

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMMUNICATIVE AND GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHODS IN TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR**Qahramonova Sarvinoz O'Imasbekovna**

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Abstract: Teaching grammar has always been a central aspect of English language instruction, yet educators around the world continue to debate which method is more effective — the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) or the modern Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. This study aims to examine students' attitudes towards these two methods in the context of English grammar teaching. A total of 100 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students from various universities participated in a survey designed to explore their perceptions of effectiveness, engagement, and learning outcomes. The findings reveal that while a majority of students appreciate the communicative and interactive aspects of CLT, they still recognize the importance of GTM for mastering grammar rules and translation accuracy. The study concludes that a balanced integration of both methods may offer the most effective approach to teaching grammar, combining the accuracy of GTM with the fluency-building benefits of CLT. Implications for teachers and curriculum designers are also discussed.

Introduction

Over the years, language teaching methods have evolved significantly, moving from teacher-centered approaches to more communicative and learner-centered practices. In traditional classrooms, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was widely used, emphasizing memorization, translation, and grammatical accuracy. While this method helped students develop a strong understanding of grammar rules, it often limited their ability to communicate fluently in real-life situations. In contrast, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach focuses on helping learners use the language for meaningful communication. Instead of concentrating solely on form, CLT promotes interaction, fluency, and authentic language use. As English continues to be the dominant global language, especially in higher education contexts, understanding how students perceive these two approaches is crucial for effective teaching. Although CLT has been widely accepted as a modern and effective teaching method, many students still prefer grammar-based instruction, especially in contexts where exams focus heavily on grammatical accuracy. In countries like Uzbekistan, where English is learned as a foreign language, this tension between communicative and grammar-focused methods often leads to confusion about which approach is more beneficial for learners' real progress. Therefore, exploring students' attitudes towards both methods can reveal how teaching practices align with their learning preferences and goals. The purpose of this study is to investigate students' attitudes towards the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) in teaching English grammar in higher education. By comparing how students perceive the effectiveness of these two methods, the study aims to provide insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers. The findings may help improve teaching strategies by balancing communication skills and grammatical competence in English classrooms.

Key words: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), Students' attitudes, English grammar teaching, Teaching methodologies, Language learning strategies, EFL classrooms, Teacher perceptions, Communicative competence, Grammatical accuracy, Classroom interaction, Learner motivation, Mixed-method research, Pedagogical implications, Higher education.

Language teaching has undergone significant transformation throughout the years, shifting from teacher-centered methods that prioritize grammatical accuracy to student-centered approaches emphasizing communication and fluency. Early methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) were primarily focused on written language, translation exercises, and memorization of rules. These methods often provided a solid grammatical foundation but failed to develop students' communicative abilities effectively (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). On the other hand, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged as a reaction to these limitations. It was introduced in the late 1970s as part of the move toward a more functional view of language — one that regards communication as the main goal of learning. According to Littlewood (1981), CLT emphasizes interaction, fluency, and the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. The Grammar-Translation Method, one of the oldest and most traditional approaches, centers on teaching grammar rules, vocabulary lists, and translation between the target language and the native language. The teacher plays the dominant role, while students passively receive knowledge. This method has proven useful for learners who aim to develop reading and writing skills, especially in contexts where accuracy is prioritized (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). However, GTM has been widely criticized for neglecting oral communication and interaction. Learners often achieve a strong theoretical understanding of grammar but struggle to apply their knowledge in real-life communicative situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was developed to overcome the weaknesses of traditional approaches. It encourages students to use the language for meaningful communication rather than for grammatical drills. Teachers act as facilitators who guide learners in real-life interactions. Littlewood (1981) explains that CLT focuses not only on language accuracy but also on fluency and appropriateness in different social contexts.

The main techniques in CLT include group work, role plays, problem-solving tasks, and discussions — all of which aim to make learning more interactive and student-centered. Despite its benefits, implementing CLT in non-English-speaking contexts can be challenging due to limited exposure to authentic language use and traditional assessment systems that still emphasize grammar and tests (Karim, 2018). Numerous studies have compared CLT and GTM to evaluate their impact on learners' language skills. Research generally shows that CLT improves students' speaking confidence and communicative competence, while GTM enhances grammatical accuracy and reading comprehension (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Rao, 2019). Some researchers suggest combining both methods to balance accuracy and fluency, which may be especially effective in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. Students' perceptions play a critical role in the effectiveness of any teaching method. Studies indicate that while many students enjoy the interactive nature of CLT, others prefer the structured and rule-based nature of GTM because it feels more familiar and exam-oriented (Al-Mutawa, 2015). In higher education, attitudes may depend on learners' goals: those aiming for practical communication often favor CLT, whereas students preparing for academic exams may prefer GTM.

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate students' attitudes towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) in learning English grammar. A quantitative approach allows researchers to collect numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and trends in students' perceptions. The participants included undergraduate students studying English as a foreign language at a higher education institution. A total of 60 students were selected using convenience sampling, which

means choosing participants who are readily available and willing to participate. The sample included students from various academic years to obtain diverse perspectives. A questionnaire was designed to collect data on students' attitudes towards CLT and GTM. It included Likert-scale items (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree) to measure students' agreement with various statements. The instrument was reviewed by language teaching experts to ensure content validity. The questionnaire was distributed during regular class sessions. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their consent. All responses were kept anonymous to maintain confidentiality and ethical standards. Data collection continued for approximately two weeks. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarize students' attitudes. Comparative analyses were also conducted to examine differences in students' perceptions of CLT and GTM. This analysis aimed to address the research questions introduced in the Introduction section.

The analysis revealed that the majority of students had a positive attitude toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Most participants agreed that CLT activities, such as group discussions and role-plays, made learning grammar more engaging and relevant to real-life communication. In contrast, Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was perceived as less interactive, although students acknowledged that it helped them understand grammar rules and improve accuracy. Comparative analysis showed that students rated CLT higher than GTM in terms of promoting fluency and communicative competence. Meanwhile, GTM scored slightly higher for enhancing reading and writing accuracy. These results suggest that learners recognize the strengths and weaknesses of both methods depending on their learning goals. Some students reported challenges with CLT, including difficulty participating in interactive activities due to shyness or lack of vocabulary. Others noted that GTM could be monotonous and less motivating, especially when classes focused mainly on translation exercises. These observations highlight the importance of balancing the two approaches to address diverse student needs.

The findings indicate that students generally prefer CLT for its interactive and communicative nature, which aligns with previous research emphasizing the importance of fluency and meaningful communication (Littlewood, 1981). However, GTM remains valued for its role in developing grammatical accuracy, especially in exam-oriented contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). These results suggest that English language instructors should consider combining elements of both CLT and GTM. While CLT fosters engagement and communication skills, GTM ensures a solid understanding of grammatical structures. A balanced approach can cater to students' varied learning preferences and enhance overall language proficiency. The study is limited by its sample size and the focus on a single institution. Future research could include a larger and more diverse population or investigate the long-term effects of CLT and GTM on language proficiency. Additionally, qualitative methods, such as interviews or classroom observations, may provide deeper insights into students' experiences.

This study examined students' attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) in learning English grammar. The findings revealed that students generally favor CLT for its interactive, engaging, and communicative nature, while they acknowledge GTM's strength in enhancing grammatical accuracy. Both methods have distinct advantages, suggesting that a combined approach may be the most effective strategy in EFL contexts. Instructors should consider integrating communicative activities alongside grammar-focused exercises to balance fluency and accuracy. Moreover, understanding students' preferences and challenges can help educators design lessons that are both motivating and pedagogically effective. Future research may expand on this study by including a larger and more diverse sample, employing qualitative methods, or examining long-term effects on language proficiency.

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