1989: 1425). Word is the smallest speech sound or combination of sound that is independently meaningful in oral or written communication. A word is a symbol for an idea and consequently has a special denotation, it may not be at the special qualities and association which enriches and degrades the meaning (Bracy in Talaba, 1995: 8)

The definitions above give us an illustration which is very important for us to learn words of a language. The words can make us how to speak within a language. Another definition is given by Fries, that is:

“A word consists of a sound that has become conversationalized in a culture or linguistic community, that is, commonly used in certain responses in hearer belonging to the same community” (Fries, 1965:43).

There are eight kinds of words called “parts of Speech”. The eight parts of Speech can be learned by the students in the teaching-learning process. They can be learned linguistically as well.

b. The Role of Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary and Life

The language skill quality of the students is very dependent on the quantity and quality of vocabulary mastery. A student who has mastered a plenty of words is very skillful to speak a language through the words mastered. It is also necessary to know that the students' mastery of subjects learned in the teaching-learning process depends mainly on the language mastered (Tarigan, 1984: 2).

Language is very important in our life. There are many varieties of the function, it will be better if the writer mentions the principles of language. They are:

1. Language is a system
2. Language is vowel

1. Language is arbitrary symbols
2. Language is something unique
3. language is a habit
4. language is a tool of communication
5. language is something related to the culture
6. language is something changes.

(Anderson in Trarigan, 1984: 4–7)

After paying attention to the principles of language above, the writer would like to have a conclusion that mastering many words is very important to build up a language, and language is very important in our life.

Alexander says that learning to communicate in a foreign language requires the ability to express idea in sentence, and the sentence itself consists of word. So, in communication, the student need vocabulary to express their ideas (Alexander, 1975: 4). Another expert, Soekardi, says that Belajar bahasa memang bukan hanya mempelajari kata-kata saja, namun jika saudara tidak tahu kata-kata dari suatu bahasa, maka saudara tidak akan bisa menggunakan bahasa tersebut'' (1974: 2).

In addition, an expert, Sabrony Rahmadia, in his book, Materi pokok vocabulary (2), says that how perfect your mastery on structural patterns or the grammatical structure, without sufficient vocabulary, you will face many problems in expressing your ideas and understanding other people's ideas (Rahmadia, 1986 :1).

2. Vocabulary and Mental Ability

Talking about the relationship between vocabulary and mental ability, means that we are taking a bout the relationship between language and thought (Tarigan, 1984: 16). Language and thought are very closely related. They cannot be separated one another. There is a language because there are many thoughts and ideas owned by human being. The thoughts and ideas should be transferred to the others. They cannot be transferred without a vehicle, and the vehicle itself is the language.

Language is a reflection of thinking. One's ability of thinking cannot be measured by the others. But if he is speaking to someone, his ability can

be understood because of the language used, and the language itself is built up by many words memorized and mastered.

The explanation above tells us that there is a relationship between language and thought. There is a cause and effect between vocabulary and mental ability. The quantity and quality of one's vocabulary can determine the quality of one's mental ability. The mastery on vocabulary can reflect one's high mental ability.

3. Classification of Vocabulary

Talking about the classification of vocabulary means that we cannot forget the names of some experts, because they classify words differently. They classify it from the different point of view. The first expert, Aristoteles, classifies the word into the *Eight Parts of Speech*, namely: Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, and Interjection.

However, a word can have different Eight Parts of Speech depending upon the context, for example, the word water, can function as a noun and a verb.

* Would you like to get me a glass of water? (noun)

* I always water the flower in the yard. (verb)

Another expert, Fries, classifies words into four groups. They are:

1. Function words; those words which primarily or largely operate as means of expression and relation of grammatical structure.
2. Substitute words; that represent not individually things or specific action, but function as substitutes for whole form-classes of words.
3. Words of affirmative and negative distribution; the words are distributed in use according to such grammatical matters as the presence matters or absence of a negative.
4. Content words; that contribute the large majority of vocabulary items. These are the words that function as symbols for the phenomena which we react upon as the word of reality about us, thus symbols *for things, for action, and for quality* (Fries, 1967: 44-48)

Function words consist of auxiliary verbs, preposition, conjunction, interrogative particles, and miscellaneous groups. The miscellaneous groups include the words for degree, for generalization, and articles. Substitute words include the pronouns. Words for negative and affirmative distribution can consist of the words which can change from positive into negative sentence and vice versa, such as: some and any. While content words consist of the words for things, action, qualities and quantities.

From the explanation above, the writer can conclude that there are many experts with their own classification of words. The words classified can be different, but in certain context they are similar. In the eight parts of speech, a word can have more than one word class.

Teaching Vocabulary through Grammar-Translation Method

As the writer told before that Grammar-Translation Method can also be used to present vocabulary. Here is the conclusion of the writer about the steps of presenting vocabulary through the method:

1. Say the word clearly and write it on the board;
2. Get the class to repeat the word in chorus;
3. Translate the word into the students' own language;
4. Ask the students to translate the word from source language to the target language and vice versa;
5. Give an English example to show how the word is used;
6. Translate the English example into the students' own language;
7. Ask the students to make English sentences using the word, then translate them into the students' own language;
8. Correct the sentences grammatically;
9. Ask the students to practise the corrected sentences;
10. Ask questions using the word;

The steps above can be applied variously. The medium of language used in teaching-learning process can be the students' own language or English. The students' own language is used when there is a complicated and special explanation about the word or sentence structure in order that they can understand the explanation easily. English is communicated in order to set English situation and practise the students' speaking skill.

CONCLUSION

Method is the way of doing something. Teaching-learning process can be managed through various methods. The methods can be applied through some techniques. Every method has its own characteristics, advantages and disadvantages, and objectives. Sometimes a method and a technique can be used in certain material only. It cannot be used in other materials. But sometimes it can be suitable for many subject matters. It depends on the teacher's creativity and ability to apply and suit the material and the method.

In presenting English vocabulary, an English teacher can use Grammar-Translation Method. However, it does not mean that the other methods cannot be applied. A subject matter can be suitable for several methods and techniques. That is why, in presenting vocabulary a teacher can apply Grammar-Translation Method especially for beginners of English.

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