LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION IN TERMS OF THE MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO EIL STUDIES

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Abstract: The problem of linguistic and cultural knowledge correlation in terms of English as an International Language learning deserves special attention as one of the topical issues in reference to the new methods of knowledge and skills acquisition, required in the present-day global society. Language learning determined by particular cultural and conceptual bases faces new challenges in the case of EIL, as culture should be discussed within different terms in this connection and serve to achieve different educational goals. Within this context, culture is referred to as both the subject of studies and the means of learning. It is used as the source of information for EIL learners and helps to create a multicultural environment to facilitate the process of intercultural professional communication. Culture can be learned both from the point of view of similarity and its difference, which correlates with the basic tendencies in semiosic systems development. The use of modern information technologies as well as the lifetime learning mode in which modern citizens live and work seeks new approaches and methods of knowledge acquisition. The multimodal approach to language and culture deserves special attention from the viewpoint of EIL learning as it implicates elaboration of certain methodology that covers the whole complex of modes based on the use of the human senses abilities as well as different semiotic systems including language. The approach in question seems to be used for the purpose of educational process optimization, especially with reference to the purposes of EIL studies and the role of culture in this concern. To analyze the problem in detail and to demonstrate the validity of cultural knowledge application within EIL learning and teaching, the survey that included 3 questionnaires has been carried out on the basis of the materials presented by 62 linguistic (English philology) and 60 non-linguistic (Social sciences) students. The answers contained in the questionnaire enabled the authors to come to the conclusions as referred to the validity of multimodal approach application with respect to cultural and linguistic skills and knowledge acquisition within the scope of EIL learning and teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a well-established fact that the linguistic and socio-cultural status of English as an International Language (EIL) in the modern world refers to the fact of the continuing spread of English as the means of communication, both cross-cultural and within the speakers' own borders, including its use for specific purposes. The problem of its teaching is to a great extent multi-fold as not only professional communication between non-native speakers with native speakers of English is taken into consideration but first and foremost communication between representatives of different cultures and nationalities. The situation becomes further complicated as the communicants in question are characterized by different cultural and conceptual biases, as well as different purposes and levels of language skills and knowledge possession.

One of the basic problems that arises in this connection is the choice of the most effective ways of teaching English for international communication, especially in concern with standards for EIL teaching, including its structural-semantic and discourse peculiarities, based on specific cultural and conceptual issues. New challenges in the area of language acquisition have required new approaches and methods, which should reflect all the linguistic and cognitive processes in their complexity and their pursuit to versatility. The multimodal approach to teaching languages seems to be the one that comprises a number of methods in their optimal combination to realize the human personality potential for solving problems of universal character, including EIL skills and knowledge acquisition. It is intended to elaborate methods that help to overcome potential barriers that may arise at the cognitive-conceptual level due to different cultural and value-semantic orientations of communicants. Thus, the study aims at the analysis of the use of the multimodal approach in teaching English as an International Language and its advantages that should be used to intensify the educational process

METHODOLOGY

One of the basic problems of EIL teaching concerns the problem of linguistic and cultural differences of the learners and their ability to accept the universal issues of the multicultural environment in order to acquire the knowledge and skills within the frames of Standards for EIL. S.L. McCay focuses on pragmatic and rhetorical competences in the field if EIL that turn out to be closely connected with language and culture correlation, especially in terms of teaching, as "the use of EIL involves crossing borders" (McKay, 2002, 81). At the same time, it should be noted that cross-cultural communication is a complicated and diverse issue based on natural dynamic processes that concern *lingua franca* and local models, both discussed within the domain of World Englishes (Kirkpatrick, 2007, 3). It should be noted in this connection that the problem of language and culture correlation as referred to EIL teaching tends to be complicated as on the one hand it is assumed that due to the fact that in this case English is considered an international language, its use is no longer connected with the British culture or cultures of the Inner Circle countries, as language cannot be

associated with any country or culture; rather, it must belong to those who use it (McKay, 2002, 1), while on the other hand it should be borne in mind that in terms of its conceptual basis English and the corresponding culture possess their own cultural and linguistic thinking peculiarities based on the long period of their historical development and world view formation (Vishnyakova, Vishnyakova, 2020).

Cultural knowledge concerning intercultural communication problems helps to explain and understand the similarities and differences between cultures, to acquire the necessary communication skills, and to provide access to successful communication based on cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness (Crowther & De Costa, 2017), which present the indispensable foundation of cross-cultural communication and the use of EIL as its basic means. Here the problem of "the lingua franca core" comes into being, not only from the phonetic and phonological point of view but also in reference to current linguistic changes, which concern all levels of language. Despite extensive discussion and presentation of new English varieties and approaches (Goddard, Wierzbicka, 2018), it is not only the provision of information on cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, and cultural artifacts that is by no means significant, but also the values, expectations, attitudes, and beliefs of the host culture, which needs a new approach based on keeping the mind open and trying to penetrate at least partially into its area. In this context, it should be noted that specific methods and techniques, which have been developed for teaching cultures, including the atmosphere of interculturality creating as well as teaching culture as a difference and similarity, teaching values, with special attention to global cultural issues (Shennan 1991; Singh, and Doherty, 2004). As is well known the main purpose of cultural issues application within the frames of the design of EIL teaching is providing cultural information, represented in the 'aesthetic sense' (literature, music, films) and 'the sociological sense' (customs, traditions, institutions), 'the semantic sense' (the embodiment of the culture's conceptual system in language" and 'the pragmatic sense' (the influence of cultural norms on the choice of types of language appropriate for certain contexts) (McKay, 2002, 82). The term "English as an International Language" covers the whole range of terms and directions in language learning, organized according to a certain learning goal. Most of the approaches used seem to be valid and successful from the point of view of the results achieved, and depend on a number of factors, which comprise the goal setting and the learners' level of assessment, their linguistic and cultural basis, including their monolingual or bilingual experience, as well as individual differences. While discussing the multimodal approach to EIL teaching and learning we proceed from the premise that it comprises several methods, having been thoroughly elaborated by generations of scientists and pedagogues, and based on the analysis of both linguistic structure and function. While discussing cultures in terms of multimodality and its semiotic nature the notions of incompatibility, on the one hand, and standardization, or mutual compatibility at the level of signs, on the other, i.e. the main principles of evolution of semiotic systems, should be taken into account (Kull, 2014).

The notion of multimodality in terms of its analytical representation is concerned with different interpretations. It is considered to be a dynamic category of social character, as referred to any dimension of mediated meaning-making at the visual (for example, pictures) and linguistic levels of representation. In terms of socio-semiotic approach to communication concerns with pragmatics and creativity as referred to the addressee at the level of gesture, picture, music, spoken sentence, the shift toward multimodality is characterized by the tendency of the retreat from linearity imposed by language (verbal) mode. At the same time, verbal and visual modalities should be clearly differentiated as at the level of language meaning of a word or sentence can be derived from its form while taking into consideration linguistic norms and conventions (Forceville, 2011). Pedagogical issues of multimodality are of particular interest in terms of current approaches to "affordances"

and "constraints", which deal with the ability of a linguistic or material (usually visual) subject to have a specific impact on the target audience (a recipient of the information). In this context, another very important point is to be mentioned, which is referred to as modal ensembles or complexes, in which the forces of two or more modes are joined together to transmit information (Ellström, 2010; Forceville, 2011). The multimodal approach concerns various aspects of human activity and, based on the process of interaction of different semiotic systems, is used to elaborate the modes of content and meaning representation, especially the ones, which may seem most appropriate in all spheres of life. Today's life makes an individual extremely efficient in the use of time devoted to learning, which in modern conditions presents itself as lifetime learning (Nemejc et al., 2019). Multimodality is connected with efficient use of human and global resources: "The complexity of today's global society and the accelerating rate of change require a citizenry that continuously learns, computes, thinks, creates, and innovates. That translates into a critical need to become extremely efficient in the use of the time we spend learning since we are being required to continuously learn throughout our lives" (Fadel, 2008, 7). This applies to all areas of learning and teaching. Thus, in the course of multimodal approach implementation, it should be borne in mind that the human senses (hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting) are involved in the process of linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills acquisition.

The brain activity of a human being very much depends on the algorithm one used in the course of life. At the same time, at the present moment, people are tempted by technology to do multiple things simultaneously (for example, driving and phoning, reading e-mails and attending audio conferences, and so on). Scientific research in the field reveals and describes losses in the effectiveness of such multitasking because of natural delays in thinking processes involved that cause human errors (Marois, 2005): "One might ask why, with our incredibly sophisticated brain, which uses 100 billion neurons to process information at speeds up to a thousand times per second, we are still unable to do two things at once? The answer is emerging from neuroscience laboratories around the world where scientists use fMRI and techniques rapid sampling to reveal patterns of brain activity over time as people read, listen, speak, observe, think, perform more tasks, and perform other mental tasks" (Fadel, 2008, 9). Similar problems can be discussed in relation to learning and teaching issues. Education currently faces some challenges, both in terms of new teaching methods and in terms of theoretical research in the field of linguistics and teaching methods. We assume that the issues of organizing a new learning environment are most topical within the context of multimedia learning, which is of particular interest in terms of visual, verbal, and auditory multimodal activities in complex, based on the advantages of the virtual space, organized with the help of a computer. In other words, the multimodal approach, which has been gradually used in the learning process for a relatively long time, tends to acquire new trends and abilities during the new era of large-scale online education. For example, New Web 2.0 technologies introduce important nuances into multimodal learning, that requires further research (Gligora Markovic et al., 2012). One of the aspects of multimodality can be referred to blended learning implementation (Burakova et al., 2021; Porozovs et al, 2019) as well as communicative strategies and tactics elaboration as referred to various discourses, informational and business among them (Khramchenko, 2019; Malyuga, Ponomarenko, 2016; Malyuga, Tomalin, 2017; Ryoo, Winkelmann (eds.), 2021). According to the research data, students engaged in multimodal learning patterns in some aspects superior to students who learn using traditional modes (Fadel, 2008; Minyar-Beloroucheva et al, 2019). It should be added that educational specifics of multimodal learning and certain competencies based on appropriate skills and knowledge development also depend on psychological, physiological, socio-cultural, and intercultural factors, with special consideration to interdisciplinary issues (Klapko,

2016) that can be rightfully located into the domain of multimodality due to the variety of methods and their combinations used in the teaching process, including multicultural knowledge base and perspective development based on different semiotic systems application (Goldberg, 1997,13) in the course of EIL teaching. Multimodality-based education and research attract attention thanks to multimedia works of art, films, websites, comics, computer games, presentations that include a rapidly growing percentage of inherently multimodal cultural artifacts. Another challenge is the ever-increasing semiotic complexity of these artifacts, which increasingly blur the boundaries between traditional differences and include interactive dimensions (Froschauer, 2002) in the fields of the form and material organization, semantics, and discourse, style (Siefkes, 2015). One of the basic issues within these terms is the way semiotic regimes work together in multimodal texts, including the layer description of modes, on both analytical basis (where structural, semantic, and stylistic properties are extracted and represented for each mode separately), and synthesis of layers and modes.

Thus, the role of cultural knowledge for EIL learning and teaching should be discussed within this context, especially in terms of the multimodal approach that helps to refer to various modes and semiotic systems along with natural human language in concern with the use of English in a multicultural environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To verify the hypothesis the survey has been carried out, in which second-year students took part – 62 linguistic students (English philology) and 60 non-linguistic students (Social sciences). The students were offered 3 questionnaire types. In total 122 questionnaires were received, and the following basic conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the results of the analysis.

Table 1

The basic purposes of learning English as an International Language (EIL). Preferences of respondents in percentage terms.

№	The basic purpose of EIL learning	linguistic students –LS- (62)			non-linguistic students – NLS- (60)		
		10 %-20%	>20 %	<10 %	10 %-20 %	>20 %	<10 %
1	Cross-cultural communication at all levels	79 %	21 %	0 %	70 %	12 %	18 %
2	Becoming a highly educated person in all spheres (an intellectual)	60 %	31 %	9 %	50 %	23 %	27 %
3	Becoming a global citizen	27 %	21 %	52 %	45 %	11 %	44 %
4	Language for specific purposes knowledge and skills acquisition	23 %	13 %	64 %	82 %	17 %	1 %
5	Using the language as the Internet-user	15 %	5 %	80 %	20 %	7 %	73 %
6	Reading fiction as the subject of individual thinking and pleasure	16 %	3 %	81 %	5 %	0 %	95 %
7	Communication in the company (restricted variety of English)	3 %	3 %	94 %	56 %	37 %	7 %
8	Communication in the company based on intercultural competence and cultural sensitivity	94 %	5 %	1 %	66 %	28 %	6 %
9	Teaching EIL as a professional	68 %	32 %	0 %	3 %	0 %	97 %
10	Doing research in the field of EIL	66 %	21 %	13 %	0 %	0 %	100 %

As the students had to take all the issues included into consideration the average was based on the parameter of 100 % per all the statements, in accord with which they had to decide on their preferences and identify the percentage of each component. The task was formulated as follows:

"The basic purposes of learning English as an International Language (EIL). Choose out of 100 % and distribute the results between the statements". Thus, the following samples can be adduced to illustrate the point.

<div align="right">Table 2</div>

The basic purposes of learning English as an International Language (EIL) (samples)

Sample 1 (LS)	Sample 2 (LS)	Sample 3(NLS)
1.Cross-cultural communication at all levels – 10 % 2.Becoming a highly educated person in all spheres (an intellectual) – 15 % 3.Becoming a global citizen – 2% 4. Language for specific purposes knowledge and skills acquisition- 10 % 5.Using the language as the Internet user- 10 % 6.Reading fiction as the subject of individual thinking and pleasure- 8 % 7.Communication in the company (restricted variety of English)- 10 % 8.Communication in company based on intercultural competence and cultural sensitivity- 12 % 9.Teaching EIL as a professional- 13% 10.Doing research in the field of EIL- 10%	1.Cross-cultural communication at all levels – 15 % 2.Becoming a highly educated person in all spheres (an intellectual) – 10 % 3.Becoming a global citizen – 20 % 4. Language for specific purposes knowledge and skills acquisition – 10 % 5.Using the language as the Internet user – 8 % 6.Reading fiction as the subject of individual thinking and pleasure – 5 % 7.Communication in the company (restricted variety of English) – 5 % 8.Communication in company based on intercultural competence and cultural sensitivity – 10 % 9.Teaching EIL as a professional- 10 % 10.Doing research in the field of EIL – 7 %	1.Cross-cultural communication at all levels – 14 % 2.Becoming a highly educated person in all spheres (an intellectual) – 10 % 3.Becoming a global citizen – 15% 4.Language for specific purposes knowledge and skills acquisition – 17 % 5.Using the language as the Internet user – 8 % 6.Reading fiction as the subject of individual thinking and pleasure – 11 % 7.Communication in the company (restricted variety of English)– 5 % 8.Communication in company based on intercultural competence and cultural sensitivity – 7 % 9.Teaching EIL as a professional – 10 % 10. Doing research in the field of EIL – 3 %

Thus, the analysis has shown that most linguistic students are interested in EIL knowledge and skills acquisition at the professional level in order to work as teachers of EIL (100 % in total), or do the research in the field under analysis (100 % in total) and communicate in the company, understanding the necessity to be aware of cultural sensitivity communication skills and intercultural competence (99 % in total), in which EIL plays a particular role. Most linguistic students (and very few non-linguistic ones, due to their specialty professional affiliation) are interested in EIL knowledge and skills acquisition at the professional level in order to work as teachers of EIL, not because it is considered a highly demanded means of human communication in different areas and a highly demanded professional area with promising perspectives, but this is also the ability to become an expert in cross-cultural communication in the broader sense. The latter has become a stimulus for both linguistic and non-linguistic students, interested in acquiring new knowledge and a certain level of proficiency within the domain of intercultural communicative space. The non-linguistic students that have taken part in the survey tend to use EIL as the basis of Language for specific purposes learning (99 % in total) and using the opportunity to communicate in international companies, which preliminary shows the necessity of cultural knowledge acquisition within these terms, as has been discussed in our previous publications (Vishnyakova, 2019; Vishnyakova et al., 2019; Vishnyakova, Vishnyakova, 2020). At the same time, the statistic data above show the difference between the learners' attitudes to various aspects of EIL acquisition, which is demonstrated by the three columns of percentage (from 10 % to 20 %, more than 20 %, fewer than 10 %). Some of the original samples presented serve to be used as illustrative and supporting factual
material.

The second part of our work included the questionnaire, in which three questions that required expanded and sometimes detailed answers were presented. This type of activity was offered to the group of 60 linguistic students (LS). The questions have been formulated as follows:

● *Multimodal learning is based on the use of all human senses (hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting) in complex with language. Do you think it helps with EIL learning? Which one is the most important? (Why?)*

●● *Is it important to consider cultures while teaching EIL?*

●●● *Is multimodal learning important in terms of teaching cultures? (Why?)*

The samples can be adduced as part of the data obtained, for making observations concerning the correlation between traditional and multimodal learning aids.

Table 3

Correlation between traditional and multimodal learning aids (samples)

Sample 1 (LS)	Sample 2 (LS)	Sample 3(LS)
• The very essence of multimodal learning is that different modes are used that affect the human senses. I believe it can really help in learning. For many, for better study, it is easier to perceive information by ear, it will be easier for another person to remember using visual memory. Since almost all organs are involved in the multimodal study, of course with this type of study, it will be much better for people to remember information. •• I suppose so. It seems to me that the study of language and culture, in general, are interconnected. Many in the future still plan to visit the country of the language they are learning. To feel comfortable and get into awkward situations, of course, you should also study the culture. In addition, often, during language learning, there are questions regarding the content of the text or task. Often, this happens if a person is not familiar with the culture and does not understand why it can be so. The study of culture will help to avoid such problems. ••• For sure, yes. As I said earlier, people are able to perceive information in different ways. Since many different students in the school have different concepts about learning and have their own styles, the multimodal approach will help each student achieve academic success. I assume that in this way, teachers will be able to highlight key aspects, and children will be interested in the process.	• I think that multimodal learning helps with EIL because it plays a crucial part in the learning of new behaviors in institutionalized settings. It is suggested that people learn from each other through imitation, observation, and modeling. To create an atmosphere and an English-speaking environment with models for the participants to observe and imitate. In my opinion, hearing is the most important sense in EIL. When people hear the English language, they perceive information faster and improve their pronunciation. •• It is important to consider cultures while teaching EIL. culture and language are inseparable and culture learning must be an integral part of language teaching. Language expresses cultural reality (with words people express facts and ideas but also reflect their attitudes). Also, it embodies cultural reality (people give meanings to their experience through the means of communication). And language symbolizes cultural reality (people view their language as a symbol of their social identity). ••• Multimodal education describes a mission-oriented and student-centric approach to teaching and learning that utilizes a plurality of strategies to achieve student learning outcomes. I think that the advantages of multimodal learning are: 1) **Multiple ways of delivering education** because of environmental and cultural factors (e.g., online, blended, residential, and even mobile learning, or m-learning. 2) **Multiple ways of teaching** due to multiple ways students learn (audio, visual, tactile learning, conceptual; e.g., in one course online, teachers incorporate multiple means of reaching students, their learning styles.	• I strongly believe that such senses, as hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting help us a lot with learning English as an international language. In fact, our brain learns foreign words more easily when they are associated with information from different sensory organs. These associations are mutually reinforcing, imprinting the source-language term and its translation more deeply in the mind. Thus, we learn with all our senses.To my mind, the most important human sense is hearing because it enables us to develop increased curiosity about other people's experiences, compassion, empathy, and connection. For example, when we're on the phone with someone we know, the areas of our brain responsible for facial recognition are active during the call. It seems that the brain simulates the information not being captured by the eyes and creates it for itself. •• In my opinion, it is really necessary to take cultures into consideration while teaching English as an international language, because culture and language are inextricably linked. During training, a student may come across a text or statement with incomprehensible or even unacceptable content in the context of his culture, although this will be an absolute norm for the culture of the language. Therefore, the student must understand the peculiarities of another culture and know its basic rules. ••• I believe that multimodal learning is very important in terms of teaching cultures. Using a multimodal approach to teaching cultural competence allows a variety of methods to be used to assist in highlighting foundational principles. Moreover, it enables teachers to reach and engage many new learners.

In the course of the analysis of answers to Questionnaire 2, we have come to the conclusion that all the respondents consider multimodality one of the advantages that can be applied to learning, for the whole complex of human senses may be involved. It helps to create an atmosphere of an English-speaking environment as well as a multicultural English-speaking world, where models for the participants to observe and imitate can be presented. In the questionnaires, respondents have laid special emphasis on the fact that such senses, as hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, and tasting

help us a lot with learning English as an international language as various cultural associations enable us with the suitable mode of behavior and the appropriate choice of words. The multimodal approach in its turn serves to facilitate the process of learning the language. It should be added that the use of modern technologies effectively contributes to the use of multimodal methods of learning, as more than half of the students taking part (about 60 %) singled out hearing from all human senses in terms of multimodal language learning, but not on the basis of traditional classification that includes speaking, reading, writing and listening, but due to the fact that many people use mobile phones and other auditory aids that help to possess language knowledge. The other questions concerned cultural knowledge acquisition in the course of EIL teaching and learning. The respondents paid special attention to the issue of culture as the subject of learning, on the one hand, and culture as the means of receiving information. While discussing cultures and values in terms of their similarities and differences, principles of constructing an intercultural environment are highlighted, in which multimodality plays an important role as, for example, differences of cultures find their manifestations at all levels and modes of human nature and activities, some of which can be identified entirely in cases when the multimodal approach as a total set of semiotic systems is involved.

The third part of the survey questionnaire included issues that reflected the linguistic students' specialty bias and dealt with problems of EIL acquisition, as well as linguistic models that should be followed and imitated within the domain of studies. As the respondents under consideration had attended the World Englishes and theoretical phonetics course, they were asked to discuss the corresponding areas of linguistic and didactic analyses. Thus, the following samples may be presented to exemplify the statements about the following questions:

1. Are nativized varieties of English important as referred to EIL?

2. What is the correlation between Standard English and phonological variation in terms of EIL?

Table 4

World Englishes and Phonological Variation as Referred to EIL (samples)

Sample 1 (LS)	Sample 2 (LS)	Sample 3(LS)
1. In order not to fail communication with people of another country, you should know the possible obstacles caused by nativized variations and should be ready for them. So, the learning of these varieties is not essential, but still desirable for a better intercultural dialogue. 2. Standard English is also known as Received English Pronunciation – RP, Public School Pronunciation. RP is the form of pronunciation that is widely understood and described in textbooks on the phonetics of British English. It is traditionally used for teaching foreign learners.	1. I think nativized varieties are very important. Although it is worth noting that schools and universities mainly teach standard versions of the English language (American English and British English), and that is why people often have a negative attitude towards the nativized varieties. Besides, some of them are quite difficult to understand. However, within the framework of international study, it is very important to study different variants, for example, Japanese English or German English. 2.The phonological variants of English are somehow derived from standard English. Due to cultural characteristics, as well as the peculiarities of the pronunciation of a particular nation, the standard language has undergone some changes. This is how Russian English, German English, Japanese English, etc. appeared.	1. Nativized varieties are important as referred to EIL because such varieties are both examples and the explanation why English has become an International Language. English at first penetrated and then assimilated in the culture and people changed the language according to their phonological background. 2. Standard English is both the variety of English and the idealized norm of it. In that case, EIL is based on the SE, however, due to the fact, that even native speakers use SE in official situations the phonological variation occurs in the everyday speech of English speakers. This is why there is a correlation between SE and phonological variation in terms of EIL.

As has already been mentioned, while discussing standards for EIL learning, the users of English should proceed from the premise that for mutual understanding such issues as intelligibility (recognizing an expression), comprehensibility (knowing the meaning of the expression), and interpretability (knowing what the expression signifies in a particular socio-cultural context) present the basics of full-fledged successful communication As for the standard variety, it generally finds its realization in literature, in the Media, it is taught to non-native speakers when they learn it as EFL and taught at schools, as well as described in dictionaries and traditional grammars (McCay, 2002, 51-52), and, as other varieties, reflects the peculiarities of culture (in this case we focus mostly on cultural and language universals). While discussing questions presented in the survey, most of the students (98 %), (except for 1 respondent – 2 %, see Sample 1) confirmed the importance of nativized varieties, both from the descriptive and comparative points of view, and their role in reference to their use as the means of international communication for certain local communities. In the case of the second question representation, the answers demonstrated by Samples 2 and 3 seem to be more valid, as phonological variation is natural and refers to the Standard variety of English in terms of its dynamics and historical development. Sample 1 shows that its author identifies Standard English with Received Pronunciation – RP, which is considered to be the model to follow, especially when dealing with learners of English as an International Language.

CONCLUSIONS

The research has shown that the problem of learning English as an International language is characterized by its evident topicality, as well as practical and theoretical significance. The aims of the learners may be different, but at the same time, as the research has shown, the basic purpose of most of them is cross-cultural communication at all levels. To attain the goals in EIL learning one has to consider cultural issues, as cultural knowledge is indispensable in terms of understanding cultures based on cultural similarities and differences to create a multicultural environment to implement successful intercultural communication. Standard English serves as an example and model to imitate and emulate in the course of EIL learning. In the course of EIL investigation and learning one should proceed from the premise that English as an International Language exists along with other varieties and can be used as the means of cross-cultural communication in all social spheres.

Linguistic and cultural knowledge acquisition as referred to EIL concerns with a number of methods, both traditional and innovative, among which the multimodal approach to teaching languages deserves special attention, due to the fact that the use of complex methods based on the approach in question provides optimization to the teaching and learning process. The modern global society of lifetime learning requires teachers and learners to become extremely efficient in the use of effective methodologies and educational facilities. The multimodal approach helps to elaborate new methods and modes, based on the complex realization of various semiotic systems' potential to make all the human senses function with great efficiency and benefit.

Conflict of interest
The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

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