# The Effectiveness of Different Teaching Methods in Teaching Different Languages: Case Study of English and Korean

Beldjenna Amel, University of Oran 2, Algeria

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## Abstract

Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are the most common methods used for teaching a foreign language. This research aims to investigate the effect of using different teaching methods; the GTM and the CLT method in teaching both English and Korean. This is an experimental research. The sample of this study comprises 8 English learners from A2 level and 15 Korean learners from A2 in which all of them were females from BCW Language School in Oran, Algeria. The findings of this research indicated that the GTM was more effective in teaching both languages. This research concluded that learners who were taught by using Grammar-Translation method progressed notably in grammar and vocabulary in both languages.


Keywords: Grammar Translation Method, Communicative Language Teaching, English as a Foreign Language, Korean as a Foreign Language

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## 1. Introduction

When learning a foreign language, the instructor is faced with a challenge to choose the method with which they choose to deliver their courses. According to Smith (1980:159), there are two types of knowledge that every learner and of course instructor need to take into consideration. The first is explicit knowledge which he defines as "the conscious analytic awareness of the formal properties of the target language." This type of knowledge is rooted in teaching the structure of the language, i.e. grammar, to promote language learning. On the opposing end of this knowledge is implicit knowledge. This second type is said to be more spontaneous and natural. Smith (1980) argues that this type of knowledge "lends support to the direct method." As a teaching method, it promotes communicative performance when learning a foreign language.

Explicit knowledge lies in the heart of the Grammar Translation Method GTM. The core belief of this method is that grammar which according to penny (2000) "a set of rules that define how words (or parts of words) are combined or changed to form acceptable units of meaning within a language" is introduced to learners, who then engage in spoken or written exercises to practice them. Subsequently, the learners apply these structures in less structured speaking or writing tasks. The teacher may use the learners' native language in teaching the grammar of the target language.

The Grammar Translation Method dates back to the …it focuses on the written form of language, giving importance to the rules of the grammar of a language. Advocates of this approach believe the language used in the literary texts is the ideal form of the language. By focusing on explicit knowledge, learners can be trained to attain proficiency by memorizing the rules and regulation of grammar of the target language. For instance, Hedge (2000) argues that teaching grammar to learners will result in the production of accurate forms of English.

The Grammar Translation Method, also known as the Classical Method, centered on the use of translation. Its primary feature is its emphasis on comprehending grammatical rules (sentence structure) and their application in translating passages from one language to another. In essence, teachers employing the GTM teach grammar and employ it as a tool to instruct students in translating between languages.

On the other hand, implicit knowledge takes on a natural setting. A method which focuses on implicit knowledge is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In this approach, language is viewed as a social tool. During the 1970s and 1980s, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as a groundbreaking method for language instruction, sparking considerable enthusiasm and interest (Hymes, 1972). Consequently, teachers worldwide began reorganizing their teaching resources, classroom materials, and syllabi in response to this development (Richards, 2006). According to Riggenbach and Lazaraton (1991), CLT places a strong emphasis on learners' understanding of how language is used in authentic communication, actively engaging them in real-life activities like negotiating meaning and participating in group interactions.

Chomsky's (1965) states that a cognitive approach has the potential to enhance learners' proficiency in acquiring grammar, which is centered on language forms and structures. Moreover, it helps them understand and use the language with greater efficiency. Littlewood (2007) argues that many governments in East Asia promotes the use of the communicative approach as a new method to improve the use of English in their countries. These East Asian

countriesendorse the prevalence of CLT as a dominant model with task-based language teaching (a contemporary iteration of CLT) holding a central role in government discourse since the 1980s. Littlewood (2013:3) states, "The communicative perspective on language is primarily about what we learn. It proposes that when we learn a language we are primarily learning not language structures but language 'functions'."

Whereas GTM focuses on teaching grammar through translation, CLT focuses on language use. Therefore, the study at hand, to discover whether GTM as a teaching approach is better suited to teaching a foreign language than the CLT approach. It also aims at finding which teaching approach is better suited for teaching English and which one is the better option for teaching Korean. In addition, the study compares between the results of the two languages. In a nutshell, the study answers the following research questions:

1. Which of the two teaching approach; the Grammar Translation Method and the Communicative Approach is more effective in enhancing learners' performance in learning Korean?
2. Which of the two teaching approach; the Grammar Translation Method and the Communicative Approach is more effective in enhancing learners' performance in learning English?
3. To what extent do the initial proficiency levels, as indicated by pretest scores, influence the effectiveness of different teaching methods in improving language proficiency, as measured by post-test scores, in a diverse student population?

## 2. Literature Review

Khan & Mansoor (2016) research the effectiveness of the Grammar Translation method in learning English in Pakistan. They distributed a questionnaire on level one and two students at intermediate level in Pakistan Atomic Energy College for Girls, Chashma, Mianwali, Punjab, Pakistan. In this Educational institute, English is taught as a compulsory subject. The questionnaire is used to attest the views of learners on this teaching method. Their study suggest through students' opinion that this method is very helpful in English as a second or third language learning.

Abrejo, Sartaj & Memon (2019) draw attention to the obstacles that hinder English language teachers from incorporating CLT into their public sector college classrooms in Hyderabad, Pakistan. Their objective is to understand and observe the attitudes and approaches of both teachers and learners towards CLT in Pakistan and how these factors impede the method's adoption. Their study concludes thata significant number of college teachers acknowledged that they continue to employ traditional teaching methods, specifically the Grammar Translation Method, in their language instruction.  However, the researchers highlight that students in public sector colleges in Hyderabad, Sindh, would benefit from instruction using a communicative approach, emphasizing the urgent necessity of adopting CLT (Communicative Language Teaching). However, several factors consistently hinder teachers from implementing CLT, including time constraints, limited access to diverse resources, and the presence of large class sizes.

Zimba & Tibategeza (2021) analyse Communicatinve Approach (CA) strategies used by teachers in teaching English in secondary schools in Mzuzu City in Malawi. The researchers collected data via interviews and questionnaires from four government secondary school with a total of 48 participants, 40 students from Form Four classes and eight English teachers from the secondary schools. The study showedthat CA strategies used by the teachers in the

classroom include pairing, question and answers, debates, group discussions and role play, and filling in gaps. Classroom Assessment (CA) strategies are employed to assist students in acquiring proficiency in the English language.

Al-Khamisi and Sinha (2022) take into consideration classroom observation reports to scrutinize the importance of using the CLT approach in Omani EFL context. This study follows the overall structure of looking at the broader literature review underpinning the calls to adopt CLT in the Omani EFL context. They conclude that the introduction of CLT method in Oman has generated conflicting attitudes among English teachers and between teachers and students. Classroom observations reveal that some teachers, particularly male expatriate Arab teachers, tend to adopt an authoritarian teaching style influenced by the hierarchical structure of Arab society.

## 3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed method approach. It is both qualitative and quantitative in nature.This study seeks to determine whether learners in the experimental class can achieve notable progress in their language learning skills following an experimental level of 3 months. In essence, it assesses whether the experimental teaching approach positively impacts their learning abilities.

The study also aims to investigate whether language learners in the experimental class, who undergo the experimental teaching approach, demonstrate greater progress in their language learning in comparison to the control class. Each language (English and Korean) is tested for the adequacy of the teaching approach best suited for the said language teaching. This research objective centers on investigating which of the two language teaching approaches, i.e. the Grammar Translation Method and the Communicative approach is more effective in boosting learners' overall progress in the process of language learning.

## 3.1. Participants

In the experiment, two groups of English class and two groups of Korean class were selected from the British Culture Wahran BCW language school as the Experimental group and Control group. One class of the Korean class is the experimental group and the other is the control group and the same goes for the English class. The experimental groups will be labeled throughout the research as K1 for Korean and E1 for English. The control groups will be labeled throughout the research as K2 for Korean and E2 for English.

A pretest was administered to all four groups to determine their level in the designated language; within each language group (English and Korean), one class is designated as the experimental group, while the other serves as the control group. The pre-tests results showed that they share a similar level of the overall language proficiency. The two classes of each language were taught by the Grammar Translation Method and the Communicative Approach respectively. The classes are four hours a week divided into two session of two hours per session.

| Groups of Classes | Number of learners | Teaching Method |
|---|---|---|
| Group 1 K1 | 4 | Grammar Translation approach |
| Group 2 K2 | 4 | Communicative Approach |
| Group 1 E1 | 6 | Grammar Translation approach |
| Group 2 E2 | 7 | Communicative Approach |

**Table 1: Participants selected after the incorporation of the pretest**

## 3.2. Data Collection Tools

1. Pre-test is used to test the subjects' language competence before the experiment. The testing paper for the pre-test comprises 30 multiple choice questions with a full mark of 60. One question is marked 2 points. The test is meant to provide an overall measure of the learner's language proficiency in the target language. The discussion of the test results are provided in section 4.1.
2. Post-test: Post-test is used to test the subjects' grammatical competence after the experiment. The testing paper for the post-test includes 30 multiple choices with a full mark of 60.

## 3.3. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher herself developed the pretest and the posttest since she is responsible for these classes. The test questions for both the pretest and the posttest included questions that cover various aspects of language proficiency in the target language, including grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing comprehension. Each question was a multiple-choice question, with three options each. Each question was Assigned 2 points for a total possible score of 60.

The pretest was scheduled after the A1 level was rapped and before the beginning of A2 classes at the language school classrooms. The participants were instructed on the purpose of the test and the allotted time for completion. They were also instructed that they should not collaborate or seek assistance from others during the test. After the test completion, the papers were labeled with participants identifiers. The same measures were taken for the posttest.

Upon the data collection was completed, the pretest scores were analyze to evaluate the impact of the teaching methods by comparing mean scores, calculating effect sizes, and conducting statistical tests, as will be discussed in the following sections.

## 4. Results

Teaching methods used in education are many and different, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. In this study, two teaching approaches are assessed in teaching two different languages. The two languages are from different language families, the first being English while the second is Korean and both language are taught by the researcher herself in a language school in Oran, Algeria.

In the experiment, two groups of each language were selected as the subjects of this study. These groups were taking language classes at the BCW language school in Oran, Algeria. The four groups were in level A2, which is a pre intermediate level. One group of Korean learners were taught using the grammar translation method and the other group was taught

using the communicative language approach. One group of English learners were taught by the grammar-focused method and the other group by the communicative approach. The level is taught twice a week for two hours a session during a 3 months period.

Before conducting the experiment, all four groups of students underwent a pre-test. This test is designed to assess their proficiency in the respective languages. The results from this pre-test are used to confirm that the groups have a similar starting level of language proficiency. This is crucial to ensure that any differences observed in post-test results are due to the teaching methods, not initial proficiency. The statistical analyses of the post-test scores were made with the help of SPSS v21.

## 4.1. Pretest Results

A pretest was conducted to figure out any difference in the achievement of the four groups' before and after the incorporation of the teaching method. The test is marked out of 60 with 30 items in total. The initial group members were as follow:

| Groups of Classes | Number of learners |
|---|---|
| Group 1 K1 | 5 |
| Group 2 K2 | 6 |
| Group 1 E1 | 6 |
| Group 2 E2 | 7 |

**Table 2: Number of participants before the pretest**

### 4.1.1. Korean Class Pretest Results

| Learners | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| K1 | 5 | 48.25 | 3.09 |
| K2 | 6 | 44.75 | 9.94 |

**Table 3: Korean Class Pretest scores**

The pretest results showed that between Group K1 (Experimental) and Group K2 (Control) in the Korean language class, there are significant differences. The first group of Korean class had a higher mean pretest score (48.25), indicating that they would start with a higher level of language proficiency compared to the other group. Additionally, the smaller standard deviation in Group K1 suggested that the scores in this class were clustered more closely around the mean, indicating less variation in language proficiency levels within the group. Since differences in pretest scores can influence the outcomes of a posttest and make it challenging to attribute post-test score differences solely to the teaching methods (Grammar Translation vs. Communicative Approach), the learners were filtered and only those with similar scores were chosen as participants of the study through matching. Participants from the experimental and control groups were matched based on their pretest scores to create more comparable sets of participants and control the variation. After the matching process, the Korean class groups are as follows:

| Groups of Classes | Number of learners | Teaching Method |
|---|---|---|
| K1 | 4 | Grammar Translation approach |
| K2 | 4 | Communicative Approach |

**Table 4: Number of Participants in the Korean groups**

### 4.1.2. English Class Pretest Results

Group E1 of the English class (Experimental) has a slightly lower mean pretest score (50) compared to the control group E2, which has a slightly higher mean (52). However, the difference between the means is relatively small. This indicates that there is no significant variation in pretest scores within the groups of the English class. This suggests that the experimental group and the control group have relatively similar starting language proficiency levels.

| Learners | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|---|------|----------------|
| E1 | 6 | 49.66 | 6.25 |
| E2 | 7 | 50.42 | 3.86 |

**Table 5: English Class Pretest scores**

### 4.2. Posttest Results

After the selection of learners for both the English class and the Korean class groups, classes began on December 2022 and ended in March 2023. It should be mentioned that the learners that were eliminated from the Korean groups were still able to take the course but were not part of the experiment. After the classes ended, a posttest which is usually an exam to test whether learners are able to move up a level were administered. The next section discusses the results of the Korean groups' posttest scores.

### 4.2.1. Korean Posttest Results

The posttest consisted of 30 multiple-choice questions, each worth two points, for a total possible score of 60. The scores were analysed using SPSS v 21 and the following table shows the scores of the experimental group and the control group. This experimental group was taught using the Grammar Translation Method while the control group was taught using the Communicative approach. The teaching approach is discussed in the discussion section below.

| Learners | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|---|------|----------------|
| K1 | 4 | 52.00 | 2.16 |
| K2 | 4 | 50.50 | 7.59 |

**Table 6. Korean Class Post-test scores**

As we can see, K1 (Experimental group) has a higher mean post-test score (52) compared to K2 (Control group), which has a lower mean (50). This suggests that, on average, the first group which was taught using the grammar translation method performed better on the post-test as opposed to the control group which was taught using the Communicative method. Furthermore, K1 has a smaller standard deviation (2.16) compared to K2, which has a significantly larger standard deviation (7.59). A larger standard deviation suggests greater variation in post-test scores within that group. The post-test results indicate that the teaching method used in the experimental group may have been more effective in improving language proficiency, as evidenced by the higher mean post-test score.

The pretest results clearly indicate an initial difference in language proficiency between K1 and K2 groups, with K1 having a higher starting level of proficiency. As we can see, the posttest results show that, despite the initial proficiency difference, K1 (Experimental group)

maintained its lead and exhibited a higher mean posttest score compared to K2 (Control group). However, the smaller standard deviations in both pretest and posttest scores for K1 suggest that this group displayed less variation in proficiency levels, which may indicate more consistency in learning outcomes.

### 4.2.2. English Posttest Results

As for the English class, the following table shows the posttest results. The experimental group E1 was taught using the GTM whereas learners in the control group were instructed in the CLT method.

| Learners | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|---|------|----------------|
| E1 | 6 | 58.16 | 1.47 |
| E2 | 7 | 55.42 | 2.43 |

**Table 7: English Class Post-test scores**.

The results of the posttest of both groups shows that the experimental has a higher mean posttest score (58) compared to the control group, which has a lower mean (55). The experimental group was taught using the GTM while the control group was taught using the CLT method. The results suggest that, on average, the experimental group performed better on the post-test. In addition, the experimental group has a smaller standard deviation (1.47) compared to E2, which has a larger standard deviation (2.43). This indicates greater variation in post-test scores within the control group. The results indicate that the GTM was more effective in improving language proficiency than the CLT method.

The pretest results show a small initial difference in language proficiency between the experimental group and the control group, with E2 starting at a slightly higher proficiency level, as opposed to the Korean groups. Nonetheless, the posttest results suggest that E1 (Experimental group) not only closed the initial proficiency gap but also exhibited a significant improvement, surpassing E2 in mean post-test scores. Furthermore, the smaller standard deviations in both pretest and posttest scores for E1 suggest that this group displayed less variation in proficiency levels, which may indicate more consistent learning outcomes overall.

### 5. Discussion

The study at hand aims at analyzing the effectiveness of different teaching methods in teaching English as a foreign language and Korean as a foreign language. By using the GTM as a teaching method, a significant emphasis was placed on teaching the rules and structures of the language (in both language groups K1 and E1), including verb conjugations, noun declensions, sentence structure, and tenses. Moreover, lessons usually included written texts in the target language as part of reading enhancing in the target language. In addition, the teacher made sure that learners' vocabulary is being enriched in the process, typically through vocabulary lists and memorization, with an emphasis on word meanings and usage in sentences.

As for the CLT method, the main goal was to enable learners to communicate effectively in real-life situations. This includes speaking and listening, as well as reading and writing, in meaningful contexts and everyday language that is relevant to the learners' needs and interests. During classes, learners engage in tasks and activities that mirror real-life communication situations. In K2 and E2 groups, the teacher created opportunities for students to interact and communicate in

interactive learning. Activities such as role-plays, debates, group discussions, and problem-solving tasks were used during classes.

As the aforementioned results demonstrate, the posttest for both English and Korean classes provide valuable insights into the comparative effectiveness of these teaching methods for language leaning: the Grammar Translation Method and the Communicative Language Teaching. These results are indicative of the performance of two groups, K1 and E1 (Experimental groups) and K2 and E (Control groups), which were exposed to these teaching methods, respectively.

In examining the posttest results, several key findings emerge. In both experimental groups, a notably higher mean posttest score was observed, in contrast to the control groups K2 and E2, which had a lower mean posttest score. This discrepancy implies that, on average, participants in the experimental group, who were taught using the Grammar Translation Method, outperformed their counterparts in the control group, who were instructed through the Communicative Language Teaching method. This suggests a potential advantage in terms of language proficiency for the Grammar Translation Method, as it led to higher posttest scores.

These findings collectively suggest that, in our study, the GTM appeared to be more effective in enhancing language proficiency among participants when compared to the CLT method. However, it is essential to interpret these results within the context of the study's limitations. The initial differences in pretest scores between the two groups may have influenced the post-test results to some extent. Additionally, other factors, such as the duration of the instruction and the participants' previous language learning experiences, may have played a role in the observed differences. Moreover, the tests that were administered were written tests rather than oral and they did not incorporate any speaking testing. This may be considered as a limitation of the study and why the GTM approach was more effective in the learners overall performance.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, our study demonstrates the potential benefits of the Grammar Translation Method for improving language proficiency. It is recommended that further research is in order to explore the specific aspects of this method that contribute to its effectiveness. Additionally, considering the limitations of our study, future investigations should aim to replicate these findings and consider a broader range of variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relative merits of different language teaching approaches.

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**Contact email:** beldjenna.amel@univ-oran2.dz