

**Iuliana LUNGU**

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**ESSENTIALS IN TEACHING ENGLISH  
A BASIC COURSE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

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**EDITURA UNIVERSITARIA  
Craiova, 2013**

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**Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României**

**LUNGU, IULIANA**

**Essentials in teaching English : a basic course in English  
language : teaching methodology / Iuliana Lungu. - Craiova :**

Universitaria, 2013

Bibliogr.

ISBN 978-606-14-0759-0

811.111

Apărut: 2013

**TIPOGRAFIA UNIVERSITĂȚII DIN CRAIOVA**

Str. Brestei, nr. 156A, Craiova, Dolj, Craiova

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Tipărit în România

## Motto

The small man  
Builds cages  
For everyone  
He  
Knows.  
While the sage,  
Who has to duck his head  
When the moon is low,  
Keeps dropping keys  
all night long  
For the  
Beautiful  
Rowdy  
Prisoners.  
-Hafiz



(Hafiz, *Dropping Keys*)

## Foreword

This book is an initial training course for the students who are in their pre-service English teacher education and gives a brief insight into the theoretical, but most importantly, practical aspects of teaching English in Romanian schools. This book is neither a recipe, nor a manual. It is simply a teaching guide comprising some of the most important pedagogical areas such as teaching vocabulary, grammar, language skills and integrating them, classroom management issues, etc.

The primary aim of this guide is to provide access to theoretical and practical input based on English language methodology to the trainees involved in the pre-service psycho-pedagogical training programme within the Department of Teacher Training, “Ovidius” University of Constanta.

To quote Penny Ur (1996:4) “There is nothing so practical as a good theory”, my intention is, through this teaching guide, to maintain a link between theory and practice, by giving some theoretical background for managing a class, planning lessons and other current ELT issues which consists of a series of steps relevant to classroom practice.

By the end of this teaching practice guide the trainees will be able to:

- ✓ understand the main key concepts of TEFL and use appropriate teaching methodology;
- ✓ know their roles inside the classroom;
- ✓ devise a lesson plan as an important tool in their pedagogical activity;
- ✓ state well-defined objectives for each lesson and sequence of lesson, an important aid to better teaching;
- ✓ select, sequence and time activities in order to enhance students’ interest, involvement and motivation;
- ✓ adapt lesson activities to the needs of their students;
- ✓ use and adapt teaching materials creatively so as to develop students’ language abilities in order to meet the requirement of the national curriculum for English and suit the classroom situations;

- ✓ know how to properly evaluate the success of a lesson, and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ have confidence in themselves and rely on their own judgment as professionals.

I hope that consulting this guide and the related materials will help the future English teachers develop a responsible and professional attitude, clear goals and ways of improving their own professional practice.

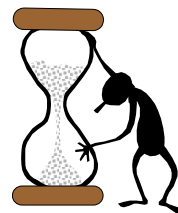
As in the lovely poem above, I am not going to hand in keys, just drop them; there will always be some of you to pick the ones you need.

**Best of luck and teach well!**

## Unit 1

### A Short History of Theories in ELT Methodology

ELT has a rich history of methods, based on various theories of language, teaching and learning and influenced also by theories of psychology. While we often pooh-pooh old methods from our comfortably superior super-modern position, it's worth bearing in mind that each of them offers valuable elements that can be incorporated into our teaching.



So, for example, from the Grammar-Translation method, we might take on board the value of using translation as a learning tool – perhaps as a means of contrasting the target language with learners' L1. From the Audio-lingual method, we might incorporate the odd bit of drilling, to give learners a chance to get their mouths around new bits of language. Approaches to language teaching come and go. Over the last few years, it has become increasingly clear that the grail of the 'perfect' approach is elusive and unobtainable. Different things work with different students in different educational contexts. We live, as the US-based educationalist Kumaradivelu has put it, in a '**post-method condition**'. The best approach to any language teaching situation will be eclectic, drawing on a multitude of approaches and techniques, choosing and shaping them in ways that are appropriate to our own particular classroom

*(For a full account of method in ELT and what the good bits of each might be considered to be, I highly recommend watching @chiasuan's **webinar** on the topic).*

**I. THE GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD (1850s-1950s)** focuses on developing students' appreciation of the target language's literature as well as teaching the language. Students are presented with target language reading passages and answer questions that follow. Other activities include translating literary passages from one language into the other, memorizing grammar rules, and memorizing native language equivalents of target language vocabulary. Class work highly structured, with the teacher controlling all activities.

**Goals:** to be able to read literature in target language, learn grammar rules and vocabulary, develop mental acuity.

**Roles:** teacher has authority, students follow instructions to earn what teacher knows.

**Teaching/learning process:** students learn by translating from one language to another, often translating reading passages in the target language to the native language. Grammar is usually learned deductively on the basis of grammar rules and examples. Students memorize the rules, and then apply them to other examples. They learn paradigms such as verb conjugations, and they learn the native language equivalents of vocabulary words.

**Interaction:** most interaction is teacher to student; student initiated interaction and student-student interaction is minimal.

**View of language.** Literary language seen as superior to spoken language, culture equated with literature and fine arts.

**Aspects of language** the approach emphasizes: vocabulary, grammar emphasized; reading, writing are primary skills; pronunciation and other speaking/ listening skills not emphasized.

**Role of students' native language:** native language provides key to meanings in target language.

**Means for evaluation:** tests require translation from native to target and target to native language; applying grammar rules, answering questions about foreign culture.

**Response to students' errors:** heavy emphasis placed on correct answers; teacher supplies correct answers when students cannot.

**II. THE DIRECT METHOD (around 1900)** allows students to perceive meaning directly through the target language because no translation is allowed. Visual aids and pantomime are used to clarify the meaning of vocabulary items and concepts. Students speak a great deal in the target language and communicate as if in real situations. Reading and writing are taught from the beginning through speaking and listening skills are emphasized. Grammar is learned inductively.

**Goals:** to communicate in target language; to think in target language.

**Roles:** teacher directs class activities, but students and teacher are partners in the teaching/ learning process.

**Teaching/learning process:** students are taught to associate meaning and the target language directly. New target language words or phrases are introduced through the use of realia, pictures, or pantomime, never the native language. Students speak in the target language a great deal and communicate as if in real situations. Grammar rules are learned inductively



by generating from examples. Students practice new vocabulary using words in sentences.

**Interaction:** both students and teacher initiate interaction, though student-initiated interaction with teacher or among each other, is usually teacher directed.

**View of language:** Language is primarily spoken, not written. Students study common, everyday speech in the target language. Aspects of foreign culture are studied such as history, geography, daily life.

**Aspects of language the approach emphasizes:** vocabulary emphasizes over grammar; oral communication considered basic, with reading, writing based on oral practice, pronunciation emphasized from outset.

**Role of students' native language:** not used in the classroom.

**Means of evaluation:** students tested through actual use, such as in oral interviews and assigned written paragraphs.

**Response to students' errors:** self correction encouraged whenever possible.

**III. THE AUDIO-LINGUAL METHOD (1945s-1950s)** is based on the behaviorist belief that students' learning is the acquisition of a set of concepts (language?) subject- verb- prepositional phrase – is learned , the speaker can substitute words to make novel sentences. The teacher directs and controls students' behavior, provides a model, and reinforces correct responses.

**Goals:** the target language is used communicatively, over-learn it, so as to be able to use it automatically by forming new habits in the target language and overcoming native language habits.

**Roles:** teacher directs, controls students language behavior, provides good model for imitation, students repeat, respond as quickly and accurately as possible.

**Teaching/learning process:** new vocabulary structures presenting through dialogs, which are learned through imitation, repetition. Drills are based on patterns in dialog. Students' correct responses are positively reinforced, grammar is induced from models. Cultural information is contextualized in the dialogs or presented by the teacher. Reading, writing tasks are based on oral work.

**Interaction:** students interact during chain drills or when taking roles in dialogs, all at teacher's directions. Most interaction is between teacher and student, initiated by teacher.

**View of language:** Descriptive linguistics influence: everyday language seen as having its own unique system of phonological, morphological and syntactic patterns. Method emphasized everyday speech and uses a graded syllabus from simple to difficult linguistic structures. Culture comprises everyday language and behavior.

**Aspects of language the approach emphasized:** language structures emphasized, vocabulary contextualized in dialogs, but is limited because syntactic patterns are foremost, natural priority of skills- listening, speaking, reading, writing, with emphasis on first two, pronunciation tough from beginning, often with language lab work and minimal pair drills.

**Role of students' native language:** students' native language habits are considered as interfering, thus native language is not used in classroom. Contrastive analysis is considered helpful for determining points of interference.

**Means of evaluation:** discrete point tests in which students distinguish between words or provide an appropriate verb for a sentence, etc.

**Response to students' errors:** teachers strive to prevent students' errors by predicting trouble spots and tightly controlling what they teach students to say.

**IV. THE SILENT WAY (in the early 1970s),** whose theoretical basis belonging to Gattegno's is the idea that teaching must be subordinated to learning and thus students must develop their own inner criteria for correctness. All four skills- reading, listening, writing and speaking- are taught from the beginning. Students' errors are expected as a normal part of learning; the teacher's silence helps foster self-reliance and student initiative. The teacher is active in setting up situations, while the students do most of the talking and interacting.

**Goals:** to use language for self expression; to develop independence from the teacher; to develop inner criteria for correctness.

**Roles:** teaching should be subordinating to learning. Teachers should give students only what they absolutely need to promote their learning. Learners are responsible for their own learning.

**Teaching/learning process:** students begin with sounds, introduced through association of sounds in native language to a sound-color chart. Teacher then sets up situations, often using Cuisenaire rods, to focus students' attention on structures. Students interact as the situation requires. Teachers see students' errors as clues to where the target language is unclear, and they adjust instructions accordingly. Students are urged to take