THE EXISTENCE OF GTM IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO CURRENT STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT. This study investigates three problems, which are the practice of Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in English learning for current students, the students’ attitude on learning English using GTM, and characteristics of students which are best taught using this method. In order to get the data, this study used a qualitative approach to analyze the data and it is a kind of case study. The researcher observed the classroom activity and delivered the questionnaire to the students. After getting the result and analyzing the data, this study draws some conclusions. First, GTM is still effective and needed to teach English to current students. Second, not only passive, but also active students who can take benefits from the implementation of this traditional method because it does not perform pure passive learning, but it is also adjusted with the current students’ characteristics. Third, both fast and slow learners are able to follow the lecturer’s instruction when he teaches using GTM because this method accommodates what the slow learners need to achieve the learning goals.

Keywords: Grammar Translation Method, Current Students, English Learning

INTRODUCTION

There are many kinds of learning method in language learning, which categorized as traditional and modern methods. Both categories have their own advantages to be implemented in specific characteristics of students, meaning that different students’ characteristics need different treatment in learning.

In a learning process, especially language learning, the different characteristics of learners is significantly influence the result of the learning itself. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defined that definition of diversity as differences among groups of people and individuals are based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionailities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area.

In language learning, there are various learning methods which have been created by researchers and scholars for along time. For example Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method, Total Physical Response (TPR), Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), etc. The issue of methodological appropriateness has existed concerning the transfer of language teaching methods to a development context.

In line with technology development and the use of it, educators have tried to maximize the use of the technology to fulfill education needs. Nowadays, e-learning has transformed from a fully online course into using technology to be able to deliver parts or all of a course without permanent time and place consideration.

Related to the use of technology for academic purposes, students seem to be more aggressive in using it, even sometimes they are smarter in optimizing and creating this kind of media than their teachers or lecturers. This situation demands the teachers to follow the

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2 Moore, K.D. and Hansen, J. 2012. Effective Strategies for Teaching in K-8 Classrooms. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452230511
technology development in order to adapt their students’ world. However, not all of the students are able to follow the current methods using online device as the recent media, especially mixed method or blended learning which needs their creativity and criticism in operating it. As the result, some students prefer to learn the target language passively and be introvert in the classroom. One for sure, their different responses and characters demands the teacher to choose the method in teaching foreign language not only because of the technology development, but also the students’ way in comprehending the knowledge. Moreover, there are many obstacles in maximizing the use of online media.

The obstacles faced by the students and teachers in implementing online media prove that the existence of traditional methods is still essential in language learning. Therefore, some modern teachers still use GTM to fulfill the students’ need. The traditional teacher-centered mode is also a guide for students, where the teacher supervises the whole teaching and learning process. It imparts systemic knowledge and academic opinions with speculative philosophy, abundantly emotional thoughts and unique manner which effect students potentially, from which they receive wisdom and power that is good for the development of their intelligence. Using GTM can fulfill the lecturers’ hope to increase the students’ achievement in learning accuracy of English. This accuracy provides appropriate sentences in creating English sentences written and orally and supports the students confidence before they perform their ability in using this language.

Because of the significances of GTM, this method does not lose its popularity in English learning. Even though many lecturers still argue that this method must be combined with the other methods, it does not mean that they underestimate this traditional method. We know that as a traditional method, GTM is the most popular than the others because of its usefulness. Therefore, this research chooses GTM implemented in teaching English for higher education students to be observed and analyzed, so it reveals the real situation in the classroom activities and the students’ comments toward the use of this method.

This study investigates three questions: How the practice of GTM in foreign language learning for current students is; How the students’ attitude on learning English using GTM is; and What characteristics of students which best taught using GTM are. In line with the statement of the problems, this study aims at investigating the process of implementing GTM for current students along with the characteristics of the students which are appropriately taught using the method in language learning. This study also explains the students’ comments on the implementation of this method to know whether this method is able to create comfortable atmosphere for the students. The results of his study provide some significances for educators to consider this method as the alternative in teaching current students as well as facilitating the students with comprehensive learning theory and material, supporting the previous studies emphasizing the significances of GTM in language learning. As the result, it concludes that GTM is still appropriate for teaching English to current students, both active and passive learners because of its simplicity in delivering the foreign language material.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

English has a prestige and a special place among Indonesians’ communication and lifestyle, that may even surpass for Indonesians. Knowledge of English is perceived of as either important or essential by large numbers of people. Related to the use of English in Indonesia, English in Indonesia is more likely to be taught and learned only as a foreign language. This means that learning and teaching English occurs mostly in formal situation such as classrooms, rather than during daily communication.

Grammar Translation Method is a variety of conventional method in English learning which focuses on students’ understanding in sentences’ translation. It is a teaching new language method which is also known as Direct Method. The students have to imitate the pattern and the pronunciation. In Latin and Greek, it is called as Classical Method. Classical or traditional methods serve many benefits for the learners, both in the learning process and the result. Those methods allows the teacher to be closer to the students, that they know the psychological condition and confusion faced by the students directly. Besides, they are able to guide them clearly in discussion conducted in classroom learning.

There are two perspective in understanding learning grammar, narrow and broad. Both perspectives have similar focus on learning method, which is understanding the change of language meaning, although narrow means only learn in pattern of the language, while broad means the implementation of spoken grammatical rule in creating sentences. There are some typical characteristics of Grammar Translation Method as stated as follow:

- The material is written formed, and the goal is translating the language.
- Sometimes students cannot use the target language orally, because their learning focus is not on oral learning.
- The class is teacher-centered
- Teachers sometimes use native language to make the students understand the explanation.
- The contents of text are not the priority.
- Students are reinforced to read at an early stage.
- Mostly, students focus on translating sentences.

Generally, there are some characteristics of young people of 21st century as described by International Education Advisory Board.

1. They like to be in control.
2. They like choice.
3. They are group-oriented and social.
4. They are inclusive.
5. They are practiced users of digital technology.
6. They think differently.

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14International Education Advisory Board. Learning in the 21st Century: Teaching Today’s Students on Their Terms.
They are more likely to take risks.

They value time off because they view life as uncertain.

At a conference of criminology two years ago, it was revealed that the more educators give thought to the construction of their on-campus courses as they do in their online courses, the better all education will be.\(^\text{15}\) Modern language teaching and learning is closely related to the existence of online media or internet access. Even though, it has been estimated, that the time of the online learning takes to transfer knowledge about the online course itself is two to three times that of a traditional course.\(^\text{16}\)

To ensure the effectiveness in teaching, there must be adapting process of new methodology into traditional learning contexts.\(^\text{17}\) Teachers cannot implement and develop the best method to their students if they do not concern the sociocultural aspect in which they are standing, because education is deeply rooted in specific philosophies of teaching and learning. Authentic materials should be the basis for classroom learning and they are not necessary derived from authentic text as long as the learning processes were authentic. The main principle of all communicative approaches is that the learner must not only know how to make a grammatically correct structure, but must also improve the ability to use language to carry out various real-world tasks.\(^\text{18}\)

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used qualitative approach to analyze the data and it is a kind of case study. The researcher observed the classroom activity and delivered the questionnaire to the students. There were three meetings the researcher observed and investigated covering students’ activity, activeness, ability in doing task, understanding to the material, responses toward the lecturer’s explanation and questions, and the other significant aspects which were observed by the researcher. In this research, the researcher had four parts, they were subjects of the study, research instruments, research procedure, and procedure of analyzing the data.

Subject of this study was a class of Non-English Department students taking English 3 level. They were from Islamic Education program with various levels of activeness and competence in English proficiency. In order to get the data, the researcher used three kinds of instrument. There were interview, observation sheet and questionnaire. In analyzing the data which had been gathered, it used several steps, namely data reduction, transcription and coding, data classification, data tabulation, and data description and interpretation.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

According to the lecturer, some students were active and enthusiastic in learning English and responding his questions. The other students only listened to the explanation because they did not have much confidence and courage to answer or perform any English utterance. The lecturer also explained that they were not in high level of English proficiency, meaning that they might not been able to create English sentences appropriately. Moreover, it


was not enough to explain the material once for them, because most of them were not categorized as fast learners. Therefore, the students preferred to be more careful in responding any questions, as well as listened only to the lecturer’s explanation and their friends’ answers. As the result, the lecturer combined Indonesian-English in explaining the material, by using Indonesian often more than English. The observation result showed that the students focus on the learning process during all the learning time, even many of them could take notes related to the lecturer’s explanation by themselves.

Although the students were not categorized as fast learners, they were eager and optimistic to learn English. It could be proven by the observation result, revealing that they could do the task well, and some of them asked the teacher to check their answers of the task.

According to the data gathered by delivering questionnaire and conducting observation, the researcher found that the lecturer were able to implement Grammar Translation Method well. Many students could understand what he explained. This was because the lecturer explained the material step by step, used Indonesian and provided some examples which represented what he was explaining, as the traditional methods’ characteristics. Surprisingly, most of the students argued that Grammar Translation Method is the best method in teaching English for their class.

All of the students enjoyed the learning process. They showed their engagement to understand and learn new thing. When the teacher asked them to respond some questions, they were eager to try to answer, although they did not know whether it would be right or wrong answer. Related to the students’ activeness in English class using GTM, there were only about half of them could participate actively in learning activity. Most of the students argued that GTM enabled them to learn English in easier and more comfortable way. Moreover, most of the students argue that the use of Indonesian and slow explanation helped them so much in understanding the English, even the difficult material such as grammar, which had been the most boring and confusing material for any students.

**Discussion; GTM Accommodates Students in Understanding the Target Language**

Subjects of this research are current higher education students which have been familiar with communicative and technology-based learning. They are more comfortable in using their smartphone rather than reading book and they like to do what they like rather than do what people like. This fact provides a contrastive view with teaching using GTM that emphasizes on teacher-centered learning so the students must listen to the teacher’s explanation and do what the teacher said. The students are not the printed-dictionary users, because there have been many applications which are easy to use to assist them in finding the complete meaning of words, even sentences. In short, the current students are too modern to learn new words or patterns in language learning using traditional methods only. Yet, it does not mean that they cannot gain anything in language learning using GTM.

Based on the principles of GTM, the current students in this research learned English by translating the words grammatically, meaning that if they cannot translate the sentence grammatically they have not reached the learning goal. They have to know the pattern before they create the sentences because they have known that English sentences have different patterns based on different context of time. This is in line with the concept of GTM explained

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by the previous researchers.\textsuperscript{20} The students’ anxiety in using wrong pattern influences them so much in producing English sentences orally and written. Absolutely, it is also influenced by their lack of practicing English, especially in listening and reading any English sources. This condition needs the lecturer’s hard effort to engage, motivate, and increase the students’ confidence to use English in their communication.

Actually, engaging the modern students is not an easy activity for the lecturer as they are the generation which can use their own strategies to solve their problem\textsuperscript{21}. But it does not mean that they have capability in mastering new language without any assistance from their lecturer. The fact shows that GTM is able to accommodate the students’ need in learning English as a foreign language and solve their problem in creating English sentences\textsuperscript{22}. This method provides the students chance to prepare themselves before they perform their ability in practicing English. Moreover, many students said that this method is appropriate for them because they are not fast learners in English class. Although the current students are called as digital users, sometimes the machine cannot provide what they need. For example, when the students want to produce a recount or narrative text, it is impossible for them to eliminate grammatical rule. Wrong grammatical rule will create different context and different time.

For some teachers and lecturers, they will motivate their students to produce any English sentences orally and written by saying that keep speaking and producing English sentences without being worry in grammatical mistakes. This motivation indeed gives positive effect for the students, because they are encouraged in producing English sentences, especially to communicate orally. But they may forget that by doing this kind of practice for long time will create a habit, which allows the students to disregard the significance of grammar. That is the reason why this such encouragement likely told by lecturers of speaking skill, that sometimes the students face two different perspective of their teachers’ motivation.

The lecturer’s motivating statement which states that producing sentences in foreign language must be tried without worrying grammatical rule does not work for some students. For the students with low achievement in English proficiency, this statement just a relieving motivation to support them in practicing English. Actually, what they need is not only the motivating statements, but also guidance to produce better sentences before they provide their performance in practicing English. This research proves that translation is still the best method to guide, motivate and convince them to produce English sentences. They were more motivated by their own ability in creating sentences by themselves. That ability gives them self-confidence before they perform their English proficiency orally.

The current students showed that learning English by using GTM serves their readiness in performing their English proficiency. They finally believed that learning English was not as difficult as they had thought so far. They experienced that learning English is easy and the explanation is understandable. Most of them elaborated that the learning process was understandable and helped them so much in understanding how to implement the certain grammatical patterns. Whereas, for most English learners, learning grammar is still the most difficult and confusing material to learn.

\textsuperscript{20}Xia, Y. 2014. Language Theories and Language Teaching from Traditional Grammar to Functionalism. \textit{Journal of Language Teaching and Research}, Vol. 5, No. 3


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Based on the elaboration above, it summarizes that the current students are still suitable to learn English by using Grammar Translation Method, because of several reasons. The reasons are described below:

- Grammar Translation Method is able to accommodate the slow learners to understand the English material well
- Grammar Translation Method shows the students that learning foreign language is not always difficult and complicated
- Grammar Translation Method provides preparation for the students before they perform their English proficiency orally and written
- Grammar Translation Method do not decrease the students’ motivation in learning English.

**Current Students are Responsive and Active in Class**

Regarding the use of technology development in learning activity, such as internet based media and online learning group, they do not guarantee that all current students have capability in accessing and operating those current media. The students living in suburb with limited equipment and access of internet connection cannot use this technology optimally to support their learning. Besides, English as the language used by the most internet based applications sometimes make the students confuse how to operate and optimize the media. We have to remember that not all of the students are high motivated learners, who have high willingness and curiosity in using the foreign-language based application. This condition enables the students to prefer face-to-face learning process, like asking their lecturer or friends directly. Therefore, sometimes traditional method can fulfill what the current learners need in some condition.

In common classroom learning, the students’ attitude during the learning is closely related to their participation or activeness. Any lecturer measures their participation by their frequency in responding the lecturer’s statement, answering his questions, and doing task punctually. This measurement sometimes ignore the silent students actually having ability in constructing sentences but not much courage to speak. That condition appears in some current methods used in language learning, which use communicative language teaching and learning as the main source. In facing this problem, lecturer has to know the students’ condition and need to facilitate them with more practice both oral and written.

Based on the data gathered during the research, the researcher believed that GTM, which known as one of the traditional methods, still provides positive effects for the modern students. This result showed the effectiveness does not only for the active students, but also passive students. Passive students do not mean that they do not have ability in understanding and practicing the language, but they may find some obstacles faced in their English learning. The obstacle rises from several aspects, such as the students inner motivation, the teaching and learning process, and the students’ understanding on the learning itself.

Moreover, the argument stating that this method is not applicable for the technology-based students is refuted by this research. The students’ activeness and enthusiasm in learning process proved that the positive values still can be obtained from the use of this traditional

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method. As long as the lecturer performs teaching skill appropriately, there are still chances available for the students to participate actively. In short, it is not about how old the method is, but how the lecturers or other educators can perform better teaching skill.

Any traditional method is considered as manual, slow, and teacher-centered, which many people, especially technology-based learners, say that it cannot provide what the current students need to achieve the learning result. Those methods actually performed as the real instructors and treated students as the real learners, meaning that they need something to be planted in their mind. This manual process can accommodate the learners, both fast and slow learners, to be in the same line and grade in receiving new knowledge. In short, step by step process is applicable for any students in the class. The fast learners must follow the manual instructions and the slow learners do not have to feel leftover by the fast.

Teacher’s instruction and gadget or technology-based instruction serves different impact for the students to response25. For an instance, students will do what the teacher says to him as soon as he can and the students can ask any question for the teacher directly. This relationship cannot be achieved when the students receive the knowledge from the gadget or other electronic devices. When they find any difficulty or want to deliver any question, they may postpone to express it, even they do not express it. Therefore, when the teacher uses Grammar Translation Method, the students are able to get their freedom in asking any questions using Indonesian. It seemed that they believe there were nothing to worry about because actually learning English is easy and simple.

The most popular characteristic of Grammar Translation Method is teacher-centered. Is it true that this is a big trouble for teaching the current students? Actually there are various response based on the students’ condition itself. Teacher-centered provided the students with knowledge completely and comprehensively. They do not have to search from the other sources by themselves to gain the knowledge, and in this case, meaning that they do not have to learn and find the grammatical patterns by themselves due to the fact that the teacher has provided it. Absolutely this treatment does not mean that the teacher does not support their independence, but he just assists them to understand better about the difficult material. Then, what about the students’ activeness in the learning process? This research proved that teacher-centered is not the obstacle for the students to be active in learning, meaning they still feel free to express their ideas and sentences.

Moreover, students’ respect on the teacher itself influence their attention and attitude in the class. In our society, respecting teacher is an obligation, that the students have to do what the teacher said because he is the one that should be respected besides parents. This cultural value shapes the students view that learning what teacher’s saying is an obligation, which then helps them to focus more on the explanation. However, it does not mean that teacher-centered is always better that students-centered, because both of them have their different characteristics of class.

Related to the use of Indonesian as the native language in our country, it does not become a problem for the students to perform their English. This can be proved by their comment that the use of Indonesian gives them a chance to understand English from the basic level. Although they are higher education students, most of them have not been able to communicate in English both orally and written. When the teacher gives explanation or

25 Sewell, T.R. 2016. Student Outcomes in Traditional, Hybrid, and Online Courses in Community College Career and Technical Education Programs. A Dissertation. Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University, p.81
instructions in English and they cannot understand anything, there will be no use and they will get nothing in the language learning.

Because of the easy and comfortable way in learning English, some of the students assume that the next level of English learning will be better to use this similar method. This assumption built by their trust to the use of Grammar Translation Method. It is in line with Indonesian belief that we have to trust what we want to achieve.

From the explanation above, the researcher defines that students learning English using Grammar Translation Method does not always perform silent, passive, bored, and uncomfortable attitude. The students still have a chance to speak and express their ideas, but in easier and more comfortable way. There will be no success learning when the students learn without comfort.

**Both Fast and Slow Learners Realize the Effectiveness of GTM**

There are several characteristics and divisions of language learners. In this research, the researcher divides the students into two main categories: fast and slow learners; active and passive learners, by considering their English learning experience in the previous classes. This division is the result of the some students’ statements recognizing some of them were categorized as slow learners. That assumption emerged because they recognized that they had not been able to practice English as what their teachers had wanted because several reasons. Some of the reasons were their own motivation in learning and practicing English. But the most frequently reason is their misunderstanding in learning this language in their English class.

Although the result of the questionnaire and observation showed that about 30% of the students were fast learners, it did not provide many differences of the students’ responses on the implementation of Grammar Translation Method. Slow learners students believed that they could not absorb any English material if the lecturer delivered the material in English, because they assumed that English was still the difficult language. Their belief was by the time the lecturer explained the material in English, they had to translate the explanation first to understand it. Absolutely, it would take long time and they did not have time to do that. Therefore, the slow learners felt they were assisted by the Indonesian explanation. After they knew and understood the explanation, they still had to learn how to practice what the lecturer said, because language learning covering learning theory and practice the language itself. It was not an easy activity to do for the slow learners to create English sentences in limited time individually. They needed more examples of the sentences construction as the model, then they could imitate the pattern.

For some lecturers and educators, the students’ memorizing pattern of sentences has been not effective way in teaching and learning language, but the fact showed that they still needed to do this step. Without this way, the slow learners, especially who are not familiar with English practices cannot create good sentences grammatically. As we know that communication is not only about the way to express it, but also how the speaker and listener can understand the context of time used in the sentences. Besides, the different word forms such as parts of speech, v^1 and v^3 differences, and phrases form rise the slow learners’ confusion. So, is it possible for them to know all of the patterns by themselves? They may be able to understand and learn the differences by themselves, but it does not work for most of the slow

27 Zulprianto. 2012. Looking on the Bright Side of Grammar-Translation Method. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching* 64 Vol 8 No 1 p. 64
learners. It is a necessity for the lecturer to pay attention on the students’ motivation or reason in learning English, because this case influence a lot on the students’ attitude and understanding.

For the fast learners, learning English does not mean that they do not need to memorize the patterns and the word forms. They still do this step to be able to make appropriate meaningful and understandable sentences. However, the lecturer may not have to work too hard to explain about the material, and he can explain it in English because the fast learners only need short time to understand what the lecturer is saying in English. Besides, the lecturer does not have to explain the material many times. This research proved that the fast learners still need the teacher explanation to learn more until they have been able to produce their own sentences. Based on the observation, the fast leaners have much motivation in practicing English so they have much willingness to learn more and something new about this language.

From the explanation above, we can conclude that both slow and fast learners still need teachers’ real attendance, especially which related to the sentences construction and patterns of words, phrase, or sentences. Therefore, it can be said that GTM is still able to accommodate both slow and fast learners need in learning English. It is not only about how to transfer the knowledge, but also encourage the students’ motivation in producing English sentences. In short, when they face difficulty from the beginning of their learning process, they will not want to learn further, even produce more sentences.

Regarding the students’ activeness in classroom learning, GTM can be available for both active and passive students. Although many educators and some current students argue that this method support passive learning, it does not usually happen in English classes. In this study, active students still have chances to show their activeness, and the passive students can follow the learning process well. It can be said that the implementation of GTM has changed from the pure teacher-centered into new form of teacher-centered communication. This is the result of the communication built by the lecturer and the current students because the current students have several differences with the previous generations. To teach this current generation, the lecturer cannot prohibit the students to speak and respond, then ask them to just sit and listen to his explanation. He has to understand the current students’ characteristics to be able to engage them in learning, so they are able to catch and reach the learning purposes. By considering this condition, GTM is still be able to teach any generation and it is applicable to be combined with other current methods.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After getting the result and analyzing the data, this study draws some conclusions. First, GTM is still effective and it works to teach English to current students. This traditional method can fulfill what the learners need in learning and understanding English as well as increasing their willingness in producing more English sentences.

Second, not only passive, but also active students who can take benefits from the implementation of this traditional method because it does not perform pure passive learning, but it is also adjusted with the current students characteristics. This condition enables the learners to have more comfortable atmosphere in English learning.

Third, both fast and slow learners are able to follow the lecturer’s instructions when he teaches using GTM because this method accommodates what the slow learners need to achieve the learning goals. Its way of using Indonesian in delivering the material enables any learners to understand the lecturer’s explanation easily.
According to the conclusion, this study provides several suggestion for the lecturer and other educators. The lecturer should understand what the students need in achieving their learning goal, and decide the best method to be implemented. He should not tend to the use of technology based media to engage the students and transfer the knowledge. For the other educators, this study suggests that Grammar Translation Method should still be implemented to teach current students to accommodate the linguistic aspects learning for every student, although they practice it by combining with the other methods.

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