

## GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD IN ENGLISH LEARNING SITUATION: IS IT EFFECTIVE FOR INCREASING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY?

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the role of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in enhancing students' vocabulary development through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of relevant studies published between 2014 and 2023. The data were drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles selected using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data collection followed the SLR stages of identification, screening, and eligibility, while the analysis employed thematic synthesis to categorize findings across studies. The reviewed literature indicates that GTM consistently contributes to vocabulary development through translation activities, explicit grammar explanations, and structured vocabulary lists. Several studies also show that GTM becomes more effective when combined with modern learning media, such as crossword puzzle applications, comic-based materials, and digital resources. Although GTM originates from traditional language-teaching practices, the findings demonstrate that it continues to support vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and linguistic accuracy across diverse educational contexts. Overall, this review concludes that GTM remains a valuable method, particularly when innovatively modified or integrated with interactive media to meet the needs of contemporary learners.

**Keywords:** Grammar Translation Method, Vocabulary Learning, English Language Teaching, Systematic Literature Review, Translation Technique

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini menelusuri peran Metode Terjemahan Gramatikal (GTM) dalam meningkatkan penguasaan kosakata siswa melalui Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis (SLR) terhadap studi-studi yang diterbitkan pada rentang tahun 2014 hingga 2023. Data penelitian diperoleh dari artikel jurnal bereputasi yang dipilih berdasarkan kriteria inklusi dan eksklusi yang telah ditetapkan. Proses pengumpulan data mengikuti tahapan SLR, yaitu identifikasi, penyaringan, dan penilaian kelayakan, sedangkan analisis dilakukan menggunakan sintesis tematik untuk mengelompokkan temuan dari berbagai penelitian. Literatur yang ditinjau menunjukkan bahwa GTM secara konsisten membantu peningkatan kosakata melalui kegiatan penerjemahan, penjelasan tata bahasa secara eksplisit, dan penyajian daftar kosakata yang terstruktur. Beberapa studi juga menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas GTM meningkat ketika dipadukan dengan media pembelajaran modern seperti aplikasi teka-teki silang, bahan berbasis komik, dan sumber digital. Meskipun GTM berasal dari metode pengajaran tradisional, temuan penelitian menegaskan bahwa metode ini tetap mendukung pembelajaran kosakata, pemahaman membaca, dan ketepatan linguistik dalam berbagai konteks pendidikan. Secara keseluruhan, tinjauan ini menyimpulkan bahwa GTM masih menjadi metode yang relevan, terutama ketika dimodifikasi secara inovatif atau dipadukan dengan media interaktif sesuai kebutuhan pembelajar masa kini.

**Kata Kunci:** Metode Terjemahan Gramatikal, Pembelajaran Kosakata, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Ulasan Literatur Sistematis, Teknik Terjemahan

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Nur (2010) the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) aims to enable pupils to study and translate famous works of literature from other countries. The goal of this approach was to help pupils read and appreciate literature in foreign languages. One of the more conventional approaches to teaching languages is grammar-translation. Despite having a distinct name, its methods for teaching languages are the same or comparable to those used throughout the history of teaching and learning foreign languages (Temizgöl, 2013).

The key to knowledge that opens readers' doors to lofty concepts is their vocabulary. When learning a new notion, proficiency with the language's lexical items is crucial. Any student who is proficient in word usage does exceptionally well in their studies of various disciplines. One of the key components of language learning and usage is expanding one's vocabulary. Indeed, it is what constitutes a language's core. He makes the case that the foundation of all language learning and usage is vocabulary acquisition. Speakers of a language cannot communicate with one another or express meaning without vocabulary (Jose, 2015). The student could utilize the dictionary to understand L2 words and phrases. By using a dictionary, students can discover the precise definition and meaning of words and phrases. Developing a vocabulary involves both learning how to pronounce words and compiling a list of them. The electronic dictionary provides the terms' definitions and pronunciations (Suseno et al., 2022).

The Grammar Translation Method is the simplest way for an English teacher to teach their target language, while emphasizing the value of vocabulary and grammatical principles. Having a first language is a fundamental method for learning the grammar rules of the target language. It demonstrates that the Grammar Translation Method requires students to understand syntax and apply their knowledge of grammar when translating. According to Prastyo (2015) by mastering the grammar through the Grammar Translation Method, the students can read and understand a text easily by identifying the structure of a sentence in a text. According to Rodgers et al., (1999) The Grammar Translation Method is characterized by several key features that shape its instructional practices. These characteristics can be seen as follows:

- Classes are conducted using the students' first language with minimal use of the target language.
- Vocabulary is taught primarily through lists of isolated words.
- Detailed explanations of grammatical rules and structures are provided.
- Grammar instruction focuses on rules for combining words, with emphasis on forms and inflections.

- Students are introduced to complex classical reading texts early in the learning process.
- Limited attention is given to the content or meaning of texts, which are mainly treated as grammatical analysis exercises.
- Grammar teaching emphasizes realistic language situations, and after explanations, teachers may allow students to practice the language in controlled classroom settings.

Prastyo (2015) further added that the grammar translation approach is still helpful for teaching and learning languages, particularly when it comes to accuracy. Accurately learning English is crucial, particularly for reading, since it can aid students in comprehending the sentence structure of a text. By identifying sentence components like part of speech, noun determiner, tenses, etc., this condition can aid pupils in understanding a book. Since learning English entails learning to read, this condition can aid pupils in understanding a text more readily. Since grammar is an essential component of a language, both instructors and students have historically placed a high value on teaching and studying it. For the reasons listed above, researchers and English teachers must figure out how to make grammar instruction and learning efficient and successful (Chang, 2011).

There are some empirical reviews related to this study. Firstly, Katemba (2023) conducted a study about Vocabulary Enhancement Using Crossword Puzzle (Word Link) & GTM. Secondly, Sukraningsih & Karmini (2023) conducted a study about The Use Of the Grammar Translation Method in English Learning in the Sub-Districts' Junior High Schools In Tabanan Regency. Much more research related is cited in this paper and further discussed in the findings and discussions. Different from previous studies, this study is new because it modifies GTM to meet the needs of modern learners. The main focus of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of past studies to understand how GTM helps to students' vocabulary development and to find different adaptations of GTM that are still effective in modern learning situations.

## **METHOD**

This study used a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to analyze previous research on the Grammar Translation Method and vocabulary learning. The data were collected from Google Scholar, ERIC, and ScienceDirect using keywords such as "*Grammar Translation Method,*" "*vocabulary improvement,*" and "*English Language Teaching.*" The inclusion criteria were: (1) studies published between 2014–2023, (2) empirical research focusing on GTM, and (3) full-text articles in English. Studies unrelated to GTM, lacking empirical data, or duplicated were excluded. The selected articles were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common patterns, results, and innovations related to the use of GTM in vocabulary development.

## RESULT

There are some studies used to obtain the findings in this research, as it is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Related research (newest to latest)

No.	Author	Title	Findings
1	Katamba (2023)	Vocabulary Enhancement Using Crossword Puzzle (Word Link) & GTM.	The adoption of GTM utilizing the Word Link application (crossword puzzle) has a good and statistically significant impact on the vocabulary development of students, according to the findings of this study. The crossword puzzle word Link apps appear to aid youngsters in expanding their vocabularies, and it is recommended that teachers employ this strategy while teaching and studying English, particularly in the early grades in elementary school.
2	Sukraningsih & Karmini (2023)	The Use of Grammar Translation Method In English Learning To The Sub-Districts' Junior High Schools In Tabanan Regency.	In accordance with data analysis, it was obtained that (1) Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was used in learning process includes the phases of observing, questioning, collecting data, associating, communicating, (2) Grammar Translation Method was used to increase students' knowledge and skills in reading and writing. (3) The difficulties faced by the students were utilizing the appropriate vocabulary and structuring sentences. The conclusion of this research is the use of Grammar Translation Method is still required to increase students' capability and skills, especially in reading and writing.
3	Akramy et al. (2022)	Afghan EFL Teachers' perceptions towards Grammar- Translation Method (GTM).	Furthermore, the results also showed that participants considered GTM a very important method of teaching because it helped them teach grammar rules properly. Another finding of the study was that teachers would often translate short passages, instructions and any language items into L1 in order to help learners to learn the target language. Moreover, the study revealed that applying Grammar-Translation Method in language classroom affected the students' performance. It also showed that there were not any statistically significant differences by their gender, age, and teaching experience except their language.
4	Spahiu & Kryeziu (2021)	A Contrastive Study of Grammar Translation Method and Direct Method in Teaching of English Language to Primary School Pupils.	Moreover, in a class where Grammar Translation Method is used the target language is used less while the students are mainly taught in their national language, i.e. L1. Therefore, since this method was less effective in preparing the learners to use the target language communicatively, a new method was

No.	Author	Title	Findings
			introduced. Thus, the Direct Method became used and popular among learners and teachers.
5	Suseno & Setiawan (2020)	Teaching Grammar To Young Learners Using Comic Strips And GTM And The Impact On Their Speaking Skills.	By implementing this kind of method, the students could enhance their speaking skills. They also have the opportunity to experience with language use and support their progress in speaking. This kind of development could be seen from the result of the pre-test and post-test. The progress of development was significant which reflect the positive impact of comic strips and GTM on children speaking skills.
6	Habibah (2019)	The Effects of Teaching Media And Grammar Mastery Towards Students' Speaking Skill At State Junior High Schools In Tangerang Banten.	The research findings show that there is a significant effect of teaching media towards students' speaking skill at State Junior High Schools Cisauk in Tangerang Banten, there is a significant effect of grammar mastery towards students' speaking skill at State Junior High Schools Cisauk in Tangerang Banten, and there are significant interactive effects of teaching media and grammar mastery towards students' speaking skill at State Junior High Schools Cisauk in Tangerang Banten. Therefore, it can be recommended that the teachers should provide teaching media in teaching speaking skill and the students should have a good grammar mastery to have a good speaking skill.
7	Lyubova et al. (2014)	Grammatical and Communicative Method - A New Approach in the Practice of Teaching Foreign Languages.	This implies the international exams - TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System). It is reported that modern teaching methods have various disadvantages, the main one is the lack of the grammatical material study. The author has developed a grammatical and communicative method and new tutorial which can help to solve this problem successfully. A more comprehensive and in-depth study of grammar is encouraged for students and professionals in order to pass exams for international certification and for further education and training abroad.

## DISCUSSIONS

The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) in English language instruction is the subject of all the studies, with a particular emphasis on how it helps students improve their reading comprehension, translation abilities, and grammar knowledge. Numerous research examines how GTM affects speaking abilities when combined with other instructional techniques as vocabulary games (Katemba, 2023) and comic strips (Suseno & Setiawan, 2020). Furthermore, several evaluate GTM's efficacy in various learning environments by contrasting it with other

approaches such as the Grammatical-Communicative Method (Lyubova et al., 2014) or the Direct Method (Spahiu & Kryeziu, 2021).

Although these comparisons, the studies' precise research topics, approaches, and settings vary. While some use experimental designs to evaluate GTM's effect on student achievement (Katemba, 2023; Habibah, 2019), others look at how teachers perceive it (Akramy et al. 2022; Sukraningsih & Karmini, 2023). Variations in language learning environments are highlighted by research settings ranging from Indonesian junior high and elementary schools (Habibah, 2019; Katemba, 2023) to Afghan universities (Akramy et al. 2022). Different methodological techniques are also used, such as comparative studies (Spahiu & Kryeziu, 2021), qualitative analysis (Sukraningsih & Karmini, 2023), and creative GTM integrations with contemporary tools.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Grammar Translation Method effectively enhances language learning by emphasizing vocabulary and grammar, allowing students to understand and translate literature. Despite its traditional roots, modern adaptations of GTM address contemporary learning needs, highlighting its relevance in accurate comprehension and effective teaching strategies.

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