

## **IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' ENGLISH COMPETENCE THROUGH GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD ON THE SECOND SEMESTER OF J CLASS AT STAIN JEMBER IN 2010/2011 ACADEMIC YEAR**

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### **Abstrak**

Mata kuliah Bahasa Inggris di STAIN Jember merupakan mata kuliah wajib yang harus ditempuh oleh mahasiswa. Salah satu tujuan dari pembelajaran bahasa Inggris adalah untuk memahami literature bahasa Inggris dalam rangka mendukung tugas akhir mahasiswa. Beberapa kendala yang dialami mahasiswa untuk memahami literatur adalah bahwa kurangnya penguasaan kosa kata yang dimiliki mahasiswa. Disamping itu penguasaan struktur kalimat kurang dipahami oleh mahasiswa. Dari dua penguasaan itu menyebabkan mahasiswa kurang mampu memahami bacaan teks. Oleh karena itu grammar translation method di terapkan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris mahasiswa.

**Key words:** *improving, English competence, grammar translation method*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are many ways or methods to teach English students. They are Grammar Translation Method (GMT), Deductive and Inductive Approach, Contextual Teaching and Learning, and others. Grammar Translation (hereafter GT) was originally associated with the teaching of Latin and – to a much lesser extent - ancient Greek. Interestingly, as Howatt <sup>20</sup> points out, 'grammar' and 'translation' are actually not the distinctive features of GT, since they were already well-accepted as basic principles of language teaching. One of the teaching methods that can be used to improve grammar mastery is Grammar Translation Method.

Many lecturers think that this method is too old or may be out of date. In fact, any kinds of method can be applied to any classes based on the situation and condition of the class. In short, we can use a method based on the situation and con-

dition of the class to teach our students.

As the researcher experienced that most students do not understand the meaning of a text or texts. Based on the students' complaints when they learn English, they did not understand the English words, tenses. They said that listening was a skill that was difficult to study. Moreover the ability to read is less. As the result, they had difficulties in doing the exercises. They wanted the lecturer to explain English by two languages. It was because they had difficulties in understanding the meaning. Besides, the evidence shown that there were more than 50 percent of the total students was fail in examination. It means that the ability of the students were not sufficient. The crucial things as the bases of this research conducted were as the researcher did preliminary study by using interview, he found that the students' English competence had not improved yet. It is proved by most of their marks were less than 60. The problems they had were because they were difficult to understand English words

<sup>20</sup> Howatt A.P.R. *A History of English Language Teaching* (OUP). (1984) p. 131

and structure. Therefore, they didn't understand English sentence.

The aim of teaching English is obviously in order to the students not only understand the English orally but also in written. The differences in forms or meaning need clear explanation and understanding for them. When English has the same forms, it probably will be easier to be understood by them; and on the other hand, if the forms are not the same the students will get difficulty to understand them.

Grammar Translation Method followed a syllabus grammar and lesson typically began with an explicit statement of the rule, followed by exercise involving translation into and out of the mother tongue<sup>20</sup>. The basis of the Grammar Translation Method consisted of translation from the foreign language and learning grammar rules and vocabulary through the translation of disconnected sentences<sup>21</sup>. It is hoped that by giving such method, the students' English competence will be better.

### **The Strength of Grammar Translation Method.**

Although grammar-translation method has been disqualified by most recent scholars and although audio-lingual and communicative methods are backed up by many of people involved in teaching second languages, it still seems that the former method is applicable at least for some specific purposes in teaching a second language<sup>22</sup>.

The basis of the grammar translation method consisted of translation from

the foreign language and learning grammar rules and vocabulary through the translation of disconnected sentences<sup>23</sup>. Meanwhile, the objective of the Grammar Translation Method was the acquisition of grammatical knowledge<sup>24</sup>. The goal was to enhance mental discipline and intellectual development through the study of literature.

Despite bearing the brunt of criticism from modern theorists for its so-called lack of a particular linguistic or psychological theory, the Grammar Translation Method still reflects at least 4 of Brown's twelve principles: language ego, self confidence, the language-culture connection and the native language effect<sup>25</sup>. Whether it is by accident or design, the method plainly tries to avoid such language ego states as raising of inhibitions and a sense of fragility by preparing grammatically sequenced lessons on a graded, mechanical level. The fact that little or no attention is given to pronunciation or oral activities makes the appearance of any humiliating effect of L2 oral production impossibility.

The Grammar Translation Method, the most traditional method for L2 teaching, emphasizes reading, writing, translation and the conscious learning of grammatical rules. Its primary goal is to develop literary mastery of the second language. The curriculum requires the memorization of paradigms, patterns and vocabulary, with translation being used to test the acquired knowledge.

It is true that this method finds it hard to produce learners who are communicatively competent, yet it helps students to memorize words, inflected words and syntactic rules and to use them to trans-

<sup>20</sup> Harmer, J. *How to Teach English*. (England : Longman group, 1999), p. 21

<sup>21</sup> Carmen, Campoy Mari, et. al. *Corpus-Based Approaches to English Language Teaching*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010). p.250.

<sup>22</sup> Dehghani, Y. *Teaching compound verbs in second language learning using grammar-translation method*. Australian Association for Research in Education Conference. (Adelaide, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Carmen. *Corpus - Based Approaches*....., p.250

<sup>24</sup> Wood, Nancy V. *College Reading and Study Skills Learning, Thinking, Making connection*. (New York: Harcourt Brace College Publisher, 1996)

<sup>25</sup> Brown, Douglas. *Teaching by Principles*. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc, 2001)

late from English to the native language or vice versa.

### The Characteristics of Grammar-Translation Method

As the old method in which some country apply it for many decades, it is believed that grammar translation method has uniqueness. Characteristics of Grammar translation method is its uniqueness. There are some characteristics of grammar translation method <sup>20</sup>:

- The unit of teaching is word, not a sentence. It means vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated words.
- It considers grammar as a soul of language.
- Grammatical rules of teaching of English are explained into mother tongue.
- This method does not help in development of linguistic competence of learner.
- English grammar is taught through rules, translation, definition and comparative study of mother tongue grammar.
- Grammar is taught deductively.
- The main function of language learning, communication is ignored.
- Reading and writing are the major focus.

Moreover, another source characterized the grammar based instruction as follow <sup>21</sup>:

1. Focus on language form
2. Success is based on mastery of language form
3. Lessons are organized around types of language forms and structure: researcher-directed activities.
4. Error correction is essential for mastery
5. Learning is a conscious process of memorizing rules, forms, and structures on skills may result in anxiety in

<sup>20</sup> Patel, M.F and Jain, Praveen M. *English Language Teaching*. (Jaipur, 2008), p.73

<sup>21</sup> Cox, Carole. *Teaching language Arts*. (United State of America, 1999), p.92

early stage.

### 6. Emphasis on product

Meanwhile, other opinion about the characteristics of the Grammar-Translation Method are <sup>22</sup>:

1. Learn a language in order to be able to read its literature.
2. Approach a language through the analysis of its grammar rules.
3. Focus on reading and writing, not on the oral skills.
4. Learn vocabulary words through bilingual lists.
5. The more sentences one translates, the better. The sentences are basic units of meaning.
6. Correction is the base of everything.
7. Grammar is taught deductively.
8. In order to learn, the teacher uses the student's L1. Comparisons are frequent.
9. This method does not require much from the teacher, and the student is passive.

### Techniques and Method Used in Grammar Translation Method

There are still some useful techniques associated with the Grammar-Translation Method <sup>23</sup>. Below is an expanded description of some of these techniques.

#### Translation of a Literary Passage

Students translate a reading passage from the target language into their native language. The reading passage then provides the focus for several classes: vocabulary and grammatical structures in the passage are studied in subsequent lessons. The passage may be excerpted from some work from the target language literature, or a researcher may write a passage carefully designed to include particular grammar rules and vocabulary. The transla-

<sup>22</sup> Macau, Cristina Mallol, *Teaching Foreign languages Through translation: Considering Multiple intelligences* (2002), p.20

<sup>23</sup> Larsen, Diane and Freeman. *Teaching and Principles in Language Teaching*. (New York. Oxford University press. 2004), p.19

tion may be written or spoken or both. Students should not translate idioms and the like literally, but rather in a way that shows that they understand their meaning.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

Students answer questions in the target language based on their understanding of the reading passage. Often the questions are sequenced so that the first group of questions asks for information contained within the reading passage. In order to answer the second group of questions, students will have to make inferences based on their understanding of the passage. This means that they will have to answer questions about the passage even though the answers are not contained in the passage itself. The third group of questions requires students to relate the passage to their own experience.

### **Antonyms/Synonyms**

Students are given one set of words and are asked to find antonyms in the reading passage. A similar exercise could be done by asking students to find synonyms for a particular set of words. Or students might be asked to define a set of words based on their understanding of them as they occur in the reading passage. Other exercises that ask students to work with the vocabulary of the passage are also possible.

### **Cognates**

Students are taught to recognize cognates by learning the spelling or sound patterns that correspond between the languages. Students are also asked to memorize words that look like cognates but have meanings in the target language that are different from those in the native language. This technique, of course, would only be useful in languages that share cognates.

### **Deductive Application of Rule**

Grammar rules are presented with examples. Exceptions to each rule are also noted. Once students understand a rule, they are asked to apply it to some different examples.

### **Fill -In The-Blanks**

Students are given a series of sentences with words missing. They fill in the blanks with new vocabulary items or with items of a particular grammar type, such as prepositions or verbs with different tenses.

### **Memorization**

Students are given lists of target language vocabulary words and their native language equivalents and are asked to memorize them. Students are also required to memorize grammatical rules and grammatical paradigms such as verb conjugations.

### **Use words in Sentences**

In order to show that students understand the meaning and use of a new vocabulary item, they make up sentences in which they use the new words.

### **Composition**

The researcher gives the students a topic to write about in the target language. The topic is based upon some aspect of the reading passage of the lesson. Sometimes, instead of creating a composition, students are asked to prepare a practice of the reading passage.

### **Advantages of Grammar translation Method**

Some advantages can be taken from the implementation of grammar Translation Method as stated below:

- When words and phrases are translated into mother tongue, his understanding of those words become very better and quicker.
- The Grammar-Translation Method develops the art of translation.

- In this method the child associates foreign words with translated words so strong memory bond is created.
- The use of mother tongue helps the children in vocabulary getting. It saves time and more effective.
- The words and phrase are easily learnt and explained if translation method is used.
- The working knowledge of mother tongue helps them to learn grammar of a foreign language. The principle of "to proceed from known to unknown" is followed.
- Through this method we can test the ability of comprehension of our students and we can know the form of understanding the subject matter.
- English grammar can be easily taught by comparing with the grammar of mother tongue.

From the fact of the evidence empirically the researcher determines the research problem as follows: 1) How can the Grammar Translation Method improve the students' vocabulary competence? 2) How can the Grammar Translation Method improve the students' structure competence? 3) How can the Grammar Translation Method improve the students' reading comprehension competence?

## THE RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

The design of the research is classroom action research with cycle model. A classroom action research is a type of applied research that its purpose is to solve a specific classroom problem or to make decision at single local site<sup>20</sup>. In other words, a classroom action research is intended to solve problems in the classroom, particularly problems encountered by students and the researchers.

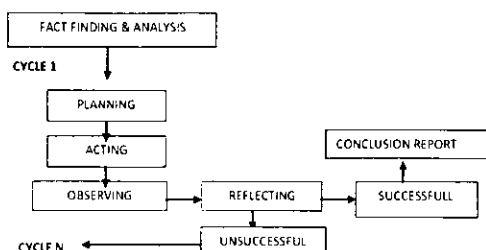
This research used cycle that consists of four steps namely: the planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The de-

<sup>20</sup> Mc.Millan, J. *Educational Research Fundamentals of Consumers*. (New York: Harper Collins Publisher Inc, 1992). p.69

sign of classroom action research is illustrated in the following diagram.

### The Design of Classroom Action Research Diagram

(Modified from Kemmis and Mc. Taggart in Iskandar, 2009:49)<sup>21</sup>



### Subject of the Research

This classroom action research was conducted on the second semester of J class at STAIN Jember in academic year 2010/2011 since the researcher was as a lecturer on the class. The subject of this research was consisted of 44 students.

### Area Determination Method

The area of this research is determined by using purposive method. Purposive method is employed by the researcher to decide the research area because of a certain purpose<sup>22</sup>. In addition, in purposive method the researcher has to be sure and understand the information and population<sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, the researcher must be sure that the population chosen is suitable with the purposes of the research conducted.

### Research Procedure Planning

In this classroom action research, the preparation of the action will be done by researcher before the implementation of action. They were as follows:

<sup>21</sup> Iskandar. *Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*. (Ciputat : Gaung Perdana Press, 2009). p.49

<sup>22</sup> Arikunto, S. *Prosedure Penelitian Suatu Tindakan Praktek*. (Jakarta: Rineka cipta, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Ali, Mohammad. *Strategi Penelitian Pendidikan*. (Bandung: Angkasa, 1993). p.57

1. Choosing the themes and sub themes that will be taught.
2. Selecting the materials that will be used in teaching and learning of English.
3. Making the lesson plans to each meeting of the cycles.
4. Choosing a method (Grammar Translation Method)
5. Preparing the guide of observation in the form of checklist containing the indicators observed.
6. Preparing the way to score the students' test.

### Implementing

The researcher implemented what had been planned before. The implementation of this research was done during the class. In one cycle there were three meetings. Each meeting applied three phases namely pre, whilst, and post reading. Meanwhile, in one meeting consists two learning hours of forty five minutes in each hour. In this implementation, the researcher gave instruction by applying Grammar Translation Method which consists of Translation of a Literary Passage, Reading Comprehension Questions, Antonyms / Synonyms, Cognates, Deductive Application of Rule Fill -in the-Blanks, and Memorization. Then, the students practiced the exercises. At the end of the activities the researcher, as lecturer, discussed the exercises and gave the right answers.

### Observing

Observation or monitoring was done during the class. The observer wrote all of the activities that students did. The activities included class situation, students' behavior, the students understanding to materials. The researcher used checklist paper to record the students' activities in the teaching and learning process. Observation focused on students' activities during the class.

### Reflecting

The researcher did the reflection based on the students' result in the cycle. The researcher analyzed the students' test result at the end of the cycle. This reflection was intended to know whether the action has weaknesses or not, and to identify successfulness and unsuccessfulness.

To measure the students' successfulness percentage, the researcher used a formula as follows <sup>20</sup>:

$$E = \frac{n}{N} 100\%$$

Where:

- E* : The percentage of the students' who achieved the criteria of success  
*n* : The number of the students who achieve minimum standard score  
*N* : The total number of the students

### Data Collection Method Test

Test is an instrument to measure skill or knowledge that presents to each subject a standard set of questions that requires the completion of cognitive task <sup>21</sup>. In this research, the test used to measure the students' English competences which consisted of vocabulary, structure, and reading comprehension.

The number of the test was 30 items that covered three indicators, namely: 8 items of Reading, 15 items of Structure, and 7 items of Vocabulary. All of these items were in the form of multiple choices. The test was administered in 90 minutes. Dealing with the scoring, each item of the indicators was scored 3.3 point. In conclusion, the total score were 100.

In this research, content validity was used because the materials had been discussed in classroom. Besides, the con-

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.186.

<sup>21</sup> McMillan. *Educational .....*,p.114

tent of test materials was constructed by considering the indicators to be measured namely: vocabulary, structure, and reading comprehension.

The test was given in the forth meeting in each cycle after the implementation of the action. The test used in this research was written test in the form of multiple choice.

### Observation

In this research, the researcher observed in each meeting of each cycle while the researcher was also doing the action/teaching as supporting information to the researcher's observation. The most effective way in observation is by using checklist containing some indicators observed <sup>20</sup>. In this case, the observer used checklist in order to note the student's response to the researcher's interaction, the students' answering question, students' paying attention, and students' curiosity to the lesson.

### Interview

In this research, interview was used to get the supporting data about the technique which used by the researcher to teach English to the students on the second semester of J class at STAIN Jember. Interview is classified into three categories; namely, structured interview, semi-structured interview, and unstructured interview <sup>21</sup>. The type of interview used in this research was semi-structured interview. List of questions were prepared and developed to get the information needed.

### Documentation

Documentation is a method in searching data about variables in the form of notes, transcript, books, news, magazines, and the like <sup>22</sup>. In this research, doc-

umentation was used to get the supporting data about the name of the research subjects and English books.

### Data Analysis Method

The collected data was analyzed based on the form of the data. The primary data in this research was obtained from the students' vocabulary, structure and reading comprehension test both in the first cycle and the second cycle. The data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to find whether the students' competence mastery increased or not. The formula to know the mean score of the students' competence test was as follows <sup>23</sup>:

$$\% = \frac{n}{N} \times 100$$

% = the percentage of the students who get score  $\geq 60$

n = the total number of the students who get score  $\geq 60$

N = the total number of the students

The criteria used to evaluate the success of the actions were as follows:

1. The actions were considered successful if 75% of the students achieved the target score  $\geq 60$ .
2. If 75% or more students actively involved in the teaching learning process. Then, the results of the data analysis were classified qualitatively based on the following classification of the scores levels.

## RESEARCH RESULT

### Preliminary study

In preliminary study, the researcher gave test to the students. The result of the test score generally could be described as follows:

<sup>20</sup> Arikunto, S. *Prosedur Penelitian, Suatu Pendekatan Praktek*. (Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta, 2002), p.204

<sup>21</sup> Arikunto, *Prosedure Penelitian Suatu tindakan.....*, p.202

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p.206

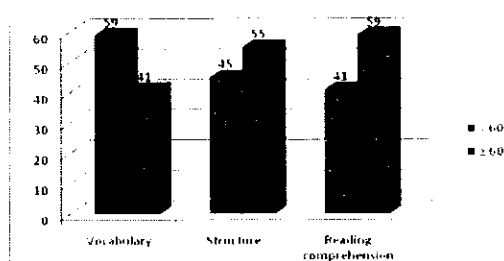
<sup>23</sup> Ali. *Strategi.....*, p.186

## Improving The Student's English Competence...

English Competence	Score Percentage (%)
Vocabulary	64
Structure	58
Reading comprehension	60

Meanwhile, each component score specifically could be described as follows:

English Competence	Score Percentage (%)	
	< 60	≥ 60
Vocabulary	59	41
Structure	45	55
Reading comprehension	41	59



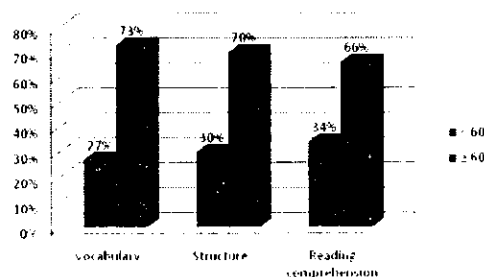
### Result of first cycle

In this cycle the researcher implemented the materials for three meetings. Each meeting had two learning hours of forty five minutes in each hour. The researcher gave materials which consisted of vocabulary, structure, and reading text. The vocabularies and structures were taken from the reading text. Meanwhile reading comprehension was also based on the reading text itself. Then the researcher gave test at the end of the first cycle. The test consists of three English elements. They were vocabulary, structure, and reading comprehension text. The result of the students' test score generally could be described as follows.

English Competence	Score Percentage (%)
Vocabulary	70
Structure	59
Reading comprehension	61

Meanwhile, each component score specifically could be described as follows:

English Competence	Score Percentage (%)	
	< 60	≥ 60
Vocabulary	27	73
Structure	30	70
Reading comprehension	34	66



### Result of second cycle

In second cycle the researcher implemented the action as the first cycle. The researcher conducted the materials for three meetings. Each meeting had two learning hours of forty five minutes in each hour. The researcher gave materials which consisted of vocabulary, structure, and reading text. The vocabularies and structures were taken from the reading text. Meanwhile reading comprehension was also based on the reading text itself. Then the researcher gave test at the end of the first cycle. The test consists of three English elements. They were vocabulary, structure, and reading comprehension text. The result of the students' test score generally could be described below.

English Competence	Score Percentage (%)
Vocabulary	72
Structure	62
Reading comprehension	62

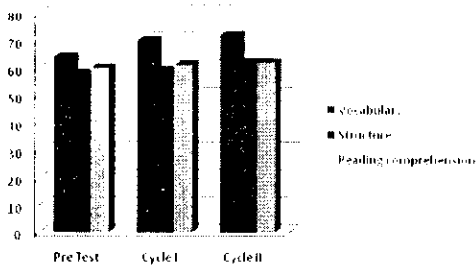


Meanwhile, each component score specifically could be described as follows:

English Competence	Score Percentage (%)	
	< 60	≥ 60
Vocabulary	14	66
Structure	11	89
Reading comprehension	23	77

From increasing the result of the test score in each cycle could be summarized on the table below:

English competence	Score percentage (%)		
	Pre test	Cycle I	Cycle 2
Vocabulary	64	70	72
Structure	58	59	62
Reading comprehension	60	61	62



DISCUSSION

In general it was obvious that teaching grammar by using Grammar Translation Method gave positive contribution on the students' English competence especially for vocabulary, structure, and reading comprehension. It could be seen from the result of the test in each cycle. To know the students' English competence the researcher conducted pre test. The result of the test showed that the percentage of the mean of students' vocabulary test score was 64%, structure test score was 58%, and reading comprehension test score was 60%. Therefore, the researcher gave materials to the students and tried to make the students'

competence better. The researcher implemented the action for the first cycle for three meeting. Then he conducted the test. The result of the test after teaching and learning process showed that the percentage of the mean of students' vocabulary test score was 70%, structure test score was 59%, and reading comprehension test score was 61%. From the result of the test it had not been achieved the target score in this research yet. Therefore the researcher continued to the second cycle. The researcher then gave materials to the class. The result of the test after teaching and learning process in cycle two showed that the percentage of the mean of students' vocabulary test score was 72%, structure test score was 62%, and reading comprehension test score was 62%. In the second cycle, the students' percentage had reached the criteria of success determined in this research that the mean of the score was ≥ 60. The 75 % of the total number of the students got ≥60

From the result of the students test, it showed that Grammar translation Method can make students better in studying English. The advantages of Grammar Translation Method are that reading and writing are the major focus, when words and phrases are translated into mother tongue, his understanding of those words become very better and quicker, the Grammar-Translation Method develops the art of translation, in this method the child associates foreign words with translated words so strong memory bond is created, the use of mother tongue helps the children in vocabulary getting <sup>20</sup>. It saves time and more effective, the words and phrase are easily learnt and explained if translation method is used, the working knowledge of mother tongue helps them to learn grammar of a foreign language, the principle of "to proceed from known to unknown" is followed, through this method we can test the ability of com-

<sup>20</sup> Patel and Jain. English Language.....

prehension of our students and we can know the form of understanding the subject matter, English grammar can be easily taught by comparing with the grammar of mother tongue.

The conclusion, the uses of Grammar Translation Method as a method had been empirically proven to successfully improve the tense mastery of the students. The class was more active because the students were interested in grammar. Therefore, Grammar Translation Method would reduce the students' boredom in teaching and learning process.

## CONCLUSION

### 1. General Conclusion

Based on the result of classroom action, it generally can be concluded that using grammar translation method could improve students' English competence of the second semester of J class at STAIN Jember in the academic year of 2010/2011 by giving translation of a literary passage, reading comprehension questions, antonyms/synonyms, cognates, deductive application of rule, fill-in-the-blanks, memorization, use words in sentences.

### 2. Specific conclusion

Grammar translation method can improve the students' vocabulary competence of the second semester of J class at STAIN Jember in the academic year of 2010/2011 by giving translation of a literary passage, antonyms/ synonyms, fill in the blanks, memorization and use words in sentences.

Grammar translation method can improve the students' structure competence of the second semester of J class at STAIN Jember in the academic year of 2010/2011 by giving deductive application of rule, and fill in the blanks.

Grammar translation method can improve the students' reading comprehension competence of the second semester of J class at STAIN Jember in the academic year of 2010/2011 by giving reading comprehension questions.

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