

GRAMMATICAL TRANSLATION METHOD AS THE BASIS OF TEACHING RUSSIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Annotation

The article explores the efficiency of employing the grammatical translation method for learning Russian as a foreign language. This method, recognized as the oldest approach to language acquisition, is evaluated for its effectiveness in this study through quantitative research. The assessment relies on a questionnaire to gauge students' perspectives on how much this method aids in their acquisition of the Russian language.

Keywords: Role, Grammar translation method, Effectiveness, Teaching, Russian language.

Introduction

Representatives of the grammatical-translation method believed that the purpose of teaching Russian as a foreign language was to enhance logical thinking through the mastery of linguistic structures. This perspective was articulated clearly by the renowned linguist V. Humboldt, who stated, "The purpose of teaching a language is to convey knowledge about its overall structure." The instructional focus centered on written speech, as spoken language was considered a deviation from the norm. Grammar took precedence in the training, influencing the entire curriculum, text selection, and vocabulary. The emphasis on grammar stemmed from the prevalent belief of that era, asserting that grammar serves as a reflection of logical thinking, and, consequently, grammatical exercises contribute to the development of thinking skills. Given the recognition of synthesis and deduction as the cornerstones of logical thinking during that time, students were tasked with memorizing words and rules, employing them to construct sentences within the translation process. [1]

The translation was recognized as the main way of work since, according to representatives of this direction, all languages have a standard grammar, and words differ only in visual and sound ways, i.e., a combination of letters and sounds. Finally, the vocabulary was mechanically memorized, like the rules, and served only as illustrative material. The grammatical-translation or grammatical-translation method of teaching the Russian language is one of the first methods known in the history of foreign and domestic methods. Representatives of the method believed that the Russian language in universities should be studied with a general educational purpose and contribute to the development of logical thinking. This teaching method is based on understanding language as a system and relies on a cognitive approach to learning. [2] The first thing distinguishing this method from others is close attention to grammar. Based on the idea of the language as a system functioning according to its own specific

laws, it can be concluded that the grammatical-translation method involves a fundamental study of the language with all the rules and exceptions. Such a scientific approach may seem excessive in higher educational institutions. Still, no one cancels the principle of considering students' age characteristics and adequate selection of the content of education. L.V. Shcherba, parodying the famous saying of Suvorov – "bullet is a fool, bayonet – well done," says: "vocabulary is a fool, grammar is well done" [3]. The grammar organizes words in speech, and hardly anyone managed to buy a bilingual dictionary of any foreign language and learn the language by memorizing lexical units. In addition to developing students' logical thinking, teachers sometimes forget that this same thinking will "require" an explanation in the use of particular constructions. And the intuitive assimilation of grammar in speech will be clearly insufficient. One of the key concepts in the method is translation. Representatives of direct methods, which replaced translational methods, criticized this aspect mainly. [4]

Methods

Presently, the primary objective of employing the grammatical translation method is to instruct students in reading and translating texts into their native language. This aligns with the overarching goal of learning the Russian language, specifically focusing on developing students' logical thinking through grammatical exercises. The foundation of this training approach involves the comprehensive study of grammar and literal translation. In the textual-lexical-translation method, the emphasis shifts to exploring the language of original texts by translating them into the learners' native language. The fundamental principles of the grammatical-translation method in teaching the Russian language include:

Written speech, serving as a representation of real speech, forms the basis of learning. Synthesis and deduction, involving the memorization of grammatical rules and words, followed by the construction of sentences based on them.

Assimilation of language material through translation and mechanical memorization, accompanied by the use of analogy (in the textual translation method), drawing from the learners' native language. [5]

A notable achievement of the grammar-translation method lies in the application of certain text-centric techniques that remain relevant in contemporary teaching practices. However, historically, the method had a significant drawback as it inadequately focused on fostering language skills for communication and reading proficiency. Despite its drawbacks, the grammatical-translation method possesses advantages. Frequently, translating a word proves to be the quickest method of elucidating its meaning. In the early stages of learning Russian, utilizing native speech to explain grammatical rules can be beneficial. [6]

Results

Larsen-Freeman (2000) outlines the techniques associated with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) as follows:

- Translating literary excerpts from the target language into the learners' native language.
- Reading comprehensive texts, with an emphasis on extracting information, making inferences, and connecting to personal experiences.
- Identifying synonyms and antonyms for words found in the text.
- Recognizing cognates by learning spelling and sound patterns that exist between the learners' native language and the target language.
- Prioritizing the understanding of grammatical structures with subsequent application to examples.
- Memorizing bilingual vocabularies, grammar rules, and grammatical paradigms.
- Employing memorization of vocabulary for application in sentence construction.
- Writing paragraphs, essays, or summaries on specific topics using the target language.

The primary goal of the Grammatical Translation Method (GTM) is to cultivate proficiency in reading Russian literature and understanding its grammatical rules. Additionally, GTM advocates for exploring foreign language vocabulary, positing that the acquisition of Russian is advantageous for students' cognitive exercises. Within the GTM framework, there is a strong emphasis on various aspects, including the translation of literary passages, inquiries focused on reading comprehension, identification of antonyms and synonyms, analysis of single-root words, deductive application of rules, gap-filling exercises, memorization, application of words in sentences, and composition. [7]

Considered a practical approach, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) prioritizes the application of grammar and sentence structure, providing students with a less stressful learning experience. It offers extensive opportunities for practice in reading, grammar, and translation. The rapid conveyance of the target language's phraseology through translation serves as a bridge for students, reducing the stress associated with engaging in their native language. The use of the students' native language as the medium of instruction facilitates the explanation of new grammar and vocabulary items, enabling comparisons between their mother tongue and the target language. [8]

GTM proves particularly valuable for the study of classical literature, offering students significant benefits in terms of mental discipline and intellectual development resulting from foreign language study. The method enhances precision in the target language, a crucial aspect for success in various formal written examinations. A distinctive feature of GTM is its adherence to a sequential order rather than presenting random examples. The deductive teaching of grammar follows a structured approach, with the explanation and study of grammar rules preceding examples and exercises. This logical sequence in presenting grammatical rules across the syllabus aims to instill organized and systematic learning of grammar. [9]

To assess the effectiveness of the Grammatical Translation Method, non-philology students were administered a questionnaire, seeking their feedback and evaluation after using the method for the last three months of the 2023-2024 academic year. Tab 1.

Table 1. Results on evaluating the effectiveness of the method used

Title	Before and after applying the method	
Mastering the curriculum	30-40%	70-80%
Confidence in communication	20-30%	50-60%
Academic performance	40-55%	65-80%

Discussion

In modern methodology, the Russian language as a foreign language is recommended for the interaction of oral and written communications in the course of classes, which does not exclude the presence of oral advance at the stage of introducing the material and its primary consolidation and activation. The following sequence of teaching types of speech activity is the most rational: from oral speech to writing, from passive forms of language proficiency (reading, listening) to active forms (speaking, writing).

The principle of interrelated learning of types of speech activity it provides language training with the simultaneous formation of four kinds of speech activity: listening, speaking, reading, writing. The principle of differentiated and integrated learning should be attributed to the essential methodological principles of the Russian language as a foreign language. Its essence boils down to the following. On the one hand, each type of speech activity is characterized by its own "set" of actions and even its own lexical and grammatical design. On the other hand, there is integration when working on language material, when teaching pronunciation, word, grammar it is conducted on a speech unit: a word, a phrase, a sentence, a super-phasal unity. The principle of integration is that, no matter what aspect of the language we teach, at the same time we use other aspects, form other skills. [10,11]

Conclusion

Knowledge of the system of interrelated and mutually dependent principles of teaching will make it possible to organize the process of teaching Russian following its laws, it is reasonable to select the content of the educational material, choose forms and methods of teaching adequate to the goals, thus achieving the effectiveness of mastering Russian as a foreign language. Another primary category of teaching methodology is method.

In the modern methodology of teaching a non-native language, the term method has two interpretations: didactic and actually methodical. In the general moralistic sense, the concept of method includes methods of interrelated activities of the teacher and students aimed at achieving the goals of education, upbringing and development of students. For a language teacher, methods are important for obtaining knowledge, forming skills and abilities. Such methods include: working with a text, a book, a teacher's story, a conversation, an excursion, exercises, and the use of visualization in teaching. Depending on the independence of the educational activities performed by students, there are active and passive methods according to the nature of the students' work – oral and written, individual and collective, classroom (excellent) and homemade. [12]

According to the methodological interpretation, the method is a system of views and ideas about how the learning process should be built. Among the methods as systems are: grammatical-translational, direct, conscious-comparative, audiolingual, audiovisual, conscious-practical, cognitive, communicative, suggestive, etc. These methods are grouped on different grounds: translational, non-translational (direct); conscious, intuitive, traditional, and alternative.

Teaching Russian as a foreign language is taught at specially organized training sessions and extracurricular time. Students can work individually, in pairs and in a team, in the classroom and outside of them, with the direct or indirect participation of the teacher. Such an external expression of the activity of the teacher and students, proceeding following the established procedure and a specific regime, is called an organizational form of learning. The main organizational forms of theoretical courses are a lecture (the dominant form), a seminar and a practical lesson. In practical courses of the Russian language, the main organizational forms of training are practical training (the dominant form), laboratory training, and various forms of extracurricular work – a study tour, independent preparation for training sessions, a thematic evening, etc.

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