



RESEARCH PAPER

Effectiveness of Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching Approach on Students' Achievement in English Grammar

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the study was to seek the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach and Grammar Translation Method (GTM) on students' achievement in English grammar in an EEL context. The study at hand focused on linguistic competence only. The nature of the study was experimental, and a pretest-posttest control group design was used. All seventy-six participants of the seventh class (session 2019-2020) from Govt. Girls Elementary School Ghazi Abad, Okara (Punjab, Pakistan) were selected as the sample of the study. Students were assigned randomly to the experimental or control group based on their pretest scores in the English grammar achievement test. A self-developed Grammar Achievement Test (GAT) was used as both a pre-test and post-test. Pretest scores ensured the equality of groups before the treatment. The experimental group was taught through shallow end approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) whereas the control group was instructed through Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Post-test results showed that students taught through CLT performed better. Therefore, the shallow end approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is recommended to improve students' achievement in English grammar in terms of linguistic competence as well.

Introduction

We are living in a globalized era. Social interaction is the basic element of this era. English is a language of worldwide social interaction (Hedge, 2001). Scholars and researchers have put their scholarship in the investigation of the ways that how to get expertise in productive skills i.e. speaking and writing (Boonkit, 2010). Anatomically, two major teaching approaches gained the attention of the

researchers. The first is Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and the other is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. In the past century, teachers unrecognized the value of communication skills. They just tried to enhance rote learning and dialogic learning (Kayi, 2012). The teaching and learning strategies are changing day by day. Concepts are changing the roles of learners and teachers. The strict control of the class is being considered as a hindrance to a conducive learning environment. The role of the teacher is not of authority but a facilitator in the new changing educational scenario. The classroom is not limited to four walls, especially in the present COVID-19 situation when online learning is taking its place in the worldwide educational system. With this changing scenario, how we can survive with the traditional approaches of teaching English grammar? According to the need of the speedy changing environment, teachers have to adapt such methods that can fulfil the needs of learners and all typical methods should be omitted and replaced by emerging ones (Khan & Mansoor, 2016).

Present Situation of teaching Grammar in Pakistan

English is used as a language of communication all over the world. In Pakistan, English is taught as a compulsory subject from nursery to graduation. According to Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (2006), the core objective of teaching English at the elementary level is to enable the students to communicate effectively both formally and informally using the target language. The problem lies in the fact that after years of instruction, students find grammar boring and are not able to use grammar in real-life situations. Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is highly criticized but frequently used whereas Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is often appreciated by experts but rarely used in Pakistan. Grammar is found the most tedious and challenging aspect of learning English by most of the students. In Pakistan, students' mother tongue is different from the national language Urdu. Consequently, they find English grammar the most difficult part of learning English. The majority of the teachers use GTM and the influence of the first language (Urdu) makes students committing more mistakes while translating each word into the target language (English). Having focused on reading and writing by identifying grammatical structures only leave the learner with low communication skills. Teachers choose the method, and the most suited one for them is the grammar translation method because communicative skills are not tested in examinations. English is being taught as a subject, not as a language in our schools. Teachers also prepare the students to perform well according to examination standards. Language is a living phenomenon and should be taught and assess practically.

Definition of Grammar

Language is made up of words (vocabulary). To give sense to a group of words, we have to follow certain rules. If we compare words to bricks, we need a certain specific plan to join those bricks to turn them into a building. Grammar is that specific plan that describes the rules to arrange a group of words into a

meaningful piece of language. Grammar is a specific framework describing languages (Wen-Foreign, 2018).

Role of Grammar in Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The role of grammar varies in all approaches to teaching English. Here, the role of grammar in GTM and CLT are being discussed. Whether CLT gives due importance to grammar or ignores it at once. The following table answers such questions.

Table 1
Role of grammar in different types of Communicative Language Teaching Approach

Role of Grammar	GTM	CLT
Definition	Grammar is a set of rules to combine words to express meaning.	The ability to use and understand a structure in a variety of situations spontaneously.
Objective	To master grammatical structures	To be able to use grammatical structures in the real communicative situations
Method	Teaches grammar explicitly	Teaches grammar implicitly
Focus	Grammatical competence is necessary for communicative competence	It focuses on teaching grammar in a natural way
Mode	Teaches grammar deductively	Teaches grammar inductively
Known as	Classical method	Modern standard method
Frequency of use	Currently being used by most of the teachers.	Currently being recommended by the British Council in PEELI (Punjab Education English Language Initiative) training and other platforms
Competence	It focuses on linguistic competence.	It focuses on communicative competence.
Accuracy vs fluency	It emphasizes accuracy.	It emphasizes fluency.
Learners' role	Passive	Active
Teacher' Role	Authority	Facilitator
Materials	Textbook	Authentic materials
Mode	Deductive	Inductive
Interaction	Teacher-students	Teacher-student, Student-student, student-students
Response towards error	Strict	Not strict
Use of Native Language	Frequent	Not using native language altogether or far and between

Source: Developed by the researcher for the present study.

Nunns (1991) is of the view that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach employs authentic texts, real-life situations, and learners' own experiences to enable the learners to communicate in foreign language. Communicative language teaching approach has further two types i.e. shallow ended approach and deep ended approach (Wen-Foreign, 2018). The shallow ended approach emphasizes learning grammatical rules and then applying them to actual communicative situations. However, the deep end approach condemns learning grammatical rules beforehand. It suggests learning a language through communicative situations i.e. rules of grammar are learnt unconsciously. On the other hand, the shallow end approach advocates learning grammatical rules beforehand consciously. The difference between GTM and shallow end approach is that in the grammar translation method, grammar is taught deductively whereas grammar is taught inductively through the shallow end approach. In shallow end approach, students are given certain examples (not detached from the context) and they are asked to catch underlying grammatical structures. Students learn underlying rules consciously in shallow end approach by linking new information to already learnt grammatical structures. Deep end approach considers grammar to be a hindrance in learning communicative competence. Overemphasis on communicative competence by deep end approach of communicative language, teaching undermines the importance of grammar.

Table 2
Role of grammar in different types of Communicative Language Teaching Approach

		Shallow End Approach	Deep End Approach
Role of Grammar	of	consciousness-raising	no place for consciousness
		grammar rules should be learnt before the actual performance	no need to learn grammar rules before performing actual communicative tasks

Theoretical Background of GTM and CLT

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has a plethora of procedures for a systematic way to teach English (Celce-Murcia, 2001) tending to analyze the language rather than use it (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is based on the theory of faculty psychology. According to this theory, the human mind has discrete faculties to accomplish different tasks. The faculty of psychology advocates that for the development of the human mind, and language learning, understanding and rote learning of grammatical rules of such language are essential elements (Pal et al., 2004). Faculty psychology confirmed that GTM has a structural syllabus (Zhou & Niu, 2015). The teacher plays an authoritative (sole) role. Students remain passive. Teaching and learning material contains just literary texts, vocabulary lists, and grammar rules. GTM has been heavily criticized for the overuse of the mother tongue (Murtisari, 2020). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach replaced the Situational Language Teaching (SLT). Situational Language Teaching (SLT) was an approach based on behaviourist psychology, which emphasized the drilling (Klapper, 2006).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach influenced by sociolinguistics (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). So, this approach is based upon the social learning theory presented by Lev Vygotsky (Turuk, 2008).

However, we find many research studies conducted to explore the effects of CLT on the teaching of English as a whole emphasizing mainly on communicative competence. Nevertheless, few research studies deal with the question of whether CLT is effective to teach linguistic competence in grammar as well. Moreover, most of the studies intend to measure perceptions of teachers and students about the effectiveness of CLT to teach grammar rather than measuring its effectiveness in terms of achievement scores. The study at hand tries to fulfil this gap. Moreover, the studies conducted on this aspect have different results suggesting no single conclusion. If we adopt CLT, do we need to compromise grammatical competence? Can we achieve grammatical competence with the communicative language teaching approach? Here this study aims at focusing on whether communicative language teaching approach apart from its claim for communication, can be employed in our local conditions without comprising on form aspect of language. Will the new approach be effective in terms of students' achievement in English grammar?

Material and Methods

Research Design

The nature of the study was experimental. Pretest posttest control group design was used to conduct the study.

Participants

The population of the study was all the 7th-grade students (academic secession 2019-2020) studying in Govt Girls Elementary School Ghazi Abad Okara (Pakistan). Initially, eighty students were included in the study but only 76 students were retained at the end of the experiment. Students were assigned either to experimental or control groups based on their pretest scores on the achievement test of English grammar. Each group consisted of thirty-eight participants. Drop out was the basic reason for students' exclusion from the post-test. When one participant leaves one group, a reciprocal participant in the other group is also excluded from post-test to reduce the effect of mortality. As a result, four participants (two from each group) were not included in the post-test results.

Instrument

Initially, the researcher developed a draft of 120 multiple-choice items. The content of the test consisted of the topics given in the curriculum framework 2006 for class 7th. Grammatical topics, i.e., parts of speech, kinds of tenses, transitional devices, sentence structure, and punctuation were included in the test. The validity of the test was ensured by experts' opinion and Kuder Richardson formula 20 was

used to calculate reliability. Item difficulty and discrimination index were calculated for each item. The instrument was pilot tested on thirty students of Govt. Girls Elementary School 54/2L, Okara. The final instrument consisted of sixty multiple-choice items having twenty items for each domain of Bloom Taxonomy, i.e., Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application with reliability 0.92.

Treatment

Both the experimental and control groups were taught by the researcher herself. Shallow End Approach of Communicative Language Teaching was used to teach the experimental group while the control group was instructed through the grammar translation method. The pre-test was taken in the third week of August 2019. Twenty-four lessons were delivered to both groups starting from the fourth week of August 2019 to the second week of December 2019. The post-test was administered in the last week of December 2019.

Results and Discussion

Ho1: There is no significant difference between control and experimental group on achievement in English grammar on the pretest.

Table 3
Comparison of mean achievement scores of the control group and experimental group in English grammar on the pretest.

	Group	N	M(SD)	df	t	p
Students' achievement in English Grammar	Control	38	21.63(6.51)	74	.134	.896
	Experimental	38	21.42(7.16)			

N=76, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 3 explains that difference in the mean scores for control (M= 21.63, S.D. =6.51) and experimental group (M=21.42, S.D. =7.16) is not significant as p=0.896 >α=0.05. Calculated t-value for df (74) =.134 is less than table value 1.99 at 0.05 level. There is no significant difference in mean achievement scores of the control group and experimental group in English grammar on the pretest. Students of both groups performed equally before treatment.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between pre and posttest achievement scores in English grammar of the control group and experimental group

Table 4
Summary of comparison of pre and posttest results of experimental and control groups

Test	Control Group					Experimental Group				
	N	M(SD)	t	p	D	N	M(SD)	t	p	d
Pretest	38	21.63(6.6)	14.223	.000	2.1	38	21.42(7.16)	14.893	.000	2.6
Posttest	38	36.395(7.5)				38	43.13(9.22)			

Table 4 suggests that there is a significant difference in terms of grammar mean achievement scores for both groups i.e. experimental and control groups. However, it is evident from table 2 that the experimental group performed better.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the control and experimental group on achievement in English grammar on the posttest.

Table 5
Comparison of mean achievement scores of the control group and experimental group in English grammar on post-test.

	Group	N	M(SD)	df	t-value	p	d
Students' achievement in English Grammar	Control Group	38	36.39(7.5)				
	Experimental Group	38	43.13(9.2)	74	3.494	.001	0.81

N=76, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 5 explains that the experimental group mean scores (M= 43.13, SD =9.2) is higher than the control group mean score (M=36.39, SD =7.5). Mean difference between both groups is significant at $\alpha=0.01$ level as $p=0.001 < \alpha=0.01$ and calculated t-value for df (74) = 3.494 is greater than table value 2.648 at 0.01 level with negligible effect size $d=0.81$. There is a significant difference in students' posttest mean achievement scores of English grammar who are taught through the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Shallow End Approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Students taught through communicative language-teaching performed better as compared with that of instructed through the Grammar Translation Method (GTM).

Ho4: There is no significant difference between the control and experimental group at the knowledge, comprehension and application level of achievement in English grammar on the posttest.

Table 6
Comparison of mean achievement scores of the control group and experimental group at Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application level of English grammar on post-test

Students' achievement in English Grammar	Respondent	N	M(SD)	df	t-value	Sig.value	d
Knowledge Level	Control Group	38	12.34(2.91)				
	Experimental Group	38	14.61(3.58)	74	3.02	.003	0.7
Comprehension Level	Control Group	38	12.13(3.27)				
	Experimental Group	38	14.24(3.28)	74	2.80	.006	0.64
Application Level	Control Group	38	11.92 (2.45)				
	Experimental Group	38	14.29(3.27)	74	3.56	.001	0.83

Group

N=76, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 6 illustrates that experimental group mean scores (M= 14.61, SD =3.58) is higher than control group mean score (M=12.34, SD =2.91) on knowledge level. Mean difference between both groups is significant at $\alpha=0.01$ level as $p=0.003 < \alpha=0.01$ and calculated t-value for df (74) = 3.02 is greater than table value 2.648 at 0.01 level with negligible effect size $d=0.7$.

On Comprehension level as well, experimental group mean scores (M= 14.24, SD =3.28) is higher than the control group mean score (M=12.13, SD =3.27). The mean difference between both groups is significant at $\alpha=0.01$ level as $p=0.006 < \alpha=0.01$ and the calculated t value for df (74) = 2.80 is greater than table value 2.648 at 0.01 level with negligible effect size $d=0.64$. The same is the case with the Application level, experimental group mean scores (M= 14.29, SD =3.27) is higher than the control group mean score (M=11.92, SD =2.45). The mean difference between both groups is significant at $\alpha=0.01$ level as $p=0.001 < \alpha=0.01$ and the calculated t value for df (74) = 3.56 is greater than table value 2.648 at 0.01 level with negligible effect size $d=0.83$.

Students taught through the shallow end approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) performed better as compared with that of instructed through Grammar Translation Method (GTM) on all three levels of the cognitive domain of Bloom taxonomy.

Ho5: There is no significant difference in gain achievement scores in English grammar between control and experimental.

Table 7
Comparison of gain means achievement scores of the control group and experimental group in English grammar on post-test

	Group	N	M(SD)	df	t	p	d
Gain Score	Control	38	14.76(6.39)	74	3.882	.000	0.90
	Experimental	38	21.71(8.98)				

N=76, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 6 explains that the experimental group mean scores (M=21.71, SD =8.98) is higher than the control group mean score (M= 14.76, SD =6.39). The mean difference between both groups is significant at $\alpha=0.05$ level as $p=.000 < \alpha=0.05$ with calculated t value for df (74) = 3.882 is greater than table value 1.99 at 0.05 level. There exists a significant difference in students' gain mean achievement scores of English grammar who are taught through the GTM and CLT.

Findings

1. Students of both groups performed equally before treatment.

2. Students of both groups performed significantly better after treatment.
3. The experimental group (students taught through shallow end approach of communicative language teaching) performed better as compared with that of the control group (instructed through GTM) at Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application levels.

Discussion

The conclusions of the present study suggest that both Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Shallow End Approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are effective to teach English grammar. Earlier researches support this conclusion. Grammar Translation Method enjoyed supremacy and was considered the most popular method. Chang (2011) also said that Grammar Translation Method is the most popular method of teaching English in China still today.

A study conducted by Fereidoni et al. (2018) concluded that medical students enrolled in Urmia University of Medical Sciences (UMSU) were satisfied with GTM. CLT is not required by learners studying English for specific purposes. Thirty-five students were included in the study, taught for three months and afterwards, a questionnaire was used to measure their attitude towards GTM. Wang (2013) conclusion in his doctoral study that GTM is better than CLT on learning translation skills whereas CLT is better on oral production is partially compatible with present study results.

However, CLT is more effective than the GTM to teach students English grammar on Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application levels. The study conducted by Khan, Ayaz, and Saif (2016) confirm the results of present study. He argued that CLT is a better approach because CLT makes use of activities and ensures active participation of students in the learning process. Present results are also supported by Chang (2011) having a view that GTM is a powerful method to teach English grammar but a combination of GTM and CLT can perform better. He further argued that the target of English learning is both fluency and accuracy. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes fluency whereas GTM advocates accuracy. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach can be tailored according to the local needs to achieve the goal of teaching successfully. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is not aimed at analyzing the language but using pronunciation, vocabulary, and collocations for communication as well. The researcher found no evidence in previous studies investigating the effectiveness of teaching methods concerning Bloom Taxonomy.

Results suggest that CLT is equally effective to teach grammar. It does not ignore grammar but it has added the role of grammar in the sense that the linguistic competence gained through grammar should be acquired through communicative activities resulting in communicative competence. Mamaliga (2020) also favoured using activities to teach English. Grammar's role has been shifted from a set of

linguistic structures to a thing that needs to be used in real life. Grammar function has changed the way of teaching it as well. Communicative activities can be used to teach grammar. Grammar is a communicative resource. CLT can be defined to teach through communicative activities to enable the learners to communicate in the target language. Therefore, communicative activities like group discussion; oral play etc can be used to teach grammar. Students find it interesting to learn grammar while structures are taught in context. Group discussion helps them to understand grammatical concepts thoroughly.

CLT is an approach, not a method. It can be tailored according to the needs and levels of the learners. To our local needs (Punjab, Pakistan), shallow end approach of CLT is better because it allows conscious use of learning grammatical structures without the use of translation. Moreover, CLT principles can be tailored /merged in GTM. whereas strict rules OF GTM does not allow such flexibility. The results of the study are supported by previous researches. Results of the experimental study conducted by Ho & Binh (2014) showed that students instructed through CLT scored higher scores on grammar test than taught through GTM but the difference between both groups was statistically insignificant. Both groups performed equally before treatment and significantly better after treatment. However, the group taught through CLT performed significantly better than the control group on oral tests. It showed that students taught through CLT were able to use grammatical knowledge in real-life situations as well. Moreover, students' attitudes were found more favourable to CLT as compared to GTM. Baydikova and Davidenko (2019) also concluded after a detailed review and discussion about using CLT to teach grammar communicatively that CLT motivates learners to learn grammar and the use of authentic materials and real-life situations enable them to use grammar structures in meaningful communicative situations.

If we try to find out which method is best to teach English grammar. Results of previous studies suggest that the method should be tailored according to the needs of the learners, their proficiency level and the objective of learning a language (Asl, 2015).Kalia (2017) wrote a detailed review article on the comparison of CLT and GTM in Indian settings (foreign language classroom). Omari (2020) suggested teacher training to improve teachers' abilities to employ CLT. Conclusions given at the end suggested that no single method fits for all. A teacher should tailor his/her method of teaching according to the needs of the students. Method should be adopted according to the objectives of the study and the context of teaching as well. Method is not good or bad, it is the way, it is taught. A bad method taught in a good way is better than a good method badly taught. It is not suitable to rely upon one method to teach a language successfully. Teachers should adapt a method rather than adopting it (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

Conclusions

Following conclusions were drawn from the above discussion:

1. Both Grammar Translation Method and Shallow End Approach of CLT are effective in terms of students' achievement in English grammar.
2. Shallow end approach of CLT is more effective than the GTM to teach students English grammar on Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application levels.
3. English language teaching method should be tailored according to the objectives, proficiency level, and needs of the learners. Flexible rules of Shallow End Approach of Communicative Language Teaching helps the teacher to the tailoring of the method according to students' needs and learning objectives.

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