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GRAMMAR TRANSLATION AND COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS IN LEARNING ENGLISH

This article describes the Trans-Cultural Comparative Literature Method, an innovative way to use literature to teach advanced English as Foreign Language (EFL) students. While the method employs activities associated with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), it also borrows from techniques associated with the Grammar Translation Method (GT) by focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and limited translation exercises during cultural comparisons of literary texts.

Although GT is a widely criticized method, students from some cultures prefer its teacher-centered activities, which include vocabulary drills and the memorization of grammatical rules in a setting that deemphasizes spoken interaction in the target language (the language being learned). However, since speaking the target language is such an important skill, there is a method, which melds some of these favored GT techniques with interesting cultural activities that promote meaningful communication among English language learners.

This adaptation of GT fits with CLT because translation and the study of grammar and vocabulary is not done in the traditional tedious way; instead, GT techniques are connected with relevant and engaging cultural activities that inspire students to communicate ideas and apply their critical thinking skills outside the classroom.

Prior to the 18-th century, the translation of literary texts was the main method for studying foreign languages. The Classical Method as it was originally called underwent a name change in the mid-1800s and was thereafter known as the Grammar Translation Method (GT). But in the late 1900s the tedious GT method lost popularity. Simply learning how to translate and recite rules was insufficient for learners who recognized the value of oral communication in the target language.

GT was teacher-centered, which limited interaction and spontaneous creativity. Teachers used GT to focus students' attention on grammar and vocabulary by having them read and translate target language texts; it was assumed that this process would allow students to gain an understanding of the grammar of their own native language. (Larsen Freeman, 2000). Examining grammatical structures and deducing rules was also considered an excellent mental exercise that would help students grow intellectually by broadening their language, history and literary knowledge. However, the classical target language texts were often difficult because they were written in non-standard language and presented as a linguistic exercise with no attempt to include themes, style, or culture into the lesson.

However, GT is still popular in some places, and is considered a good method for individuals who want to be translators and are not concerned with knowing how to speak

or pronounce the target language. It is also still used in many EFL settings where students like a teacher-centered method that includes the intensive study and memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary.

Traditional foreign language teaching was also teacher-centered and leaned heavily on the study and memorization of structural forms of the language being learned (Celce-Murcia, 1991; Morror, 1981). The CLT approach arose in response to criticism of methods that did not prepare students to communicate effectively or to thoroughly learn the language. Numerous alternate methods appeared on the scene in 1960s and 1970s that in one way or another tried to encourage authentic communication and improve language teaching. Finally, in the 1980s, a single communicative approach known as CLT was born (Nunan 1991, 2003).

Many researches performed groundbreaking work and research on CLT in the classroom and highlighted the importance of real life communication needs. Today CLT represents a wide variety of learner-centered methods that prepare students to interact with authentic language in real life situations and settings, where they acquire true communicative competence that includes a mastery of grammar, discourse, language style, and verbal and non-verbal strategies. Vocabulary and grammar are generally not drilled and memorized, but are instead acquired through communicative interactions and tasks that are meaningful and relevant to the English learner.

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