**Development of Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to Improve Translation Skills in SMP N 2 Merbau**

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**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini menyelidiki penerapan Metode Penerjemahan Tata Bahasa (Grammar Translation Method/GTM) untuk meningkatkan kemampuan penerjemahan siswa di SMP N 2 Merbau. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, menggabungkan metode kuantitatif dan kualitatif untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas GTM dalam mengatasi tantangan siswa dalam menerjemahkan teks bahasa Inggris. Pengumpulan data melibatkan pre-test dan post-test untuk mengukur keakuratan terjemahan, observasi kelas untuk menilai keterlibatan, dan wawancara siswa dan guru untuk mengumpulkan wawasan tentang pengalaman mereka dengan metode ini. Hasilnya menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan penerjemahan siswa, dengan nilai post-test meningkat rata-rata 23% dibandingkan dengan nilai pre-test. Para siswa menunjukkan peningkatan akurasi dalam konstruksi kalimat dan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang struktur tata bahasa dan kosakata. Temuan kualitatif menunjukkan bahwa sifat terstruktur dari GTM memberikan kejelasan dan konsistensi, sehingga memungkinkan siswa untuk memahami konsep-konsep linguistik yang kompleks. Namun, beberapa siswa melaporkan berkurangnya keterlibatan karena sifat kegiatan GTM yang berulang-ulang. Untuk mengatasi hal ini, strategi tambahan, termasuk latihan gamifikasi dan penggunaan alat digital, diperkenalkan, yang meningkatkan motivasi dan partisipasi siswa. Kesimpulannya, GTM terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan penerjemahan di kalangan siswa sekolah menengah pertama jika diadaptasi dengan strategi yang inovatif. Studi ini menyoroti pentingnya menyesuaikan metode tradisional agar sesuai dengan dinamika kelas modern dan merekomendasikan pendekatan campuran untuk mengatasi keterbatasan GTM.

Kata Kunci: Metode Penerjemahan Tata Bahasa (GTM), keterampilan penerjemahan, pengajaran tata bahasa, pengembangan kosakata, penelitian metode campuran

Abstract

This study investigates the application of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to improve students' translation skills at SMP N 2 Merbau. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the effectiveness of GTM in addressing students' challenges in translating English texts. Data collection involved pre-tests and post-tests to measure translation accuracy, classroom observations to assess engagement, and student and teacher interviews to gather insights into their experiences with the method. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' translation skills, with post-test scores increasing by an average of 23% compared to pre-test scores. Students demonstrated enhanced accuracy in sentence construction and a better understanding of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Qualitative findings indicated that the structured nature of GTM provided clarity and consistency, enabling students to grasp complex linguistic concepts. However, some students reported reduced engagement due to the repetitive nature of GTM activities. To address this, supplementary strategies, including gamified exercises and the use of digital tools, were introduced, which increased student motivation and participation. In conclusion, GTM proved effective in improving translation skills among junior high school students when adapted with innovative strategies. This study highlights the importance of tailoring traditional methods to suit modern classroom dynamics and recommends a blended approach to address GTM’s limitations.

**Keywords:** Grammar Translation Method (GTM), translation skills, grammar teaching, vocabulary development, mixed-methods research

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Translation skills are a cornerstone of language learning, fostering comprehension and communication across linguistic boundaries. In recent years, SMP N 2 Merbau has recognized the importance of enhancing students’ translation abilities to equip them for a globalized world. This study explores the potential of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in achieving this objective, particularly focusing on improving students' understanding of grammar and vocabulary to enhance their translation accuracy and competence. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has a longstanding history in language education. Originating in the 18th and 19th centuries, GTM emphasizes the rigorous study of grammar rules, vocabulary, and the translation of literary texts. While it has been critiqued for its traditional and teacher-centered approach, GTM remains relevant in educational contexts that prioritize reading and writing skills over speaking and listening. Scholars like Richards and Rodgers (2001) have argued that GTM’s structured nature makes it suitable for contexts that require linguistic precision, such as translation tasks.

SMP N 2 Merbau, a junior high school in Indonesia, faces challenges in improving English translation skills among its students. Observations indicate that many students struggle with sentence construction, comprehension of contextual meaning, and achieving accuracy in their translations. These challenges suggest the need for a structured and methodical approach like GTM, which can provide students with a clear understanding of grammar and vocabulary, ultimately strengthening their translation skills. The integration of GTM at SMP N 2 Merbau aligns with the school’s curriculum goals. English is a core subject in the Indonesian education system, and the ability to translate effectively is seen as a vital skill for academic and future professional success. GTM, with its emphasis on understanding grammatical structures and expanding vocabulary, offers a viable solution to address gaps in students’ linguistic abilities. According to Larsen-Freeman (2011), this method is particularly effective in helping learners develop foundational language skills that support accurate translation.

Critics of GTM often argue that the method limits communicative competence due to its minimal emphasis on speaking and listening. However, in the context of SMP N 2 Merbau, where translation skills are the primary focus, GTM’s structured and systematic approach offers a solid foundation. While GTM may not prioritize oral communication, it can be a stepping stone for incorporating more interactive and communicative activities into the curriculum, as suggested by Harmer (2007). This study explores how GTM can be adapted and implemented effectively in SMP N 2 Merbau to improve students' translation skills. Innovative teaching strategies, such as incorporating culturally relevant texts and utilizing digital tools for practice and feedback, are integrated into the traditional GTM framework to make it more engaging for young learners. These adaptations aim to address the limitations of GTM while preserving its strengths. The success of GTM in improving translation skills depends on several factors, including teacher expertise, student motivation, and curriculum design. Teachers at SMP N 2 Merbau play a crucial role in implementing GTM effectively. Their ability to balance the traditional elements of GTM with modern pedagogical practices, such as collaborative activities and formative assessments, is critical in ensuring that students achieve desired learning outcomes (Brown, 2007).

Research on GTM’s impact on translation skills in junior high schools is limited, particularly in Indonesia. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence of GTM’s effectiveness in SMP N 2 Merbau. It also emphasizes the importance of localized adaptations of GTM to suit the unique profiles and needs of learners in the school. According to Creswell (2014), such localized research is essential for understanding the practical applications of theoretical methods. The findings of this research are expected to inform language educators and policymakers about the viability of GTM in contemporary classrooms. By demonstrating how traditional methods can be tailored to meet modern educational goals, this study underscores the potential of GTM to complement communicative approaches and enhance language learning outcomes. Scholars like Ellis (2008) highlight that a balanced approach, incorporating both traditional and modern methods, often yields the best results in language education. In conclusion, this study aims to revitalize the role of GTM in improving translation skills at SMP N 2 Merbau. The article is organized into several sections: a theoretical framework, research methodology, findings, and recommendations for educators. By bridging theory and practice, this research not only contributes to academic discussions but also provides practical guidance for language teachers seeking to improve translation skills among their students.

**2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The implementation of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) at SMP N 2 Merbau revealed significant improvements in students’ translation skills over the study period. Data collected from pre-tests and post-tests demonstrated a marked increase in students’ ability to accurately translate English texts into Indonesian and vice versa. On average, student scores improved from 55% accuracy in the pre-test to 78% in the post-test, indicating the method’s effectiveness in enhancing comprehension and translation competence. Observational data from classroom sessions highlighted positive student engagement with GTM activities. Exercises such as translating sentences, analyzing grammatical structures, and memorizing vocabulary contributed to better understanding and retention of language rules. Teachers reported that students showed increased confidence in identifying grammatical patterns and applying them to translation tasks. Qualitative feedback from students revealed that the structured approach of GTM helped them develop a systematic understanding of English grammar and vocabulary. Many students appreciated the clarity of the method, particularly when translating complex sentences that required careful attention to grammatical details. However, a subset of students expressed difficulty in maintaining interest in repetitive translation drills, indicating a need for additional engagement strategies.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings confirm the potential of GTM as an effective tool for improving translation skills among junior high school students. GTM’s emphasis on grammar and vocabulary directly addresses key challenges faced by students at SMP N 2 Merbau, such as weak sentence construction and limited lexical knowledge. By focusing on detailed grammatical analysis, the method enables students to decode and reconstruct sentences accurately, a critical skill for translation tasks. One of the study’s key successes was the alignment of GTM activities with the students’ existing curriculum. For example, using culturally relevant texts, such as traditional Indonesian stories and short English narratives, helped students connect linguistic structures with meaningful content. This approach not only increased motivation but also fostered a deeper appreciation of the practical applications of translation.

While the results highlight the strengths of GTM, they also reveal its limitations. The repetitive nature of traditional GTM exercises can lead to decreased engagement among students, particularly those with a preference for interactive or communicative learning methods. To address this, the study incorporated innovative strategies, such as gamified translation exercises and group discussions, which made GTM activities more dynamic and engaging. These modifications enhanced the students’ learning experience without compromising the method’s core focus on grammar and translation accuracy. Teacher proficiency emerged as a critical factor in the success of GTM implementation. Teachers at SMP N 2 Merbau who had a strong understanding of English grammar were better able to explain complex concepts and provide constructive feedback during translation exercises. This underscores the importance of teacher training in ensuring the effectiveness of traditional methods like GTM. Another significant finding was the role of technology in enhancing GTM’s effectiveness. The use of digital tools, such as translation software and online grammar quizzes, provided students with additional practice opportunities and immediate feedback. These tools helped address individual learning gaps and allowed students to work at their own pace, thereby reinforcing classroom instruction.

Despite its advantages, GTM’s limited emphasis on oral communication remains a notable drawback. While the method significantly improved students’ translation skills, it did little to enhance their speaking or listening abilities. This suggests that GTM should be supplemented with communicative approaches to provide a more comprehensive language learning experience. Such a blended approach can help students develop both translation competence and overall language proficiency. The findings of this study align with previous research on GTM, which has consistently highlighted its strengths in teaching grammar and translation while pointing to its limitations in fostering communicative skills (Larsen-Freeman, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, this study contributes new insights by demonstrating how GTM can be adapted to suit the specific needs of junior high school students in Indonesia. In conclusion, the results of this study support the use of GTM as an effective method for improving translation skills at SMP N 2 Merbau. By addressing its limitations through innovative strategies and supplemental activities, GTM can continue to play a vital role in language education. Future research should explore the integration of GTM with communicative approaches to create a balanced and comprehensive learning experience.

**3. CONCLUSION**

The study on the development of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to improve translation skills at SMP N 2 Merbau demonstrates its effectiveness in addressing students' challenges in English translation. The structured focus on grammar rules, vocabulary enrichment, and sentence analysis significantly enhanced students’ translation accuracy and comprehension, as evidenced by improved test scores and classroom performance. GTM's ability to provide a systematic framework for understanding linguistic structures proved highly beneficial in equipping students with the foundational skills necessary for accurate translation. Additionally, the incorporation of culturally relevant materials and digital tools enhanced the method's engagement and effectiveness, addressing some of its traditional shortcomings.

However, the study also highlights GTM’s limitations, particularly its lack of emphasis on oral communication and its potential to disengage students through repetitive exercises. These challenges underscore the need for supplemental strategies, such as gamification, collaborative activities, and integration with communicative methods, to create a more balanced and engaging learning experience. In conclusion, while GTM remains a traditional method, its adaptability and focus on grammar and translation make it a valuable tool in language education, particularly for improving translation skills. This study reaffirms the importance of tailoring teaching methods to the specific needs and contexts of learners. By addressing its limitations and leveraging its strengths, GTM can continue to play a pivotal role in language learning at SMP N 2 Merbau and beyond. Future research should explore its integration with modern pedagogical approaches to further enhance its relevance and impact.

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