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Effectiveness of the Direct Teaching Method in Enhancing Language Skills and Learner Autonomy in EFL Contexts

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Abstract

This study compared two teaching methods in EFL context, Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Direct Teaching Method (DTM). Research Studies define Grammar Translation Method for vocabulary teaching and accuracy of grammar. On the other side Direct Teaching Method in EFL is context is featured with fluency in speaking and confidence. The research used quasi-experimental Design. Students were used in two groups with equal strength. Purposive sampling technique was used. Pre-Test and Post-Test was applied on both groups for assessment of creative writing and oral fluency. Research instruments used for both groups were grammar exercises, role play, dialogue, oral assignments. Duration of experiment was 12 weeks. Both groups were assessed before instructional period with same tasks. After intervention post-test was conducted on both groups with identical task to examine which method produced better results. The findings reveal that experimental group was more confident in oral tasks, more accurate in content organization and self-directed learning. The gains of controlled group, taught through grammar translation method were limited. The score of pre-test and post-test were analyzed using SPSS software. The results suggest that DTM due to its interactive and student-focused approach improves both language skills as well as makes learners more confident. The results suggest that EFL classrooms active learning, teamwork and real-life communication should be used. The study concludes using DTM helps to address challenges in EFL classrooms. It supports students who face low confidence and struggle with language exposure.

Keywords: Direct Teaching Method (DTM), English as Foreign Language (EFL), Learner Autonomy, Oral Speaking Skills, Challenges.

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1. Introduction

English is used across the globe. It is not confined to education sector but common language of communication for all. An effective teaching approach is crucial when English is taught as foreign language (EFL). Selection of appropriate technique will ensure learners language proficiency and long-term academic growth. In Pakistan English is taught through Grammar Translation Method. Since long English is taught in schools and higher education institutes as foreign language but students face many challenges to use this language.

Studies show students have low confidence, limited vocabulary and challenges in forming sentences (Channar et al., 2025). Poor speaking abilities hinder academic performance of students (Amina & Amanullah, 2025). Among various methods of teaching Direct Teaching Method (DTM) is significant structure. It is teacher-led and student-centered method. It focuses on modeling, clarity and guided practice. According to Zulkarnain and Abrar (2025) study direct method emphasizes listening, speaking and real-world communication. At the same time modern education gives importance to learner autonomy. It is based on students' ability to make informed decisions and take responsibility of their own learning (Zairjanovich et al., (2025)). Therefore, balancing direct instruction with opportunities for autonomous learning is a challenge in present century. These studies examined the effectiveness of Direct Teaching method while comparing with in practice method, Grammar Translation Method (GTM). In Pakistan's context Direct Method is getting popularity due to its focus on speaking and listening through communicative tasks (Khan & Ahmed, 2021). Specific methods are required in language teaching to acquire vocabulary, foster and grammar. Methods provide an organized framework so they are essential for teachers. To meet all the requirements of successful language, acquisition the choice of teaching method is vital. Its role is crucial role in defining the learning process. Various factors such as teaching goals, student characteristics, and teacher preferences are required while choosing a method (Oraznepesova, & Berdiyeva, 2025).

2. Statement of Problem

Improving language skills and developing learner autonomy are major goals of EFL classrooms. In spite of this many students feel difficulty in both areas. Current teaching practices often lack between guidance and independence. The Direct Teaching Method is widely used in many countries. It offers clear and structured instruction. But its impact is still unclear on language development and autonomous learning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of this method to address the challenges in context of EFL.

3. Research Objective & Hypotheses

To compare the effectiveness of Direct Method (DM) and the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) for enhancing language skills and learner autonomy in EFL classrooms.

(H1): It was hypothesized that students taught through DM would show significant improvement in language skills and learner autonomy than those taught through GTM.

(H0): It was hypothesized that there would be no difference between students taught through both methods.

4. Literature Review

To ease the learning process and enhance learners' ability to master communicative language skills Language teaching has developed with numerous and different methods. One of the oldest and most significant is the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). It is special for translation-based

exercises, vocabulary memorization and emphasizing mostly grammatical rules. The GTM method has been widely used in many educational settings though it has been criticized due to a lack of focus on oral and listening skills during the learning period. It is basically supportive to enhance the formal style of language (Zayniddinova, 2025; Nisha (2024). Grammar Translation Method (GTM) focuses on mastery of grammar rules and translation skills (Allovidinovna ,2025).

Language teaching traditionally relied on rigid sentence structure exercises, extensive grammar instruction and memorizing vocabulary lists. Classroom mostly focused on constructing simple spoken phrases, correcting pronunciation, and reading and translating texts. In consequences, making the learning process both tedious and discouraging and essential language acquisition skills were often neglected (Orujlu, 2025). Over a century, the Direct Method in language teaching has been widely used in educational settings. Its focus Everyday vocabulary, oral communication and focus on grammar teaching are main features. In the short term, Direct Method improves oral proficiency and listening skills. In creating immersive language environments depends heavily on the teacher's skill. To develop comprehensive language proficiency, it requires subjoining with other approaches (Dakhalan, & Tanucan, 2024).

A critical concept in language education is learner autonomy. It emphasizes students' responsibility for their own learning. It has modern educational goals problem-solving and fostering critical thinking. ensuring that Learner autonomy becomes a sustainable element of language education with the role of teachers in bridging the gap between theoretical principles and classroom application (Rahimjonova, 2025). Learner autonomy has approximately 40-year history. By drawing attention to the fundamental importance of understanding the language learner it has contributed to the field of applied linguistics. In particular learner autonomy researchers diversify use of research methods to make explicit theoretical frameworks (Chong & Reinders, 2025).

In English three methods have their own strengths and limitations and they are Grammar Translation Method (GTM), the Direct Method (DM), and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). GTM concentrations are mainly translation and grammatical structure. Conversely, DM focuses on speaking skills, and real-life communication is CLT emphasizes. Anyhow, separately, each method has limitations despite the fact addressing the multifaceted requirements of language students (Hassan, 2025). To discover the perception and usage of Communicative Language Teaching, Audio-Lingual Method, Grammar-Translation Method and Direct Method, a descriptive survey design was employed, on 130 English language teachers. The results show high level of agreement among respondents for these four methods. The highest overall mean score was for Communicative Language Teaching due to its focus on real-life communication. It shows the shift student-centered teaching approaches (Ali et al., 2025). Simanjuntak and Prayuda (2025) study reveal significant improvements in articulation, language fluency, and grammar for those who were taught using the Direct Method. By incorporating visual aids such as real-life objects, pictures, and gestures boost vocabulary learning and students' motivation (Yuldoshova & Khudoyorova ,2021).

Many teachers blend Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT) with Direct Method. It creates more interactive learner-centered classrooms. Moreover, it supports to development of oral communication skills (Zairjanovich et al., 2025). In language teaching the benefits of group discussion are crucial. Discussions improve speaking confidence and enhance classroom interactions (Asgawanti et al.,2025). Kedungjati (2025) outlined five stages as instrumental in developing fluency through active participation. These are effective role-play preparation, role division, explanation, evaluation, and reflection. While mainly used for oral skills, role-play also

supportive for writing skills. Direct Method has value in enhancing vocabulary, consistency and students' engagement in written work. Inclusively, when visual, communication and role play strategies are integrated with DM it offers a more comprehensive language learning experience (Axrorova, 2025).

5. Research Methodology

This study used an experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group. 60 students were randomly selected as participants. The experimental group was taught through Direct Method. The controlled group received instruction using GTM. Both groups studied same content using different approaches. Two tests were used to collect data: Language Skills Test was to assess listening, speaking and Creative Writing Test to assess writing skills. These tests were given before and after the intervention. Duration of data collection was 12 weeks.

The focus of Direct Method was on oral communication, active participation and fluent use of language. Whereas, Grammar Translation Method mainly worked on reading passages, translations, grammar explanations and written tasks. While keeping all conditions consistent the same teacher taught to both groups. Data was collected through pre-test to develop baseline of the study. Post-tests measured improvements at the end of the study.

6. Results

6.1 Comparative Analysis through Paired Sample t-Test

Table 1

Variables	Method	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Mean Difference	Paired t	p
Creative Writing	GTM	12.45 ± 2.10	13.30 ± 2.25	0.85	2.1	0.043
	DTM	12.48 ± 2.12	14.00 ± 2.20	1.52	39.898	0
Speaking Fluency	GTM	12.60 ± 2.00	16.07 ± 2.15	3.47	37.085	0
	DTM	12.63 ± 2.05	16.10 ± 2.20	3.47	37.085	0
Learner Autonomy	GTM	12.80 ± 2.05	16.40 ± 2.10	3.6	41.687	0
	DTM	12.82 ± 2.00	16.60 ± 2.12	3.78	41.687	0

Note: N=60, DTM= Direct Teaching Method, GTM= Grammar Translation Method, SD=Standard Deviation, Sig (2-tailed) = $p < 0.001$

The results revealed that direct method clearly promotes students learning. In Creative Writing scores increase as ($t = 39.898$, $p < 0.001$) which is higher from GTM group. In speaking fluency DTM improved scores from 12.63 to 16.10. The mean difference is 3.47. ($t = 37.085$, $p > 0.001$). Its performance was similar to GTM. DTM given the strongest boost to learner autonomy. Scored increased from 12.82 to 16.60 ($t = 41.687$, $p < 0.001$). So, DTM showed consistent improvement in both areas creative writing and spoken skills.

6.2 Regression on Pre-Test and Post-Test Learners' Autonomy

Table 2

Predictor	B (Unstandardized Coefficient)	β (Standardized Coefficient)	t-value	p-value
Constant	2.828	—	4.010	0.000
Learners' Autonomy Post-Test Score	-0.321	-0.280	-2.221	0.030

The constant value 2.828 is statistically significant ($t = 4.010$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates the meaningful baseline level of pre-test autonomy while post-test score is zero. The learners' autonomy post-test score is -0.321 and β is -0.280 . The negative sign shows an inverse relationship. It shows when post-test autonomy increases then post-test autonomy decreases. The p – value is below 0.05 which shows inverse relationship is statistically significant. The regression model suggests that learners who achieved higher autonomy after intervention started with lower autonomy in pre-test. It reveals meaningful growth in autonomy through the learning process.

Table 3

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.828	.705		4.010	.000
Learner Autonomy Post-Test Score	-.321	.144	-.280	-2.221	.030

The constant is 2.828 and highly significant as $p = .000$. The post-test autonomy score showing negative effect as coefficient is -0.321 . A moderate inverse relationship is indicated as β is -0.280 .

The t-value (-2.221) and p-value (0.030) confirm statistical significance.

7. Findings

1. Creative writing in both methods but DTM showed a larger gain ($t = 39.898$, $p < 0.001$).
2. Speaking fluency increased equally in both methods ($t = 37.085$, $p < 0.001$).
3. Learner autonomy remained stronger under DTM rising from 12.82 to 16.60.
4. In regression analysis constant was significant which showed meaningful baseline level of autonomy.
5. The post-test autonomy score showed a negative relationship. It indicated that higher post-test autonomy was associated with lower pre-test autonomy.
6. Clear growth after intervention reflected as students with higher post-autonomy inclined to have lower pre-test autonomy.
7. DTM produced significant results regarding creative writing, speaking fluency and learners' autonomy.

8. Discussion

The study basically investigated effectiveness of Direct Teaching Method (DTM) in context of EFL classroom. Comparison of two methods of English Teaching was conducted. The findings

indicated positive of DTM on linguistic skills. These results are aligned with Babayev, (2025) study of characteristics of DTM. The results of intervention show that interactive nature of DTM encourages learners to produce actively either writing skills or oral speaking skills. These outcomes also aligned with previous studies of (Bano, 2025; Dakhalan & Tanucan, 2024) which emphasize communicative and task-based approaches in EFL contexts.

DTM and GTM both showed improvement regarding confidence in speaking. This result is consistent with the research Estaji and Jafari, (2022) of guided practice and teacher-led modeling for oral skill development. Learner autonomy showed significant under DTM. Post-test scores showed substantial growth when compared to pre-test scores. It is evident that DTM makes students independent and responsible for self-directed learning. An inverse relationship between pre-test and post-test autonomy that students with lower autonomy achieved higher autonomy after invention. This proves hypothesis that DTM supports language development and cultivates independent learning behaviours.

9. Conclusion

The study concludes that DTM can enhance multiple aspects of language EFL learning. Its structured guidance, interactive strategies and active participation of learner contribute in improving creative writing, speaking fluency and learners' autonomy. Compared to the Grammar Translation Method DTM fosters both competencies.

10. Recommendations

1. Teachers should adopt DTM to increase students' motivation and provide interactive learning opportunities.
2. EFL programs should include strategies that allow student to take responsibility for their progress.
3. Professional Development workshops should be arranged for teachers to train in DTM techniques.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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