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Effectiveness of Teaching Translation through Grammar Translation Method at Intermediate Level: An Experimental Study in a Semi-Rural Area, Sohawa

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Abstract

For a few decades, teaching translation through the Grammar Translation Method has been in practice throughout the world. This method is also dominating over all the other teaching methods in Pakistan when it comes to teaching translation from Urdu to English, in particular. Conducted in the classroom of Intermediate part 2, this study aims to examine the up to which GTM has helped students to gain proficiency in translating from Urdu to English. It was a three-dimensional study where the data were gathered in the form of responses to the questionnaire and pre-test, and post-test. 30 students from class second-year class were selected as the population from Greenview Islamic Girls College, Sohawa, and they were taught translation from Urdu to English for 60 days. All of them were female, aged between 16-18 years. Data was analyzed through a mixed-method approach, SPSS for quantitative analysis, and qualitative for informal analysis. Data was gathered through personal visits and teaching to the selected population. The study revealed that student from semi-rural areas like Sohawa still feel comfortable while they are being taught translation through GTM, which enhanced their proficiency and confidence in translating from Urdu to English.

Keywords: Translation Studies, Grammar Translation Method, Teaching Translation, Teaching Methodology, Intermediate Level

Introduction

The method of teaching is the most important factor when it comes to learn a language. According to Celce-Murcia (2001, p.5), nine methods were used to teach translation in the 20th century. One of them is the Grammar Translation Method, which is derived from teaching Latin, as at the beginning of the 16th century, it was the most read and learnt language around the globe. It was due to its significance in government, business, and academia. Nonetheless, with time, it was replaced by other languages like French, English, and Italian. The main goal of GTM is to make the students read and enjoy the literature of other languages. GTM is more teacher-centered.

Background of the Study

The study at hand is significant in educational settings where students are learning new skills to polish their translational skills to compete with the modern world around them. Students often face difficulties when their medium of instruction changes, especially when they upgrade from school to college level. Abdullah (2015) says that in bilingual/multilingual classrooms change of MOI

hurts students' learning performance. It is also important to asses that in developing country like Pakistan, students from semi-rural areas are ready to go beyond GTM or still relying on it thoroughly. At the Intermediate level, it becomes more crucial as after this stage, the students embark on their journey to the university, and ultimately, for their career, they have to appear in competitive exams where their translational ability is considered highly important (Hassan & Anjum, 2024; Anjum, et al. 2024).

The research aims to educate educators, students, and policymakers to make them aware of to, in a semi-rural area like Sohawa, GTM is being proven helpful to improve students' proficiency in translation from Urdu to English. Besides, in general, it will also emphasize the need for having a strong grip on human translation skills despite being in the modern era of technology.

The study will also tell about the advantages and disadvantages of using GTM while learning translation from Urdu to English. Besides addressing these benefits and drawbacks, the importance of having strong human translation skills will be highlighted.

Research Questions

1 . What is the significance of GTM on students' proficiency in translating Urdu into English at the intermediate level?

2 . What are the effects of GTM on students' confidence in translating from Urdu to English at the intermediate level?

Literature Review

Pakistan is a country where the majority of the students belong to the lower-middle class, and on account of this, they cannot get access to the schools and colleges where they can get quality education. Class discrimination also plays its part in it. Students, due to their lower background, cannot get an education in institutions where they can get enough exposure to the English language and technology. That's why in the majority of areas of the countries where translation is taught, GTM is widely used.

Translators, who transfer one language into another, face numerous challenges due to certain factors such as sentence structure, etc., and he is aware of their responsibility to convey the message of the source language in the target language as naturally as possible (Mohebbi, 2023; Shea, 2022). For second language learners, a contrastive approach akin to comparative linguistics research is quite relevant. Cunningham (2000) says that translation in the classroom is the best tool for acquiring a second language. Damiani (2003) declared that being a teacher the GTM approach helped him a lot to understand and assess his students' intellect, and gave him a chance to have a discussion with them about vocabulary and language they were being taught. He further says that had he used any other or target language, and used familiar phrases and words, he would not have had a chance to know about his students. He was still unsure whether they could understand him thoroughly or not.

On the contrary, Mart (2013) says that there is a chance that students might not get exposure to the target language as GTM gives priority to the first language. However, it can be helpful for the students to comprehend grammatical structure and vocabulary better, as well as to become more mindful of both cultures. GTM has always been challenged for the reason that it has always remained helpful for teaching grammatical rules and vocabulary instead of improving communication skills and fluency in speaking the other language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014)

GTM is a helpful tool for some contexts and objectives, such as translating or language acquisition for academic reasons, despite its shortcomings. It is the attribute of human translation that it can easily understand the context and idiomatic expressions of the source text, which does not lead the reader to any ambiguity. Though certainly it takes far longer than the modern AI tools

like Google Translate, still human translation is more appropriate and accurate than that of Google Translate, says Brazill et. al, 2016. Loutayf and Soledad (2017) stated that human translation plays a very crucial role between cultures and languages. People, having less exposure to other teaching methods, rarely think or believe that writing by hand after thinking in one's first language is time-consuming, especially those who belong to rural or semi-rural areas with no exposure to technology and the English language.

Methodology

It was an experimental study. Mixed mixed-methods approach was used to analyze the data. Data was of two types, including responses of the participants in response to the questionnaire, pretest, and post-test. Data gathered in response to the responses of the questionnaire was analyzed through SPSS, and frequency tables and bar charts were generated to see the statistics of the overall responses to make it easier for the comprehension of reader. Pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed manually.

The intermediate students of Greenview Islamic College for girls were selected as the population. They were 30 in number. All of them were female. They were aged between 16-18.

Sohawa is a semi-rural area in district Jhelum of province Punjab where majority of the students belong to lower-middle class families and that get rare chance to join a school where they can get education in way that can enable them to have enough exposure to English language, technology and modern ways of teaching especially when it comes t translation from Urdu to English.

The questionnaire, pretest, posttest sample, and the observation sheet made by the researcher have been provided in the appendices.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a questionnaire (attached as Appendix 1) that was comprised of fifteen questions made on a Likert scale, followed by five options: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. It was developed with the help of an expert linguist (Ph.D in English Linguistics). Other than that, pre-test and post-test (attached as Appendix 2,3) taken by the students were also another form of data. The data was surely valid as it was collected by the researcher's visits to the institution. The rest of the participants responded, so the response rate remained 100%.

Data Analysis

The gathered data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The pre-test and post-test were analyzed manually.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The responses of the participants, in response to the questionnaire, were analyzed by generating frequency tables and bar charts using SPSS software. This analysis was made item-by-item.

Results and Discussion

Item: 1

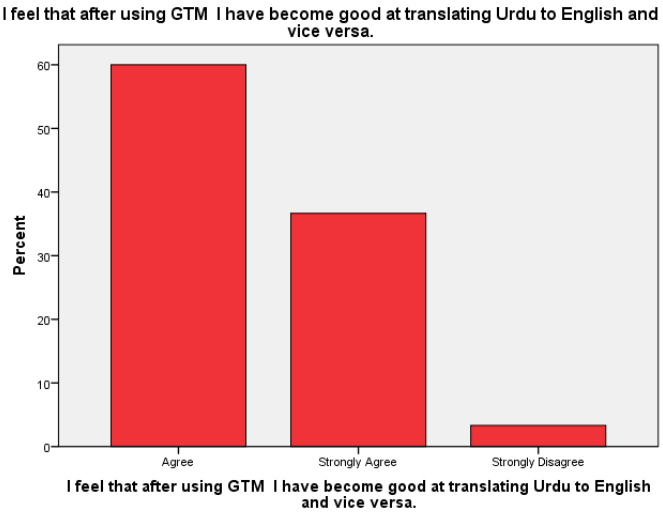
Table 1

Frequencies of responses

I feel that after using GTM, I have become good at translating Urdu to English vice versa.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	18	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Strongly Agree	11	36.7	36.7	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table displays feedback of the responses of item 1, where a significant majority of respondents—60%—agreed that GTM has improved their capability to translate between Urdu and English and vice versa, whereas 36.7% strongly agreed. The fact that just 3.3% strongly disagreed indicates that this traditional method is prevalent.



Graphical Representation of the Responses of Item 1

Item:2

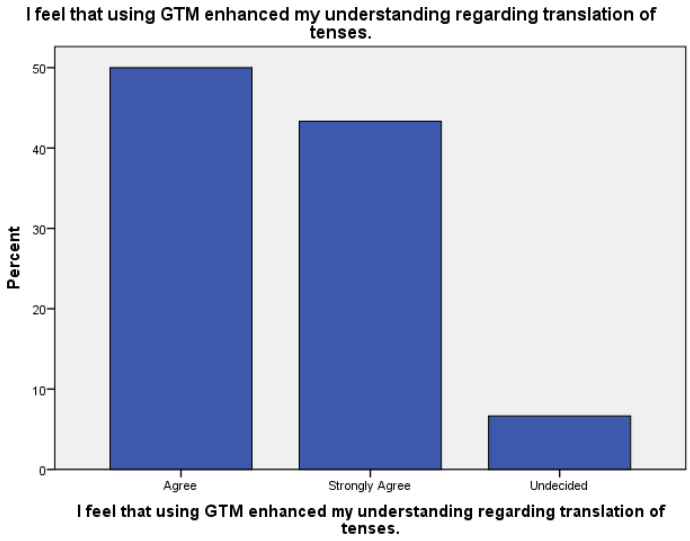
Table 2

Frequencies of responses

I feel that using GTM enhanced my understanding regarding the translation of tenses.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Strongly Agree	13	43.3	43.3	93.3
	Undecided	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table above evaluates the impact of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) on tenses translation understanding. Half of the respondents (50%) said that GTM helped them comprehend more, and 43.3% strongly agreed. The fact that only 6.7% expressed uncertainty indicates that opinions on GTM's effectiveness in teaching tense translation are generally in mutual agreement.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 2

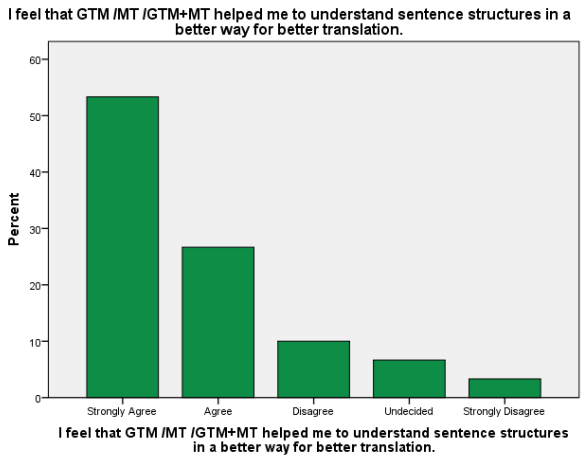
Item No: 3

Table 3
Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM helped me to understand sentence structures in a better way for better translation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Agree	8	26.7	26.7	80.0
	Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Undecided	2	6.7	6.7	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table above evaluates how well students learn sentence structures through the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), enabling them to translate more properly. 26.7% of respondents agreed, and 53.3% strongly agreed that GTM helped them understand more. Given that just 10% disapproved and 10% were unclear, it appears that GTM is generally seen positively in this context.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to the Item

Item No: 4

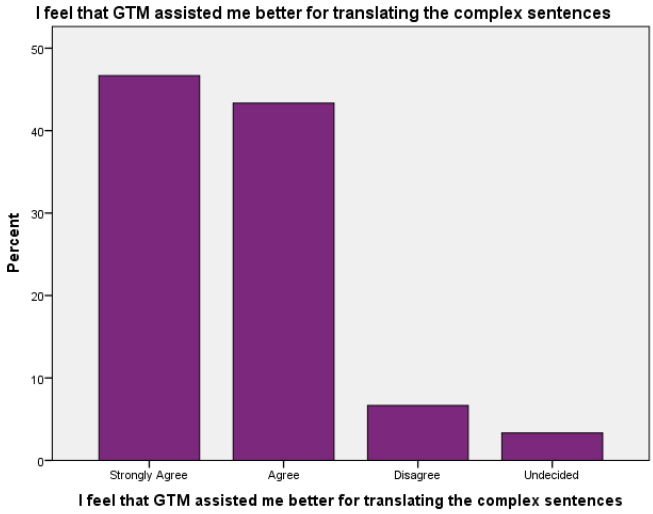
Table 4

Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM assisted me better in translating the complex sentences,

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	14	46.7	46.7	46.7
	Agree	13	43.3	43.3	90.0
	Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	96.7
	Undecided	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

By applying the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), this table examines how well students translate complex sentences. Notably, 46.7% of respondents strongly agreed that GTM was beneficial, despite 43.3% agreeing. The fact that only 6.7% disagreed and 3.3% were unsure suggests that people generally have a high level of confidence in GTM's capacity to help translate complex sentence structure.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 4

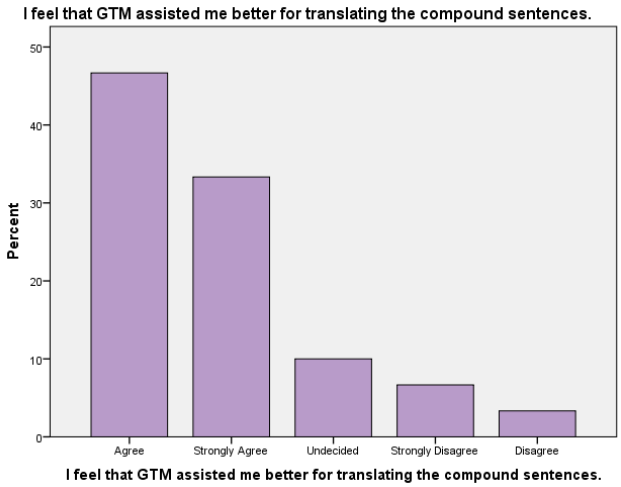
Item No: 5

Table 5
Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM assisted me better in translating the compound sentences.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	14	46.7	46.7	46.7
	Strongly Agree	10	33.3	33.3	80.0
	Undecided	3	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	96.7
	Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

This table evaluates how successfully students translate complicated phrases using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Of those who responded, 46.7% felt that GTM was helpful, and 33.3% strongly agreed. Only 10% disliked or strongly disagreed, indicating a generally positive impression of GTM's role in translating complicated structures, while roughly 10% were unclear.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 5

Item No: 6

Table 6
Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM helped me to translate clauses in a better way.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Agree	10	33.3	33.3	73.3
	Undecided	5	16.7	16.7	90.0
	Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	96.7
	Strongly Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

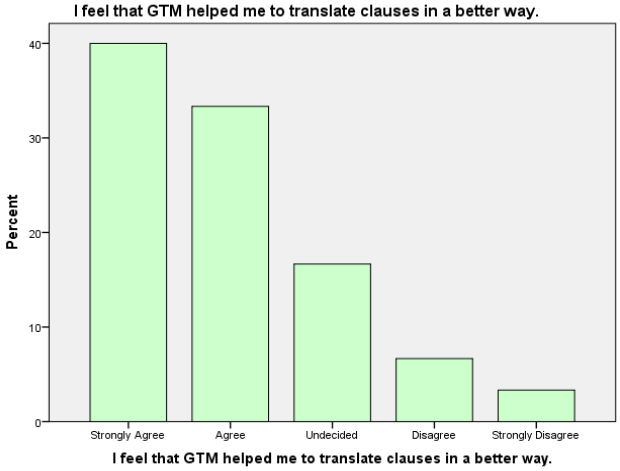
Using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the above table examines students' proficiency in translating clauses. Forty percent highly agreed and thirty-three percent felt that GTM improved their translation skills. There was some uncertainty evident in the responses, with 10% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 16.7% being unclear. Overall, the remarks indicate that individuals have a positive opinion of GTM's role in clause interpretation.

Table 7

Frequencies of responses

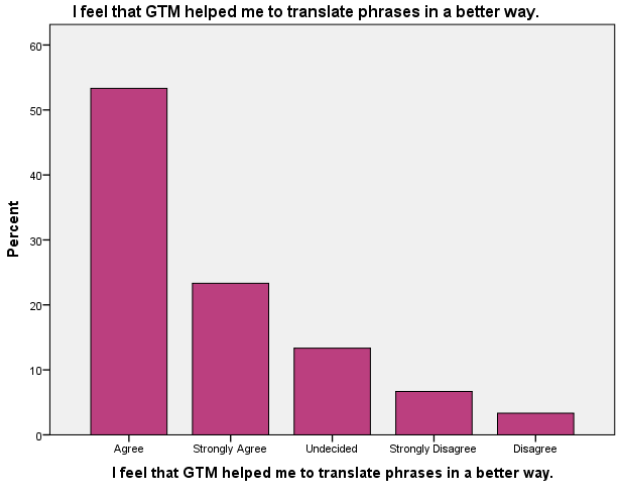
I feel that GTM helped me to translate phrases in a better way:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	16	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Strongly Agree	7	23.3	23.3	76.7
	Undecided	4	13.3	13.3	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	96.7
	Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 6

Using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), this table evaluates students' phrase translation skills. With 23.3% strongly agreeing, 53.3% of respondents said that GTM improved their translation skills. There was uncertainty; 10% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 13.3% were unclear. In general, there is positive feedback on GTM's contribution to phrase translation.



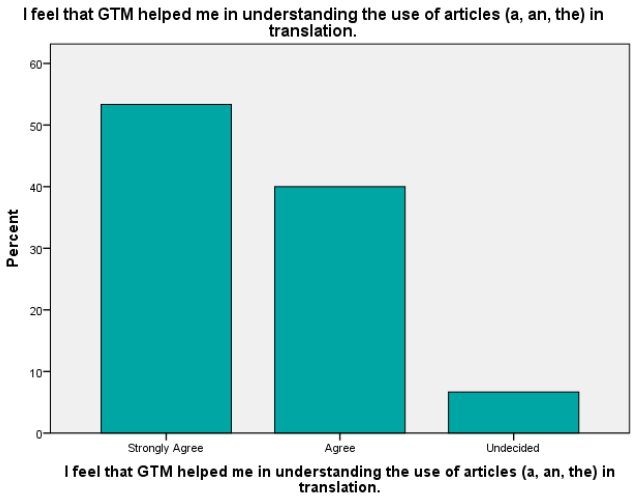
Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 7

Item No: 8

Table 8
Frequencies of responses
I feel that GTM helped me in understanding the use of articles (a, an, the) in translation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	16	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Agree	12	40.0	40.0	93.3
	Undecided	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the table evaluates students' understanding of how to use the articles a, an, and the in translation. Notably, 53.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 40% felt that GTM was beneficial. Given that just 6.7% expressed uncertainty, GTM appears to be a very successful way of teaching for article usage.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 8

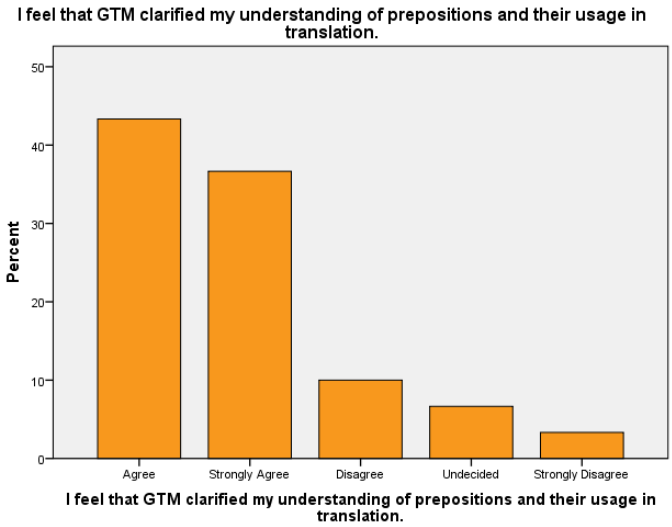
Item No: 9

Table 9
Frequencies of responses
I feel that GTM clarified my understanding of prepositions and their usage in translation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
	Strongly Agree	11	36.7	36.7	80.0
	Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Undecided	2	6.7	6.7	96.7

	Strongly Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the table above evaluates students' understanding of prepositions and their translation skills. 43.3% of respondents thought that GTM was helpful, and 36.7% strongly agreed. Given that just 10% disagreed and 10% were unclear, it appears that most individuals had a positive assessment of GTM's role in preposition instructions.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 9

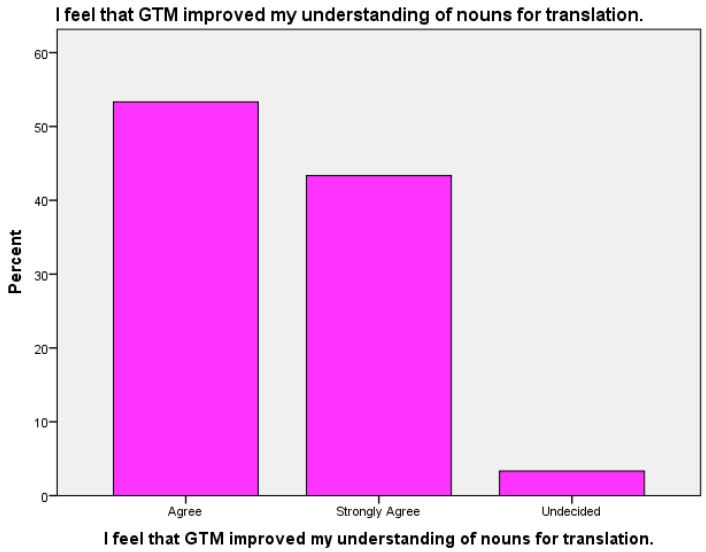
Item No: 10

Table 10
Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM improved my understanding of nouns for translation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	16	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Strongly Agree	13	43.3	43.3	96.7
	Undecided	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table above of item 10, evaluates students' understanding of nouns for translation. 53.3% of respondents found GTM helpful, with 43.3% strongly agreeing. There is widespread confidence in GTM's capacity to teach noun use, with just 3.3% doubtful.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 10

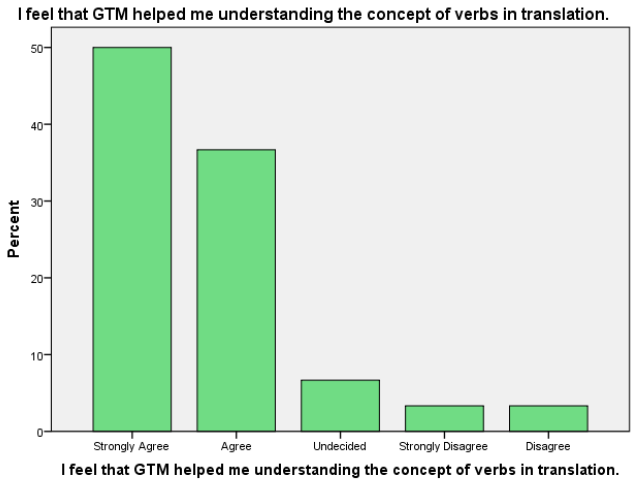
Item No: 11

Table 11
Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM helped me understand the concept of verbs in translation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Agree	11	36.7	36.7	86.7
	Undecided	2	6.7	6.7	93.3
	Strongly Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
	Disagree	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table above uses the responses of the students who used the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to understand the concept of verbs in translation. Thirty-seven percent believed that GTM was helpful, and fifty percent strongly agreed. Just 6.7% of respondents were uncertain, and only 6.6% disagreed, showing a high level of confidence in GTM's ability to teach verb concepts.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 11

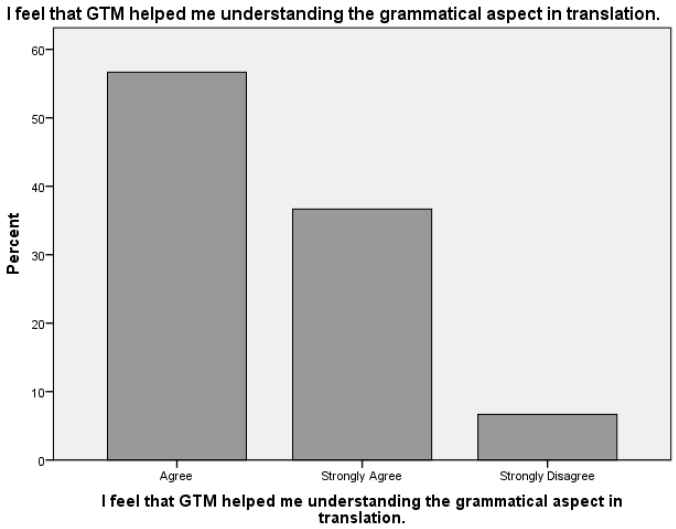
Item No: 12

Table 12
Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM helped me understand the grammatical aspect in translation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	17	56.7	56.7	56.7
	Strongly Agree	11	36.7	36.7	93.3
	Strongly Disagree	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the table above evaluates understanding of students about grammatical categories in translation. 36.7% of respondents strongly felt that GTM was helpful, while 56.7% agreed. Only 6.7% of respondents strongly disagreed, indicating that GTM's capacity to teach grammar in translation is generally well-regarded.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 12

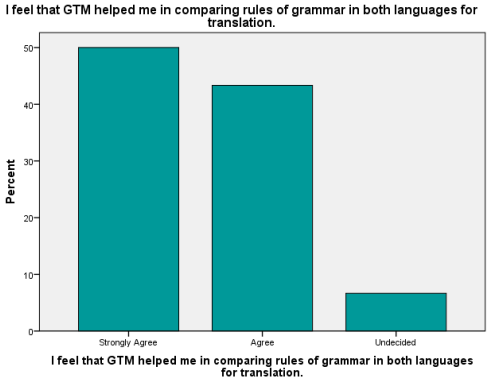
Item No: 13

Table 13
Frequencies of responses

I feel that GTM helped me in comparing the rules of grammar in both languages for translation**.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Agree	13	43.3	43.3	93.3
	Undecided	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

This table evaluates how effectively the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) helps students compare grammatical rules in different languages for translation. Forty-three percent thought that GTM was helpful, and fifty percent strongly agreed. Given that just 6.7% expressed uncertainty, GTM appears to be a very effective approach to teaching comparative grammar.



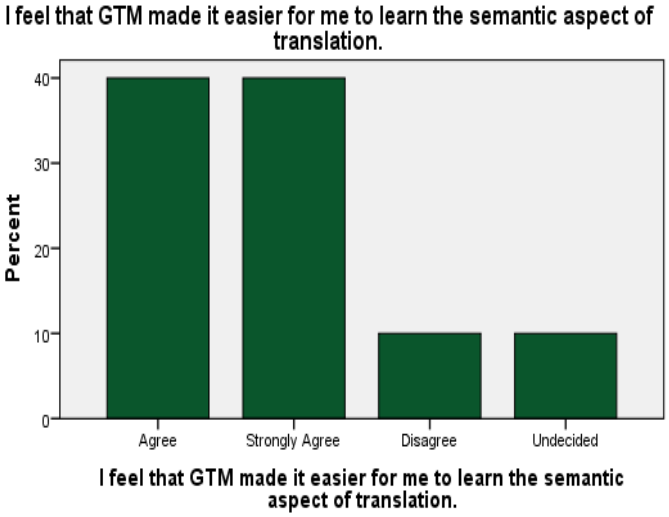
Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 13

Item no: 14

Table 14
Frequencies of responses
I feel that GTM made it easier for me to learn the semantic aspect of translation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Strongly Agree	12	40.0	40.0	80.0
	Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	90.0
	Undecided	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The table evaluates how well the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) teaches students translation semantics. Of those who responded, 40% felt that GTM was helpful, and 40% strongly agreed. However, the fact that 20% disagreed or were unclear indicates that there are differing views on how effective GTM is in this area.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 14

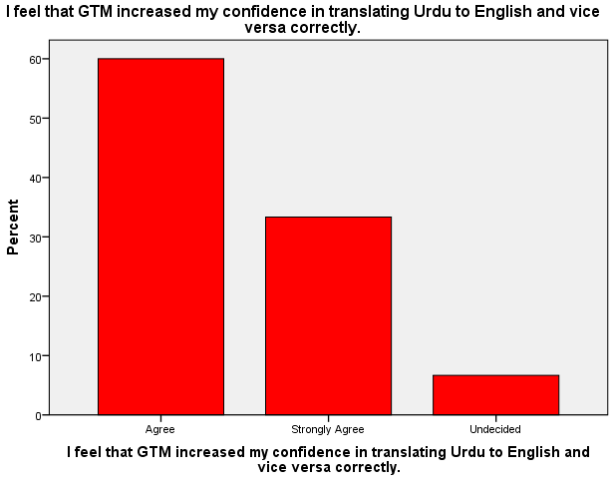
Item No: 15

Table 15
Frequencies of responses
I feel that GTM increased my confidence in translating Urdu to English and vice versa correctly.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	Agree	18	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Strongly Agree	10	33.3	33.3	93.3
	Undecided	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

This table evaluates how effectively students' confidence is increased when translating between Urdu and English using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Thirty-three percent strongly agreed that GTM was useful, and sixty percent thought it was helpful. The fact that just 6.7% expressed uncertainty indicates that most individuals have a high level of confidence in GTM's ability to enhance translation skills.



Graphical Representation of the Responses to Item 15

Pre-Test Analysis

It is a common practice that while using GTM, writing and reading are given preference over the other two skills-listening and speaking. The pre-test (Attached as Appendix 2) was meant to be taken to see whether students have basic knowledge of the language or not. They were asked to translate two paragraphs composed of Urdu sentences into English. The proficiency in the usage of nouns, pronouns, and verbs was observed minutely. They had having grip on these to some extent, but it was observed that they were not able to translate complex or compound sentences, even phrases and clauses. In pretests, they were observed recognizing nouns, pronouns, and verbs, etc., but they had no idea of what a phrase and a clause are actually and what the rules are to translate them.

For them, it was easy to recognize these simple grammatical categories, for instance, in the sentence ‘The ball is on the table”, but there was a drastic decrease in their performance when they were given a few complex and compound sentences. A few of them were also making mistakes in using the past tense, in particular. A problem with the usage of conjunctions was also seen. The most commonly adopted habit was seen that they used to omit the difficult words while translating the source text into the target text.

Post-Test Analysis

It was evident that after a session of two months, students were better able to understand how to translate from source text to target text. Other than that, they were now confident to use tenses correctly, as during the session, they were made to practice the tenses and memorize the rules of tenses in their first language. The performance in the post-test indicated that their translation skill have significantly increased; now they have a grip on the technique to look at the main and supporting parts of the sentence before translating the whole sentence.

Moreover, because of this improvement, they were more confident while translating complex sentences with difficult vocabulary, for this practice also made them able not to omit the difficult words. Improvement was also seen in their vocabulary building, for the students were now using more suitable synonyms.

Additionally, students also memorized the fundamental topics linked to their translation work with GTM. Their self-confidence was greatly increased after the GTM session. By the end of the session, the majority of the students who could not show their translation abilities in the pretest were now having a good command of it, comparatively. Students were also seen confident in giving their point of view to solve problems that came up during the practical session.

Ultimately, it was clear that GTM remained successful in improving the translation skills of the participants of the study. However, the Group suffered from its over-reliance on prescriptive approaches in two areas: first, when handling a model that requires flexibility, and second, when dealing with more dynamic translation contexts that require creativity. These results suggest that the structure of GTM may have limited their ability to critically analyze language usage outside of the grammatical realm. Last but not least, the study discovered that utilizing the Grammar Translation Method improved students' lexical vocabulary, grammatical awareness, and confidence more than using other languages. Even though this method prepared students for accurate translation, the situation made it evident that modern approaches that encourage flexibility and critical thinking in language learning are needed.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the study was to see to what extent GTM helps students improve their translation ability and confidence level. The scope of the study was limited to the intermediate-level students of a semi-rural area. Students responded well to the traditional GTM because of their educational background and lack of exposure to technology, which emphasized the continued usefulness of traditional techniques in semi-rural educational environments. This fits with the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, which highlights the sociocultural aspects of language teaching (Mitchell et al., 2019). The findings of this study favor the same idea that students with a weak academic background, having less exposure to language and technology, are still comfortable with GTM, and they feel very comfortable with it. It increases their proficiency and understanding of the target language. Not only this, but their confidence increases when they are taught with GTM, for they can ask questions in their language and get a response in the same language.

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