

## STAGES OF TEACHING ENGLISH TO BEGINNERS

*Andrei VASILACHE, lector superior*

### **Rezumat**

*Acest articol prezintă un șir de idei și reflecții referitor la unul dintre cele mai dificile procese și anume, cel de predare și instruire a limbii engleze pentru începători, în deosebi, și studenților la nivel intermediar. Drept rezultat al citirii și analizei mai multor surse tematice, așa ca: manuale de limba engleză, cărți de metodica predării limbii engleze, dicționare, surse din internet în formă de prezentare Power Point, materiale vizuale, audio și video didactice suplimentare etc., a fost stabilită caracterizarea comună pe etape de predare a limbii engleze studenților începători și celor la un nivel mai avansat.*

Teaching the English language is a very responsible thing and exactly because of that, it requires an absolutely serious attitude toward the matter. If there is a reference to the aspect of teaching it to the pupils, students or learners who are being at their initial stage of studies or the beginners, then the strategy and structure of the model of teaching process must be definitely an accurate, well-organized and motivated one. As a support of the above-enumerated thoughts and ideas, to mind, there can be the following quotation sentences: „There are lots of different methods and approaches to teaching, but no single one is ‘the best’ or the ‘right way’. Some methods work for some people and not for other people” [2, p. 8]. It is no doubt, true to be right, especially if viewed by a person with at least a couple of years of pedagogical experience, as such. The given article represents some more reflections upon one of the most difficult processes referred to teaching the English language to beginners, especially, and to post-beginners pupils. As a consequent result of reading and analysis of a number of topical sources, like: textbooks, books, exercise-books, dictionaries, internet sources in the form of Power Point presentations, worksheets and cards etc. there was set out the common average procedures of acquiring English by beginners and the steps of progressing within the domain. Defining the concepts and strategies of methods and techniques of implementation of this process is quite important for the teachers of English, firstly. That is the reason why, following their everyday experience, they are the ones who must determine the items of studies. Resulting my personal experience within teaching I agree completely with the following statement that says: “As a teacher you will never meet a class where learners don’t make mistakes. In fact, mistakes help the teacher plan their lessons as it gives them an idea of the learners’ problems and progress. Taking into account the mistakes made by learners is a step in improving your teaching”[2, p.61]. It can be always right in the class of beginners no matter of the age or gender of the learners. The biggest problem is that you will have a classroom with some absolute beginners and it is necessary to know how to teach them this foreign language. Teaching someone this mode can be difficult, but it is not always impossible. With good planning and organization, teaching English to beginners can be a stimulating and useful experience. The most important piece of advice for teaching someone who doesn’t speak any English is to be very careful with what you say. They won’t understand you if you speak the way you do with your friends, by using a lot of new vocabulary, words, expressions, idioms and speaking to them without writing on the blackboard. You have to be very controlled, motivated and only speak words that are relevant to what you are teaching. Remove unnecessary words, filler words and find the simplest way possible to say what you are saying. You will have to rely heavily on the use of props, hand motions and other verbal cues to explain what you’re teaching. To teach numbers you might point to your fingers and count out 1-10. To teach occupations, print out cards with pictures of people doing those jobs. A fun way to teach fruits would be to bring a bunch of them to class and talk about different smoothie combinations. Teaching beginner students requires a lot more preparation, but in some ways they are easier to teach. When they come to you without knowing any English, you know exactly what they don’t know, which makes it easier to decide what they should know. They also come without any bad habits learned from other teaching methodologies, so you will have the chance to mold them according to your own philosophy. When you first come to the class and start teaching English at a school, you will probably be given intermediate and advanced level students to teach to. Once you sit down at the table and start conversing with your student you will realize how unnecessary the native language is for you to

carry out your job. In a typical class, you will work through whatever book or teaching materials you are using all while talking in English. Even if you spoke fluent Romanian or Russian it wouldn't be appropriate for you to speak it during the classroom. The only place it might help is if they want to use a word but don't know the English equivalent and want you to translate. Even then, Romanian isn't necessary because they should be able to explain the word they are looking for using English. When a student pays for an hour of English class, he is expecting to get 60 minutes of instruction in English. If it was Romanian class that he was looking for, he could go outside and talk to anyone on the street. Your beginner, intermediate and advanced students all want to learn English with you, so it is English that you must teach them that new language for them. The idea and the message here is that Romanian language ability is not a prerequisite for teaching English in the classroom. This research can be classified as an action of research in pedagogical science. According to more sources this action research can be utilized as a means of remedying problems diagnosed in specific situations, or improving in some way a given set of circumstances; as a means of in-service training, providing teachers with new skills and methods and heightening self-awareness. Also, it can be used as a means of injecting additional or innovative approaches to teaching and learning into a system which normally inhibits innovations and change. The purpose of the study was to implement a proposal with innovative language teaching methodologies in order to make the language learning process fun and meaningful for children. During this process the English teachers can reflect on these new practices, analyze what works or does not work, and make changes based on the reflection. During classes they become familiar with research techniques, syllabus design, and story teaching methodology. Once the teachers analyze the results of the needs analysis, they started to design the course syllabus and create the agenda and planning. The purpose is to teach the language in a meaningful, funny and interesting way for learners. In order to reach this goal, the teachers plan classes around the stories which they wrote and illustrated as big books. For reading each story, the teachers follow the steps of pre-reading, while reading, and post reading. During the pre-reading stage they create a good environment to introduce the story by decorating the room with big posters about the story. Then they do some vocabulary work through games, songs, poems and matching activities. After that they start reading the story using body language and pictures in order to help students understand better. Also during reading, the students activate their prior knowledge by making connections between the story and their life, making predictions about what could happen next, and answering questions about the story. Through predicting and questioning, the teachers can check comprehension and determine which students started using the new language vocabulary. During the implementation of the method, one of the teachers is in charge of teaching the lesson while the other one observes and take notes of the process. The next lesson they exchange roles. After each lesson the teachers meet, analyze the notes in the journal, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson, the activities and strategies that work or do not work, as well as the students' learning process. Based on this information the teachers write a reflection about the lesson. If they find any difficulties during the lesson related with classroom management or teaching strategies, they need to implement new strategies in order to improve and get better results next time by reading new bibliography or by following their supervisor's advice. As a teacher supervisor, his role consists of guiding teachers in the research process and also supervising the implementation of the teaching proposal in the class of English. At the beginning of the whole process, teachers need help to study resources.

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