A Contrastive Analysis of English Language Teaching Methods

Masood Akhtar Memon (M.Phil. Scholar)
Abdul Malik Abbasi (Ph.D.)
Tariq Umrani (Ph.D.)
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Abstract

The present paper investigates two important teaching methods of English in a second language classroom setting i.e., Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching. This close-ended study was carried out to compare and analyze Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The study basically looks at both teaching methods from the perspective of English language teachers show they prioritize either GMT or CLT methods as to be more effective tools of teaching at college level in three districts of Sindh. For data collection, a questionnaire was designed containing twenty queries favoring GTM in first ten and CLT in next ten queries in sequence in order to find out which teaching method is more effective. The questionnaire was close-ended with a Likert Scale range of five: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The participating subjects were randomly recruited from three districts of Sindh e.g., Jamshoro, Shikarpur and Jacobabad. The findings of the study show sixty percentage of the subjects favored GTM while, forty percentage language teachers favored CLT method as an effective method.

Keywords: Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Language Teaching (LT), Second Language Acquisitions (SLA)

Introduction

The present paper is based on the analysis of twenty statements in questionnaire along with the responses of English language teachers, interview protocols and the authors' observations regarding GTM and CLT methods. It has always been a problem for language teachers to choose the most effective way of teaching a foreign or second language. Therefore, the field of language teaching has witnessed a number of trends and movements.

Murcia (2001) argued this as 'the field of second language or foreign language has undergone many fluctuations and swifts over the years'. Many methods and approaches were developed, applied and discarded in order to try out for the most effective teaching language method.

In addition, language teachers have proposed various language teaching methods. For instance, linguists in twentieth-century proposed nine methods of language teaching e.g., grammar translation method, direct method, reading method, audio-lingual, oral situational, cognitive method, affective-humanistic, comprehension-based and communicative language teaching. This paper presents the old grammar translation method versus the modern communicative language teaching method.

Literature review

Grammar Translation Method

Grammar translation method is also known as translation method and Classical Method of Language Teaching (Elizabeth, 2004). Grammar translation Method was popular in the past, even today it enjoys the profound popularity among the language teachers (Elizabeth, 2004). It focuses on teaching grammar in a language class (Murcia, 2001), it was used to teach the target language by translating the passages of target language into the mother tongue (Elizabeth, 2004). The selection of words were taken from the texts used for translation, and the meaning of the vocabulary was taught through bilingual word list or dictionaries and memorization (Richards& Rodgers, 2001).The rules of grammar are taught explicitly and clearly explained by giving texts for translation. Grammar translation method is still one of the most important and effective way of teaching a foreign or second language (Elizabeth, 2004) and is also being used in many parts of the world including Pakistan.

It is widely used in the language teaching institutes of Pakistan as compared to the Communicative Language Teaching which has not replaced Grammar Translation Method in Pakistan yet.

GTM was originally developed to teach dead languages such as Latin and Greek (Elizabeth, 2004) where no or less importance was given to spoken communications (Murcia,

2001).GTM dominated European countries and foreign language teaching from 1840s to 1940s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Early linguists believed that the language can be taught and learnt properly or effectively through the translation method (Elizabeth, 2004) therefore GTM stressed the form and memorizing conjugations (Murcia, 2001). The primary skills for GTM are reading and writing, little or no systematic attention is paid to listening and speaking (Richards, &Rodgers, 2001). Elizabeth (2004) says that GTM was also assumed to be enabling non-native learners to enhance their skills in getting more familiar with the grammar of their mother language. Elizabeth presents the following principles on which the grammar translation method was based:

- 'Teaching of a foreign language through translation is easy, quick and economical.
- 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.
- The knowledge of rules helps learners to avoid type of mistake'.

Richards et al. (2001) argued that GTM was first known in the States as Prussian method and some of its first users called it the creation of German scholars. In the middle of the 19th century, GTM was opposed in many of the European countries. This opposition paved the way for the development of new ways of teaching English language. According to one of the critics of GTM, the method aimed to know "everything about something rather than the thing itself" (Richards& Rodgers, 2001). The proponents of GTM claimed that the second language learners, through it, were able to read the literature of target language properly and they could easily translate from one language to another which ultimately enabled these learners to develop and excel their writing and reading skills (ibid).

According to Murcia (2001), the key points of GTM are as follows:

- 'Instruction is given in the native language of the students.
- There is little use of the target language for the communication

- Focus is on grammatical parsing. i.e., the form and identification of words.

- There is early reading of difficult texts.

- A typical exercise is to translate sentences from the target language into the mother tongue or vice versa.

- The result of this approach is usually an inability on the part of the learner to use the language for communication.

- The teacher does not have to be able to speak the target language.

- Long elaborate explanations of the intricacies of grammar are given.

- Grammar provides the rules for putting words together, and instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.

- Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.*'*

In addition, Richards et al. (2001) stated that GTM is the way of teaching and studying language through the teaching of grammar rules in detail followed by the application of knowledge of the target language. It focuses on the memorization of few rules and their understanding to manipulate the sentence structure of the target language.
Elizabeth (2004) explains merits and demerits of GTM in context of English language teaching as follows:

Merits of GTM

- 'This method is very successful in the present day class-rooms, where there are a large number of students in each section.

- By telling the meaning of a word or sentence in mother tongue, the teacher can at once make the students understand. Thus it is less time consuming.

- It is very reliable for giving the students practice of reading with understanding.

- In this method, the teachers as well as the learners are able to facilitate the teaching-learning process.

- Teaching English by using this method does not require lot of labor on the part of the teacher. Thus many teachers who are not habitual of working hard feel happy.

- By using this method, the comprehension of the students can be tested very easily.

- The learners are able to learn many items of English by comparison with mother tongue. That makes learning more clearly and firm'.

Demerits of GTM

- 'This method ignores the practice of oral work to the students which is the most important aspect in the teaching of any language.
- In this method, reading comes first and speaking afterwards. That is very unnatural.
- This method wastes a lot of time of student because everything has to be translated compulsorily.
- The translation work is always approximate. So the learner is not able to learn things accurately.
- Through translation work, the real spirit of meanings contained in the sentence is missed.
- It does not provide opportunity for silent reading.
- It lays more emphasis on the rules of grammar which is not very sound in teaching-learning of a language.
- This method makes the students think in mother tongue and then translate the same into English. In many cases, it may lead to funny expressions.
- It is dull and mechanical method because the learner remains passive mostly.
- It does not help the students to learn correct pronunciation of English.
- The learners can remain absent minded while being taught by this method. Many a time they just try to show their teacher that they are listening to him.
- This method does not help students to learn the language.'

Although the GTM has many drawbacks and there were onlya few advantages but even then it was popularly adopted and utilized until the advent of direct method which gained the attention of linguists (Elizabeth, 2004). GTM is still one of the popular ways of teaching English in many parts of the country (Chang, 2011).

Communicative Language Teaching

Among the different language teaching methods, as discussed above, communicative language Teaching (CLT) is one of the most recent, effective and widely adopted method of teaching language specially English. CLT is the approach that is being used in almost all the European countries, eastern and also some of the gulf countries. CLT was adopted as a reaction to grammar based methods (Richards & Renendya, 2002).This is also called a "new" and "innovative" way of teaching English language as a second or foreign language(Murcia,2001).

According to Murcia (2001) the CLT was developed in order to fulfill the needs of increasing groups of immigrants and guest workers. In addition, a very rich British linguistic tradition led the linguists to develop a syllabus for students based on notional-functional concepts of language use (Murcia, 2001). CLT was derived from neo-Firthian system of linguists (Halliday, 1973;Hymes,1972). These linguists analyzed the language ability for all the major languages of Europe in order to describe what the basic function of a language were (Murcia, 2001). The supporters of CLT began operating the language in terms of Communicative Competence and wanted to introduce it at all the levels of teaching language (Richards &Renendya, 2002). According to Murcia, (2001) the term communicative was attached to all the levels or programs of language teaching which was used as notional-functional syllabus and it was often called as *'principled approach'* (Murcia 2001).

CLT is based on some special tasks assigned to learners (Mukalel, 1998). It provides simulations or such type of situations in or outside the classroom, which also provides opportunities to the language learners to make their communication meaning-based (Mukalel, 1998).

According to Murcia (2001) the assumptions behind CLT are as follows:

- 'It is assumed that the goal of language teaching is learner ability to communicate in the target language.
- It is assumed that the content of a language course will include semantic notions and social functions not just linguistic structures.

- Students regularly work in groups or pairs to transfer meaning in situation in which one has information that the others lack

- Students often engage in role play or dramatization to adjust their use of the target language to different social contexts.

- Classroom materials and activities are often authentic to reflect real life situations and demands.

- Skills are intergraded from the beginning; a given activity might involve reading, speaking, listening and also writing.

- The teachers' role is primarily to facilitate communication and only secondarily to correct errors.

- The teacher should be able to use the target language fluently and appropriately'.

Richards & Rodgers (2001) state: 'communicative language teaching is a kind of vehicle which conveys the meaning involving two parts of it which are speaker and listener', the knowledge is transferred using these two parts and other two which are writer and reader, the desired goal of communicative language teaching is "Communication Competence", and the competence which is achieved through CLT.

Savignon (1983) introduced his famous classroom model to tell the linguistic learning level of the learners based on the term 'Communication Competence', this term was coined by Dell Hymes in 1960s. Mukalel (1998) shows it into "inverted pyramid" which is the integration of four major components: 'socio-cultural competence, grammatical competence, discourse competence and strategic competence' (Murcia, 2001). This model shows that how thoroughly the wide range of practice and experience of communicative contexts and events; the learners slowly and gradually gain and expand their communicative competence (Richards& Rodgers, 2001). According to Murcia (2001) these all four components are interrelated and one depends on another, she asserts 'rather an increase in one component interacts with other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence' as illustrated in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1. Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence

Components of Communicative Competence
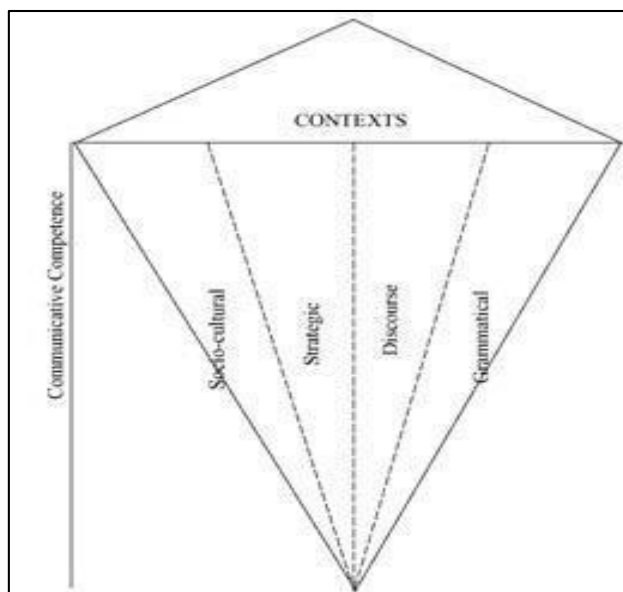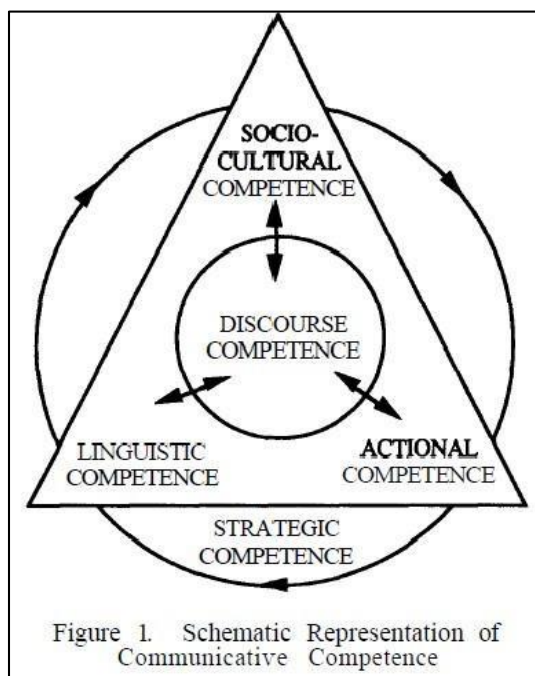
Some of the disadvantages or demerits of Communicative Language Teaching are mentioned by Richards& Rodgers, (2001):

- 'CLT gives very little guidance about how to handle the vocabulary; however it gives more guidance to the functional and practical communication.

- CLT gives stress to only single concept of "Communication", other all varieties of language teaching have almost been unnoticed while unnecessary expansion is given to Communication only.

- Critics of CLT sometimes criticizes that it focus on learner centered approach, while in some case it is considered that learners bring preconception of what teaching and learning should be like.

- CLT does not provide much focus on EFL while it origin was teaching English as foreign language.

- The most difficult problem in CLT is the absence of native speakers, which does not provide the learners the exposure of English language through native speakers.

- CLT cannot be seen as a panacea for the problems that have been isn't a fix framework of CLT'.

Research Question

1. Which of the two methods i.e., GMT and CLT is more effective teaching method in the three districts of Sindh?

Methodology

This close-ended study was carried out in order to have the first-hand information about two English language teaching methods in question in the context of three districts of Sindh. There are various methods of teaching English language in vogue for instance the modern communicative language teaching (CLT) and the old grammar translation method (GTM) which are widely being adapted and used all over the world. This research was carried out to investigate which of these two methods is more effective in target area. The research queries are as follows:

Material

A questionnaire was developed in light of the activities of these teaching methods in order to collect data as a tool of this research paper. The questionnaire contained twenty items based on Likert Scale range five: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. These items were related to the classroom activities and situations, asking the participating subjects about their understanding of English teaching methods. The questionnaire was also divided into two parts: first ten items contained the queries in favor of GTM, whereas, the next ten items contained the queries in favor of CLT.

Population

The present study recruited ten English language teachers from three districts of Sindh. These English language teachers had a teaching experience of five to ten years at college level. Their age ranged between 30 to 40 years. Two teachers were approached in the district of Shikarpur, three teachers were from Jacobabad district while five English language teachers were from district Jamshoro (Cadet College Petaro).

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Data Analysis

A close-ended study was conducted in order to find out which method is more effective relatively in light of responses taken through questionnaire from the respondents. The questionnaire contained first ten questions in favor of GTM whereas; the other ten queries were in favor of CLT. After the collection of data, the following results were analyzed in light of queries through questionnaire as follows:

Q1. A teacher should be able to speak the target language in the classroom.

Analysis	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Respondents	2	5	0	2	1
Percentage	20%	50%	0	20%	10%
Results	GTM = 70%		0	CLT = 30%	

Q2. Teacher at first teaches grammar rules to the students in the class.

Analysis	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Respondents	1	4	0	3	2
Percentage	10%	40%	0	30%	20%
Results	GTM = 50%		0	CLT = 50%	

Q3. The best way of teaching English is to teach tenses at the initial stage.

Analysis	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Respondents	3	5	1	1	1

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Percentage	30%	50%	10%	10%	10%
Results	GTM = 80%		10%	CLT = 20%	

Q4. The effective way of teaching English is to ask the student to translate the sentences from native language to target language.

Analysis	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Respondents	2	3	1	2	2
Percentage	20%	30%	10%	20%	20%
Results	GTM = 50%		10%	CLT = 40%	

Q5. Teacher may give learners difficult passages from text to translate into target language in the class.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	3	3	0	2	2
Percentage	30%	30%	0	20%	20%
Results	GTM = 60%		0	CLT = 40%	

Q6. Teacher gives instruction in native language for the better understanding in the class.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	3	2	0	2	3
Percentage	30%	20%	0	20%	30%
Results	GTM = 50%		0	CLT = 50%	

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Q7. Teacher may avoid speaking target language in the class while teaching.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	4	4	0	2	0
Percentage	40%	40%	0	20%	0%
Results	GTM = 80%		0	CLT = 20%	

Q8. Learners should master grammatical structures for better language learning outcomes in class.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	1	6	0	2	1
Percentage	10%	60%	0	20%	10%
Results	GTM = 70%		0	CLT = 30%	

Q9. A teacher can effectively teach English language by teaching rules of the grammar rather than getting accuracy in the target language.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	1	2	0	4	3
Percentage	10%	20%	0	40%	30%
Results	GTM = 30%		0	CLT = 70%	

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Q10. The ultimate goal of teaching language is to get accuracy in the target language rather than to have mastery over the fluency of the learners.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	4	2	2	1	1
Percentage	40%	20%	20%	10%	10%
Results	GTM = 60%		20%	CLT = 20%	

Next ten questions in the Questionnaire contains the questions in the favor of Communicative Language Teaching, the data collected through the responses in the questionnaire is as follows:

Q11. A teacher should pinpoint the mistakes and correct them while language teaching.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	3	2	0	4	1
Percentage	30%	20%	0	40%	10%
Results	CLT = 50%		0	GTM = 50%	

Q12.A teacher facilitates learners to speak in the target language freely in the class.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	1	3	0	3	3
Percentage	10%	30%	0	30%	30%
Results	CLT = 40%		0	GTM = 60%	

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Q13. Teacher creates situations in the class for interaction among the learners in the target language.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	2	3	0	2	3
Percentage	20%	30%	0	20%	30%
Results	CLT = 50%		0	GTM = 50%	

Q14. Grammatical structures are not necessary to teach at the initial level of language teaching.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	1	3	2	2	2
Percentage	10%	30%	20%	20%	20%
Results	CLT = 40%		20%	GTM = 40%	

Q15. Teacher provides language learning activities in the class for meaningful negotiations among the language learners.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	2	1	0	4	3
Percentage	20%	10%	0	40%	30%
Results	CLT = 30%		0	GTM = 70%	

Q16. Teacher should make the learners involve in role playing or dramatization to adjust their use of target language in social contexts.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	2	2	1	3	2
Percentage	20%	20%	10%	30%	20%
Results	CLT = 40%		10%	GTM = 50%	

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Q17. All four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) should be taught at early level for better English language teaching.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	1	5	0	1	3
Percentage	10%	50%	0	10%	30%
Results	CLT = 60%		0	GTM = 40%	

Q18. Learners should be given maximum opportunity to interact and communicate in the target language in the class while teaching.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	3	3	0	1	3
Percentage	30%	30%	0	10%	30%
Results	CLT = 60%		0	GTM = 40%	

Q19. Learners should be free to communicate on the situations created by the teacher in the class.

Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	1	1	1	4	3
Percentage	10%	10%	10	40%	30%
Results	CLT = 30%		10%	GTM = 70%	

Q20. The goal of language teaching should be the ability of learner to communicate in the target language.

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Analysis	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Respondents	3	1	0	4	2
Percentage	30%	10%	0	40%	20%
Results	CLT = 40%		0	GTM = 60%	

Data analysis shows that grammar translation method is still considered as an effective method of teaching English in Sindh since many English language teachers apply this method in their classrooms. Figure 2 illustrates that 60 % English language teachers apply GTM method whereas, 40% teachers apply Communicative language teaching method.
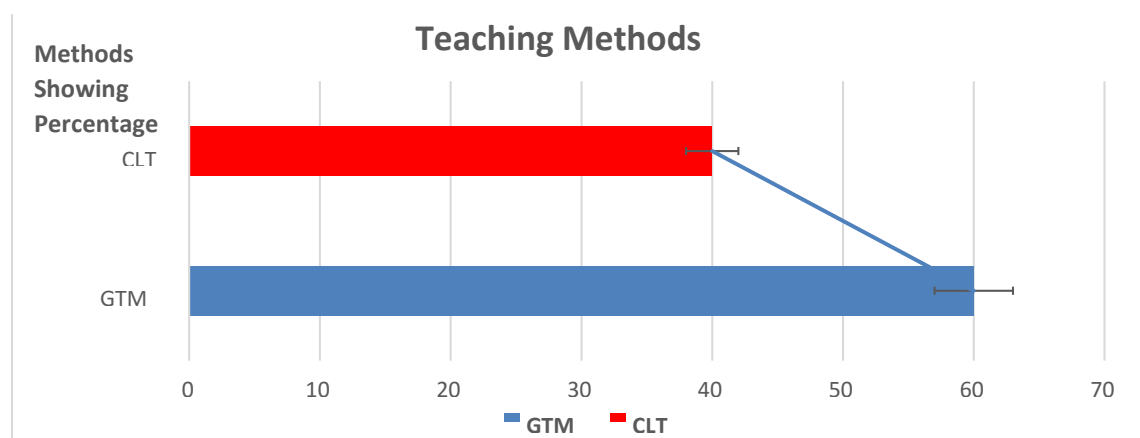
Figure 1. Graph shows percentage of GTM vs CLT methods applied by ELT teachers

Discussion/Suggestion/Conclusion

The findings of the data report that 60% of the target teachers still relied on GTM; however, 40% teachers applied CLT method which, they argued, was a reliable and more effective method of English language teaching. Some of the language teachers did not view CLT to be more effective as compared to GTM. GMT method is very old, but it is still gaining ground in three districts of Sindh despite the emergence of several modern methods. In addition, CLT is quite effective on account of its natural way of teaching and bringing

updated authentic material in the class. However, some teachers considered that it is very difficult even now to teach through CLT since language teachers have still not developed their language teaching skills as prescribed by CLT. Therefore, the teachers seemed to be more inclined to apply the strategies and techniques applied in GTM which they considered that the need of teaching English language could be fulfilled. Teaching of English in these districts should be promoted by training teachers from the districts of Sindh. However, a few institutes are promoting English language teaching, i.e., private sector colleges and universities. English language teachers in Sindh still need more trainings, workshops, seminars, vigorous and consistent development in order to have up-to-date skills to teach English.

The present study was conducted in order to find out which method either GTM or CLT was more effective. Thus, the present study discovered that grammar translation method is more effective in comparison to communicative language teaching method, in three districts of Sindh in view of the responses collected from English language teachers.

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Questionnaire

Name _____ Qualification_____ Profession _____						
City/Town _____ School/College _____						
			25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45
Gender Male Female		Age				

S N	QUESTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	A teacher should be able to speak the target language in the classroom.					

2	Teacher at first teaches grammar rules to the students in the class.					
3	The best way of teaching English to teach tenses at the initial stage.					
4	The effective way of teaching English is to ask the student to translate the sentences from native language to target language.					
5	Teacher may give learners difficult passages from text to translate into target language in the class.					
6	Teacher gives instruction in native language for the better understanding in the class.					
7	Teacher may avoid speaking target language in the class while teaching.					
8	Learners should master the grammatical structures for better language learning outcomes in the class.					
9	A teacher can effectively teach English language by teaching rules of the grammar rather than getting accuracy in the target language.					
10	The ultimate goal of teaching language is to get accuracy in the target language rather than to have mastery over the fluency of the learners.					
11	A teacher should pinpoint the mistakes and correct them while language teaching.					
12	A teacher facilitates learners to speak in the target language freely in the class.					
13	Teacher creates situations in the class for interaction among the learners in the target language.					
14	Grammatical structures are not necessary to teach at the initial level of language teaching.					
15	Teacher provides language learning activities in the class for meaningful negotiations among the language learners.					
16	Teacher should make the learners involve in role playing or dramatization to adjust their use of target language in social contexts.					
17	All four skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) should be taught at early level for better English language teaching.					
18	Learners should be given maximum opportunity to interact and communicate in the target language in the class while teaching.					
19	Learners should be free to communicate on the situations created by the teacher in the class.					

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20	The goal of language teaching should be the ability of learner to communicate in the target language.					

Thank you very much for being the part of this research survey

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Masood Akhtar Memon
(MPhil Researcher)
Lecturer English, Cadet College Petaro
Pakistan
mamasoodmemon@gmail.com

Dr. Abdul Malik Abbasi
(PhD, UMT Lahore)
Lecturer English,
Sindh Madressatul Islam University Karachi
Pakistan
abdulmalikabbasi@hotmail.com

Tariq Umrani
(PhD, Swansea University, Wales)
Assistant Professor,
Institute of English Language & Literature
University of Sindh, Jamshoro
Pakistan
tariqumrani@gmail.com