

Acquiring Lingua
Franca of the Modern
Time

Acquiring Lingua Franca of the Modern Time

*Current Issues and Strategies
in ESL Studies*

Edited by

Elena Polyudova

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter One.....	5
Mapping ESL in Modern Multicultural Education: Current Streams in the Field Elena Polyudova	
Chapter Two	33
New Perspectives for Global Education and Language Immersion Class Marialuisa Di Stefano	
Chapter Three	59
The Co-construction of a New Meta-Language: Pedagogical Implications for Explicit Grammar Instructions to Novice ESL Students Ryan Goble and Christine Sanzaro	
Chapter Four.....	77
Studying Popular Songs as a Strategy to Overcome ESL Students’ Performance Anxiety Elena Polyudova	
Chapter Five	101
The Study of Stylistic Peculiarities of Oscar Wilde’s Fairy Tales in the Process of Learning English by Russian Students Olga Stukalova	
Appendix I.....	121
Written Interviews for a Volume “ESL in Modern Multicultural Education”	
Appendix II.....	135
ESL Professional Organizations	
Authors	137

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INTRODUCTION

This issue assembles a selection of current strategies for the study of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from the vision of modern linguistic theory and praxis. Instructors from different countries examine present-day methods in the world of the global environment where the English language exists as the lingua franca of our time. Several chapters are taken from the 111th PAMLA (Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association) conference in the format of the session “ESL Studies”.

This edited collection of original articles written by several authors develops ESL studies from different perspectives. Each of the six chapters takes a particular focus on teaching theory: several are primarily developmental and others are more practically organized. This volume covers the diversity of studying English as a second language by students with different native languages such as Arabic, Italian, Russian, and Spanish; and by teaching ESL in different countries (Australia, the European Union, Italy, the Russian Federation, and the USA). The authors, as competent instructors who are proud of their students’ accomplishments, share their experience and thoughts.

Each of the five chapters, however, stands alone and on its own merit. Together they form a rich mosaic of interconnecting themes, which constitutes the present-day process of teaching ESL throughout the world.

Chapters 1 and 2 address the theoretical understanding of teaching issues from the modern global multicultural community perspectives. Chapter 1, “*Mapping ESL in Modern Multicultural Education: Current Streams in the Field*” by Dr. Elena Polyudova, Russian Federation, who currently lives and works in the USA, examines the chain of ESL issues in all its diversity. The chain includes some current issues such as the definition of the term; the challenges of the present multicultural global environment; the educational traits of the modern M Generation; strategies for the efficient study of English; and observation of the existing literature on the subject. Based on five years of educational research, the chapter analyzes not only academic terms, cultural differences, and methods of teaching, but also the incongruity in the translation of cultural concepts, new streams in creating didactic literature, and directions for the further study of the interrelations between concepts in different languages.

Chapter 2, *“Global Education and Language Immersion Class: New Perspective in Global Immersion Program”* by Dr. Marialuisa Di Stefano, USA, is the result of the integration of dual language immersion classes and global education guidelines in a sociocultural framework. The intent of this work is to propose a new perspective in the global immersion program in the United States and Europe. The chapter includes the demographic characteristics of ESL students in the United States and in the European Union. The essential social needs of human beings are emphasized by citizenship education, a global and international education, as well as the language immersion approach. The four main topics that constitute the theoretical framework for the analysis are observed: the sociocultural learning theory, the global education guideline, the hybridity of cultures, and the language immersion style.

Chapter 3 represents the diversity of present-day educational strategies. *“The Co-Construction of a New Meta-Language: Pedagogical Implications for Explicit Grammar Instruction to Novice ESL Students”* by Ryan Goble and Christine Sanzaro, USA, contributes to the methodological perspective of the implications of the theoretical approaches. The authors demonstrate how instructors and students can co-construct a new meta-language for explicit English grammar instruction to novice second language users of English, rather than default to distracting and challenging meta-linguistic jargon when instructors do not use their students’ first language.

Chapter 4, *“Studying Popular Songs as a Strategy to Overcome ESL Students’ Performance Anxiety”* by Dr. Elena Polyudova, Russian Federation, who currently lives and works in the USA, considers the instructional implications in innovative ESL studies. The author concentrates on the performance anxiety phenomenon as a major challenge that ESL students experience while acting in an English language environment. The term “communicative insecurity” describes the state of nervousness that ESL students feel on leaving their ESL class comfort zone. To overcome performance anxiety and communicative insecurity, the author ponders the different tactics of using popular songs as a source of ESL teaching. The chapter considers creating a special “educational dialogic space” in the ESL classroom based on Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue and utterance. The described strategies help to organize free discussions in a classroom without the tensions and fears of performing in a foreign language. The article includes examples of the songs’ content implications for different studying levels.

Chapter 5, *“The Study of the Stylistic Peculiarities of Oscar Wilde’s Fairy Tales in the Process of Learning English by Russian Students”* by Dr. Olga Stukalova, Russian Federation, demonstrates an efficient

scenario of teaching English language in the environment where English exists as a foreign language. The author analyzes the artistic features of Oscar Wilde's style by the example of his famous tales. Irony, ornamental prose, rich detail, and epithets are the stylistic features that make Wilde's fairy tales so popular among readers and critics. The texts of fairy tales allow a wide interpretation and could be the basis for lessons devoted to the most important issues of life.

CHAPTER ONE

MAPPING ESL IN MODERN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: CURRENT STREAMS IN THE FIELD

ELENA POLYUDOVA

Introduction: English Language in the Modern World

English language has become a real lingua franca of the modern time: if you do not speak English, you cannot converse with the world. English is a door to study other languages. In the ESL classroom students and a teacher communicate in English, discussing the curriculum and making essential comments. The academic world writes in English to share ideas and thoughts; the professional world of different fields, from computer engineering to medical science, speaks English to promote a more efficient environment for the work place. Speaking English becomes an essential skill to improve a career or a business, a way to expand a vision of the world in different perspectives. Tourists throughout the world use this language to navigate the different, sometimes exquisitely exotic countries. The tourism industry answers travellers' requests by teaching their staff English. Speaking English becomes the usual practice for world citizens, the citizens of globalization. All these factors in the current global multicultural milieu lead to the necessity of acquiring sufficient English language proficiency.

The chapter analyzes the process of studying English from the theoretical and practical perspectives of modern educators. The chapter observes both academic and practical parts of the current situation in ESL studies. It is time to gather all existing information about the endeavours of different educators and organizations, and not miss any available sources to observe the whole picture. I agree with Hubbard, who remarks "The future of listening and language learning may be bright, but despite the acknowledged importance of listening, the research base in this area is

still relatively thin. What that means to language teachers and researchers is many new spaces to explore, innovate in, and understand.”¹

This chapter considers modern ESL studies in different directions, from the definition of the term to the methods of teaching. The subject itself is extremely broad and hard to embrace. The goal of the chapter is not to cover all of the issues in the field, but to try to deliberate the most important concepts of the modern process of teaching and studying English. Contemporary ESL studies are developing constantly; it is difficult to delineate all current streams. To overcome this problem I have decided to narrow my research in some perspectives, which reflect the present state of studying English in the modern world. These perspectives deal with the peculiarities of the modern educational and cultural environment in terms of traditional didactic methods. This approach explains the content of the chapter.

The chapter starts from discussions of the term itself and continues with a description of the modern world’s environment. The educational issues that the chapter explains are based on the existing way of communication in the era of technologies. To complete the picture from a didactic standpoint, I classify different types of teaching and studying literature. It is important because nowadays the diversity of instructions provided by the Internet and printed materials is overwhelming; it challenges an educator, making his choice exceptionally tough. There is a need for a compass to enable the navigation of an educator in the ocean of instructional literature. Hence, the chapter creates the chain: definition–environment–audience–methods–sources.

In the first part of the chapter, the definition, I consider the existing terms and definitions that describe the field. This part considers the usage of different terms in the field. It is important because nowadays there is no general agreement on a certain term in the English teaching field. The second, environmental, part considers studying and teaching ESL in the modern multi-cultural milieu in the world of globalization. In the environment with the Internet and global connections, a need to think multiculturally is the most essential part of education. As an example of the complexity in multi-cultural issues, I demonstrate a case study of different cultural approaches to the same term. In the third part about the audience I consider educational traits of the young generation (Generation M), comparing them with the traditional studying characteristics of adult learners. Deliberations on the peculiarities of the modern audience give specificity in the description of the modern environment. The fourth,

¹ (Hubbard 2007), 3

methodical, part concentrates on the efficient strategies of acquiring English as a language of everyday communication. Based on Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of dialogue, the method of studying English through dialogue is a resourceful strategy in modern ESL studies. Finally, in the fifth part, the observation of modern instructional sources indicates the types of current educational literature.

Each part of the chapter could be a subject for a separate research project because the existing situation of studying and teaching English is a point of interest for many people in different countries. I analyze only a few of the issues in modern ESL studies. The chapter is based on the materials of the USA educational system. Some references to other countries are made to elucidate several questions, but the general content describes teaching and studying English as a second language (ESL) in the USA.

English as a Second Language. Definition of the Subject

In the modern environment of English language studies there is a plethora of terms related to the same theme: ESL, EFL, ESOL, EIL, ELF, ESP, et cetera. In this part of the chapter I will examine the diversity of usage of the terms. Teaching English as a second language, ESL, is also known as EFL—English as a foreign language and TESOL—teachers of English to speakers of other languages. It is defined as an education profession, which is intertwined with and affected by society's view and attitude toward immigrants.² Wikipedia probably provides the most relevant definition and description of the term, but this source is not reliable for references. The lack of the definition mirrors the current state of the subject in contemporary educational theory: developing in different directions.

Although the term is well known for the high variability of its definitions, it is not acquired properly in the academic educational world. Its existence in educational literature remains uncertain and questionable. For example, the American Encyclopedia of Education, 2003, eight volumes (sic!) does not have a separated article about English as a Second Language. Although this edition points out a concept, it mentions ESL as an inclusion to the following articles: bilingualism, second language learning, and language minority studies.³ In the article “Bilingualism,

² (A Career as a Teacher of English as a Second Language 2013), 1

³ (Education 2002), v. 2, 740

second language learning, and English as a second language”⁴ the term is used as “producing bilinguals by teaching English as an L2 to learners in an English-speaking context”.⁵ The article claims the necessity of distinguishing ESL from bilingual education and instructions. If a reader would like to find a proper definition of the term, he will experience difficulties for the term is rarely defined in educational literature. It usually appears as an acronym with further decoding as a phrase. Some descriptive editions define the term as a part of the ESL teaching career: “There are some related terms that describe circumstances of teaching English: ESL (English as a second language), EFL (English as a foreign language), and ESOL (English for speakers of other languages). These acronyms define the process of studying English based on the environment people learn the language”.⁶

The following explanations reflect the current state of using the different terms. EFL (English as a foreign language) is applied in non-English-speaking countries although there are specific local terms for a phenomenon. In those countries English is neither a native language, nor a language of internal social communications. People study English there for usage outside of their homeland and for special reasons: to pass an exam, to continue education in an English-speaking country, to travel, or to get a promotion working for the business world.

In English-speaking countries, where English is a language of intercommunication in a society, usually the term ESL is applied alongside ESOL, when English is not the second, but the third or fourth language for the students. Sometimes, although rare, a term EAL (English as an additional language) could be used. The terms ESL and ESOL describe a social demographic situation: the majority of a country’s population uses English as a mother tongue (so-called native speakers, NS) while immigrants have to acquire English from different levels and at different ages (non-native speakers, NNS). The use of the terms ESL or ESOL is a question of social agreement or personal preferences. Quoting my colleagues’ written interviews: “I prefer ESL, since it is most frequently used in my work related education/work experience” (Anna); “I prefer ESL and I am not sure exactly why. Maybe it is just what I am used to. It is easy and uncomplicated to say ESL. I do not think the title matters. I have had students who have English as their third or fourth language. We still say ESL” (Phyllis). The reader will find the entire texts of the interviews in the Appendix of the current issue. All the previously

⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 1, 181-184

⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 1, 182

⁶ (A Career as a Teacher of English as a Second Language 2013), 1

mentioned acronyms are students-centred because they embrace situations of teaching.

In addition to those that are students-centred, there are special teachers-centred terms regarding teaching English. Again, there is no general agreement on the terms; and educators use them according to their personal preferences and local customs: ELT (English language teaching), TESL (teaching English as a second language), TESOL (teaching English for speakers of other languages), or TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language). It seems that educators find the process of creating new acronyms very exciting, but the overall surplus of terms that describes the same phenomenon creates confusion and misunderstanding (do not mention other related terms such as EIL (English as an international language), ELF (English as a lingua franca), ESP (English for specific purposes), and EAP (English for academic purposes). The current usage of the different terms is a question of personal preferences. In the future development of the field, only one ubiquitous term will be accepted for defining this special area of education and social adaptation.

Based on my experience of teaching English and participating in academic activities in the USA, I use ESL as an umbrella term for the phenomenon of teaching and studying English in an English-speaking country. Although for many students English is not the second language, the term ESL is more relevant in description of the situation. Despite all the languages a person could know, he or she uses the second language (English) to communicate in an English-speaking country. From this perspective English is a second language, the current active language a student uses in the actual environment. I define ESL as the area of education where people teach and study English as a non-native language for using it in an English language milieu. This area includes the theory of acquiring a non-native language; methods and strategies of teaching; creating textbooks for students and educational guides for teachers; special multi-cultural class management; teaching and studying English via technologies; and psychological issues in overcoming the language barrier. In the chapter some of the modern issues related to ESL studies will be considered.

Environment. Modern Multicultural Concept of Education

Nowadays the term “multiculturalism” is well known and widely accepted for its relevant portrayal of the global community. Books, academic researches and news cultivate the term from political, sociological,

and educational standpoints. The political concept in multiculturalism reflects modern views of unifying governmental and administrative resources of different countries in dealing with global issues (Cambbell 2010). The sociological approach renders modern processes in forming a global community with its active routes of migration for different reasons, from professional to disastrous. It allows, not only the realization of the processes and their consequences, but also most importantly, the resolve or even prevention of possible conflicts amongst different social strata (Pratt 2008). Recent studies focus their attention on the ethnic and religious minorities of immigrants (Banks 2008) (Latinos in the US, Muslims in Western Europe), minority nations (e.g. Catalans, Basque, Welsh, Québécois), and indigenous peoples (e.g. Native peoples in North America, Maori in New Zealand).⁷ Hence, multiculturalism has been used as an umbrella term to characterize the moral and political claims of a wide range of disadvantaged groups (Philosophy 2012).

In education multicultural researches mirror all issues presented in the world. They are social, ethnical, and national clashes or benefits and drawbacks of the modern global cyber community (Banks 2008), (Steinberg 2001). It is a set of strategies and materials assisting teachers with promoting democratic principles given the cultural diversity of modern schools. According to our observation of the educational environment in California, modern schools and colleges face students from a variety of socio-economic, cultural, and language groups because of active immigration flows throughout the world. For example, in the American classroom the homogeneous middle-class European-American culture does not exist anymore in urban or rural areas. Fisher describes the Berkeley campus as “a hotbed of ethnic consciousness and students typically frame issues in terms of race and nationality”.⁸ Large numbers of ESL students study the traditional curriculum beside the students with English as a mother tongue. The social contradiction between a multicultural environment and a one-centred-culture curriculum is obvious, and old school methods do not work proficiently in a modern classroom.

Certain subjects in a curriculum such as mathematics, physics, and biology are not influenced very much by multicultural issues because of their objective content. It is much easier for a teacher to manage their neutral content in a multicultural classroom. On the contrary, social and humanitarian subjects, e.g. history, social science, literature, liberal arts,

⁷ (Philosophy 2012), <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/multiculturalism/>

⁸ (Fisher 1999), 9

psychology, et cetera, are a challenge to teach for various reasons, like the differences in students' cultural backgrounds, the value system, national traditions, and religious views about historical and cultural events. To create the syllabus for such subjects, an educator should take into account the content as well as its cultural implications.

One of the recent concepts in multiculturalism exists as multicultural education, which is slightly different in definition, comparing it with the idea of multiculturalism itself. If multiculturalism, as it was mentioned before, is an umbrella term for a variety of political, sociological, and ethical studies. Multicultural education combines the concept of the highest levels of academic achievement for all students and develops a positive self-concept in multicultural situations. The National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME), which has existed since 1990, defines the term as:

A philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents, such as the US Declaration of Independence, constitutions of South Africa and the United States, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. It affirms our need to prepare student for their responsibilities in an interdependent world. It recognizes the role schools can play in developing the attitudes and values necessary for a democratic society. It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice.⁹

The authors relate the term to various aspects of school life—from educational process to policies, which “help students develop a positive self-concept by providing knowledge about the histories, cultures, and contributions of diverse groups.” The concept pays special attention to specific issues of the modern world, such as “racism, sexism, classism, linguicism, ableism, ageism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, and xenophobia”. These issues should be directly included in a school curriculum. To support these ideas and discussions regarding the issues, the Association demands the necessity for cultural competency and ability to provide a culturally diverse environment for students and school staff.

A modern classroom in the USA is a real multicultural environment with the mixture of countries; K-12 students and adult school students alike. The variety of articles on the subject demonstrates the current state

⁹ ((NAME) n.d.)

of the issue. For example, Atkinson addresses the issue of considering culture as an “under examined concept in TESOL”.¹⁰ Attesting to modern needs for the multi-cultural approach in ESL studies, the author proposes “a revised view of culture that is intended to serve TESOL practitioners into the 21st century, or that can at least provide a takeoff point from which such a view may be developed”.¹¹ According to Atkinson, in the modern ESL field culture is the starting point, not the supplemental implication (Atkinson 2012). In our case there is an opportunity to incorporate multicultural contents in ESL education. There is the need for expanding the abstract ideas to more practical levels. All modern ESL educators have to consider a multicultural classroom as a starting point. Later in the chapter I consider the role of multiculturalism in methodology and practical application.

Translation Issues. A Brief Description of a Case Study

Another important problem that ESL educators encounter on a regular basis involves translation issues in understanding terms and concepts. To consider it from the practical perspective, I describe a case study on understanding a concept by groups of students from different countries. I have conducted a survey concerning the understanding of the personal culture concept in Russian and American youth social environments. It is a part of the comparative studies of American and Russian Art Education systems. This particular subject, translation issues in ESL studies, has arisen during the preparation of a component about educational patterns in visual culture environment. The case study presents the differences in the definitions of the term “personal culture” from American and Russian students’ points of view. Although the results are only a case study, it is important to demonstrate them due to the unusual outcomes and the interesting, sometimes contradictory answers. The results of the study were presented at the Multicultural symposium at Berkeley University in April 2012.

The survey took place in 2009 in two locations: Sierra College, Rocklin, California, USA, Moscow School of the Humanities, Moscow, Russia, and Gertzen University of Education, Moscow, Russia. American students (38) with majors in philosophy and cultural anthropology and Russian students (56)–Humanities and pedagogy. Ages: 18-23. The survey included five open questions about a term that was given as the term for explanation, “personal culture”. The goal was to compare the differences

¹⁰ (Atkinson 1999), 626

¹¹ Ibid., 626

in terminological understanding with straight translation without taking into account the cultural and language background.

Questions

1. Define the term “personal culture”. Which characteristics are important for personal culture development?
2. List some kind of activities that efficiently influence personal culture development.
3. Is this term important nowadays? How can you apply it to our standard life?
4. What does influence personal culture development in your environment?
5. Have you ever discussed this term with your friends or colleagues. In which context?

In Russia the term “personal culture” develops dynamically in modern Russian Humanities from psychology to education and cultural anthropology based on the prominent Russian philosophers’ and educators’ thoughts. For example: V. P. Zinchenko, perspectives of the endless development of a human being; V. S. Bibler, a human being as a part of a culture, A. G. Asmolov, D. A. Leontyev, multimentionality of a personality, V. M. Rosin, “a dialogue with one’s life”, and Ch. Couli, “social I”.

In American reference and research literature there is no direct correlation with this term although there is something generally in common in the concepts of personal development, culture and individual personality differences: abilities and aptitudes from the Encyclopedia of Education and the Gale Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence.

From the perspective of the Russian language the term is defined as the development of a person’s upbringing and education, the level of mastership in an occupation or activity, individual moral traits, manners and attitude towards other people and activities Personal culture is close to all-over-the-culture competency that could be improved through education, communication, and other personal and social activities. This term could be expanded via the development of different directions of a person’s inner world. In accepting and implementing cultural codes and patterns, a person carries them in his or her personal space.

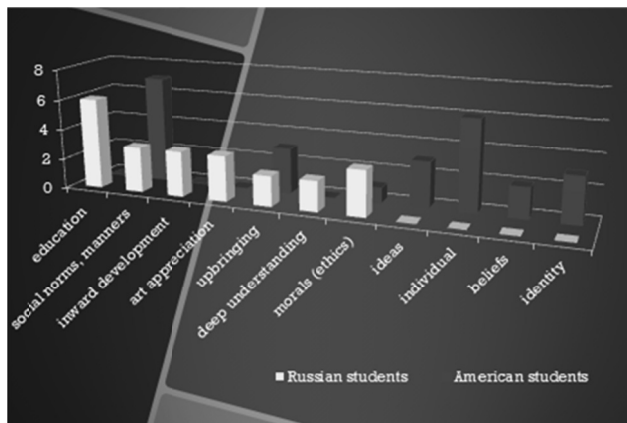
For Russian students the term “personal culture” exists in the semantic field of personal growth and the developing inner world in terms of the Humanities. The set of words they use to describe the phenomenon exists on a cultural level of morals and the highest personal standards: education,

social norms, inward development, art appreciation, and ethics. The set of words that American students use leads us to a different dimension of social norms and personality: social norms, manners, ideas, individual, beliefs, and identity.

From the perspective of the English language, the concept “personal culture” is close to a concept of “integrity”, “morals”, and “honour”. However, there is no direct translation of the term from Russian to English. The direct translation does not give the correct understanding in English. Russian students relate the term to cultural competency that is defined as a level of education and erudition. These traits define a person’s self-education, ability making independent decisions in knowledge challenges, and skills managing self-opinions. American students mentioned social competency that is defined as social skills and responsibilities. The latter allow a person to adjust properly to a society’s norms and rules both written and unspoken. For American students the term exists in the field of social pedagogy, which had been the mainstream in American education over the past few decades.

Table 1-1 demonstrates the differences in understanding the definitions in the visual dimensions. Russian students pointed out certain traits in terms of the Russian language cultural background: education, inward development, and art appreciation. American students reflected their cultural background in using ideas, individuality, beliefs, and identity. Some terms were common for both groups: upbringing, social norms, manners, and morals.

Table 1-1. Personal Culture’s Frequency of Characteristics: American Students vs. Russian Students



There are many words in both languages that create translation issues: “mirovozzrenije”–worldview, ideology; “volja”–will, desire, determination to do something, the power of handling your instincts and desires; “razvitije”–development, but also deeply penetrating into a person’s inner world.

For example, in translation from Russian to English, the word “dukhovnyi” (“spiritual”) has strong religious connotation in English. In Russian it does not only mean “religious” or “connected with religious”, but first of all it carries the meaning of the inner world. In Russian this meaning exists in the context of “deep inner world”. Another meaning is related to something mystical with the connotation of spiritual practices. This term associates with Russian literature traditions of moral standards through creating the environment of a moral system. Hence, it is impossible to translate “dukhovnyi” from Russian to English as “spiritual”. Depending on the context, it could be translated as “inward”, “inner world” and only in some specific contexts as “spiritual”.

Another example is the word “educated”. In the Russian language this term means more than only education or an earned degree. An “educated” person in Russian culture implies wide erudition, an understanding of art and cultural roots, and the norms of appropriate behaviour. In addition, it means professionalism and skilfulness in a particular occupation, and an attitude towards other people, to yourself, to the world. It is more like high standards in human personal development. It involves personal responsibility to the morals of humankind, and to the development of personal abilities. The roots of this complex understanding lay in the deep religious orthodox Christian traditions of Russian culture, such as the personal responsibilities before God. A person with the developed personal culture approaches the Creator in his thoughts and actions. In the English language it is closer to the term self-actualization.

The case study I describe reveals that in ESL, special attention should be concentrated on the correct explanation of terms. The correlation between the translations in two languages lies in deep cultural traditions: “Language is processed and structured linguistic experience of a certain community. This experience is based on certain phrases of language material, which coexist in a language in related and united forms”.¹² Explanations of the English language term (or characteristic) should be the results of pondering over cultural background. Examples of using a term given to students have to include different language and social situations in order to include a term in a semantic field of a meaningful concept.

¹² (Shcherba 1947/2003), 62

The Audience. The M-Generation and Teacher-Student Roles in Modern Education

This part of the chapter focuses on a description of the educational characteristics of young generation students because young students of the modern generation are different. In the ESL classroom a teacher faces two opposite ways of dealing with students for they are divided into two groups: adult learners and young generation students. The first group is M-Generation students, “digital natives”, with all the positive and negative characteristics of this generation. A teacher has to take into account their psychological and educational traits to engage the students efficiently in the studying process. In ESL terms this group needs more independent assignments including searching Internet resources and activating digital devices. A teacher could use flexible plans in delivering materials with digital support, but concentrate students’ attention on developing evaluative skills and pondering over the subject. The speed of a quick response here provides real support in finding information. The high level of creativity of modern youths provides a chance to keep them involved in the studying process if creative assignments are given. For example, finding reliable sources on a subject; creating a video with personal comments; delivering a presentation about personal interests, etc.

The second group that an ESL teacher deals with is a group of adult students, “digital immigrants”, who experience difficulties in using electronic devices in addition to the complications of studying English. Because of the wide range of technology usage in the modern educational process, a teacher faces issues in giving instructions to adult learners for using computer devices in English and using computer devices themselves. It takes a lot of the teacher’s patience and skills to deliver proper instructions to adult students and to keep an educational language process moving. Variances in students’ cultural and educational backgrounds are also a serious problem for adult education. In the USA adult ESL schools unite people from different countries. All of them meet to study English. Although school districts divide students according to their levels of proficiency, cultural backgrounds are still the complication. The most difficult and the most fascinating aspect of cultural diversity in adult schools is the diversity of cultural customs, experiences, habits, and standards. It has to be a special part of ESL teachers’ training in managing the cultural backgrounds of different countries.

Technologies have changed not only the educational environment, but also students’ traits. To understand better the modern educational environment, scholars have to study the psychological and educational

characteristics of the young generation. These generations, the so-called M- and i-Generations, started in the years 1980 and 2000, respectively. The importance of the Internet and technologies for these children, teens, and young adults is inevitable. Technology is everywhere and characterizes their environment and personal space (Rosen 2010), (Teaching Generation M. 2009). I use the term M-Generation, keeping in mind all the names and specific characteristics of both generations.

Modern young people grew up in an era of computers and Internet connection, perceiving the world as a common “wired” information space. Constantly in touch, modern youths are perfectly oriented to use software products, combining them all into the living-in complexity of everyday life (Teaching Generation M. 2009). Their visually and technically multifaceted network constructs the communication and information world amongst them. They are highly experienced in searching for information and prefer an associative complex approach instead of linear learning: short video clips, graphics, and the overall context of the problem. They are accustomed to asking a question and receiving an instant answer. In the space of the network they form a private online space, creating a world of personal references and contacts. They are real “Digital Natives”—natives of electronic space in contrast with “Digital Immigrants”—adults who have lived in pre-digital time (Pletka 2007).

The characteristics of the M-Generation differ from the student of the traditional educational environment. There are negative and positive characteristics that had developed because of the new digital technological milieu. Negative characteristics are connected with the fast speed of modern digital devices and ease of access to information though the Internet. When instructors create an educational space for this generation, the problem is the students’ preference for quick information. They are prone to get information as fast as possible. The breadth of deep dig knowledge is poor; and modern students are comfortable with untested sources. Random (but quickly found) sources strongly affect their conception of the world. Students can rapidly accumulate material, however, their ability for critical evaluation, the general background of thinking and concentration on a particular topic are both poorly formed (Teaching Generation M. 2009). The effect of “turning a page” and the appearance of immediate information, makes modern students impatient. They rush to the next page looking for the next content that seems more captivating than the previous one (Teaching Generation M. 2009). And the result is a fragmentary, torn perception that does not form a complete analysis of the material, such as gained from a book. Teachers tend to complain about the distractive and superficial nature of the modern

generation although students successfully express their creative personalities in out-of-school activities.

Otherwise, there are positive characteristics of M-Generation, which are enhanced in a contemporary technological environment. In an analysis of modern students' creative activities, we found out that they fill up this shortage of linguistic consciousness development by different digital activities such as video clips, social networking, text messaging, and so on. For example, short videos that young people uploaded to You-Tube are limitless in subjects and topics, from advice about business and philosophical lectures to tips about makeup and communication. Everyone who creates a video reveals his or her personal environment of the dialogue with the space and content. This is the "growing pains" of social networking and texting educators have to transform into productive activity. However, even with such a proficient creative activity the development of momentary fulfilled speech is blocked by traditional forms of education such as testing in the "silent" environment.

Knowledge of the traits is helpful in forming the multicultural ESL classroom environment, for these traits are focused on personalities, individual expression, and attention to the opinions of others. Taking cultural differences by definition, youths do not concentrate their attention on them, maintaining a sustainable peers' environment with a sense of morals and ethics without cultural dissimilarity. The modern generation manages the diversity of cultures without evaluation or concentration on the cultural differences. In Table 1-2 the positive and negative traits are juxtaposed to demonstrate the possibilities of diminishing the negatives and increasing the positives. I have extracted the most important characteristics of modern young generations to observe the effect of increasing the positives and diminishing the negatives.

Table 1-2. Educational Traits of the M-Generation

Positive traits	Negative traits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High speed of visual perception • Active involvement in seeking information • High level of creativity in using technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of deep understanding • Preference for quick information only ("turning page" effect) • Weak skills of aesthetic evaluation

Usually, a weakness could be the base for building a strength. For example, engaging the characteristic of the high speed of visual perception, an educator could provide the base for deep understanding. In this case an assignment to find a certain perspective of a broad topic could be beneficial. Students are prone to search the Internet, but soon realize they need criteria to narrow their exploration. When a question about criteria appears, an educator has to be ready to discuss them with students. Modern educators have a supportive rather than informative function. Modern students do not want to be followers because of their eagerness to explore the world by themselves. For their broad and deep self-realization, modern students have well-developed technologies which they use efficiently—they are savvy, quick and self-confident.

In such a situation a teacher needs new approaches to manage the educational process. In understanding the psychological and educational traits of adult learners and the modern generation, ESL studies have to concentrate attention in seeking new strategies to improve the learning of English.

Methods and Dialogue

In the modern active world people need a sufficient grasp of language for expressing their opinions freely, delivering information and managing issues. While modern times request real communication, studying grammar structures and practicing them does not meet the real needs of the students. To improve the skills of students using English in everyday life, learners want to be involved in interactive practical studying. A vital part of modern ESL teaching is based on developing a process of real discussion. According to Russian philologist Lev Shcherba,

a language is a tool of communication, and students' attention should be concentrated and focused on expression, but not on the ways of expression. Language process of expression flows absolutely subconscious in a spontaneous natural dialogue'.¹³

Concentrating on the grammar, educators often forget about the real aim of using a language. Expression and its personalized arrangements should be the real aim of studying any language. The formed ability to express yourself, ask questions, be polite, etc., is the most desirable part of acquiring a language. In this perspective the process of studying English

¹³ (Shcherba 1947/2003), 32

could be redirected from structural acquisition to acquiring different ways of expressing certain feelings and thoughts. I consider the concept of dialogue to be a key point in gaining new language structures in a significantly relaxed studying environment.

The idea of using the dialogue concept as a key point in ESL studies is based on the ideas of Russian philologist Mikhail Bakhtin (M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* 1981), (M. Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* 1993). His ideas were cultivated as a source for ESL studies in some recent issues. In the book “On dialogue” the authors reexamine the value of the dialogue concept in modern humanities. The importance of using the dialogic environment is evident for the authors. They consider the concept as a resourceful way not only of understanding the ideas, but also developing new meanings through the dialogic discussions (Lee, Nichol, David Bohm 1996). A book “Dialogue with Bakhtin on Second and Foreign Language Learning: New Perspectives” specifically concentrated on using Bakhtin’s concept for ESL studies (Hall, Joan Kelly, Gerdana Vitanova, Ludmila Marchenkova 2004). More detailed considerations of the dialogue are provided in chapter IV of the current issue.

In the environment of a “natural dialogue” there is a special goal for producing an “equal zone of creativity” in each learning situation for expressing opinions, listening to classmates, creating interconnections to help understand knowledge, values, beliefs, and patterns of behaviour of an unknown ethnic group without social prejudices and stereotypes. However, the question of shared subjects for discussions becomes more important than the abstract topics. I call them “riding an elephant” activities, referring to one of the exercises where the participants have to ask questions using Present Perfect Tense structure. One of the phrases was about riding an elephant. No doubt, it is a funny question, but it has nothing to do with participants’ everyday activities. Hence, a natural dialogic space has to produce situations that are close to the participants’ lives.

The next issue is finding subjects for a dialogue, providing interest and a sense of involvement for everybody as Steinberg calls it, an “equal zone of creativity” (Steiberg 2001). It accentuates the subjects and issues where cultures are common, e.g. the concepts of responsibility, love, self-identification, integrity, etc. It helps to maintain a constant cross-cultural discussion without raising tensions in a multi-cultural group. The needs of reasoning based on equality make students develop critical thinking and rational evaluation, which in turn expand argumentation and skills for self-

expression. By learning to listen to others, students improve their personal style of expression in English:

Language as a whole structure is social phenomenon. This social nature of language exists in unity of the processes of speaking and understanding, which are as it was mentioned before, the wholeness—the communicative process (the act of communication). The process of understanding is preliminary stage for the process of speaking; if understanding does not come or goes in the wrong direction, not as a speaker suggests, it demonstrates to him some certain defects in his process of speaking.¹⁴

This statement is central for inexperienced ESL speakers who struggle with non-expressiveness and non-understanding. Even if they are able to express themselves, a society demands from them a certain proficiency in communicative skills. The creation of a dialogic space in a classroom with training on expression, coping, managing and resolving, makes the use of a language much easier in reality. The benefits of these activities transfer a class space to the global level. They help to develop essential dexterity, such as a deep understanding of a problem, expanding in the process of looking for information, and elaboration in the constructive evaluation of oneself and others.

From the educational standpoint, multicultural classrooms promote social pluralism in ESL studies. Dialogue is the umbrella concept for developing language skills in a modern multicultural classroom. Hence, the goal of ESL students is to get closer to the “language/linguistic experience” of the social environment, which is impossible without being aware of cultural realities and shared interests. The dialogic environment provides a response to students’ ideas and opinions, an equal opportunity to listen to the real voice of a person, and a mutual understanding and respect between the speaker and the audience. The dialogic space with an equal zone of creativity with common subjects for discussions generates a shared linguistic/cultural experience for participants of the dialogue.

Sources. Analyzing Literature on the Subject

The field itself is full of literature. By naming a search “ESL studies”, there will be hundreds of books and articles in academic journals. A seeker should narrow the search to refine a direction. Otherwise, he will be lost in the abundance of materials, which means that the field is developing and improving in different ways. The number of books, articles and textbooks

¹⁴ Ibid., 62

is enormous and covers a wide range of topics: self-studying textbooks, the ESL teacher's organizational guide; references for writing; etc. I have decided to construct a classification of modern ESL books to help educators and students in self-navigating the ocean of available sources.

Modern issues provide sources for different directions of development rather than sticking with one static program. It could be explained by the mixture of levels, nations, cultures, backgrounds, and even ages of current ESL students. After looking through hundreds of ESL issues, I organized them according to the type of information they deliver. These categories include academic, instructional, and studying literature. A source could be written in a popular style, but in a broad perspective be very close to an issue written in the academic format. Otherwise, in the ESL field, sharing a personal experience plays a vital part in dealing with the issues. Some academic works describe a personal experience in an appropriate scholarly format. Traditionally a classification includes subcategories according to the content or style of materials; in ESL studies with its broad variety of sources, the term "approach" is more suitable. Dividing ESL materials based on the approaches the authors provide, allows an enhancement of the differences in the content, not the style. This is important in the process of looking for material with a certain goal, i.e. finding instructions for a class; understanding cultural patterns; comparing academic opinions; sharing personal thoughts. I have classified existing literature in the following subcategories: analytical, methodical, descriptive, reference, and personal experience. The following section describes different approaches in modern ESL materials.

Methodical and analytical approaches give ESL teachers an ample variety of sources. These types of editions combine two important types of educational activities; a description of methodical strategies and their analytical consideration. These types give ESL teachers the opportunity to discuss an educational process and its diagnostics. In general perspective the experiences of ESL teaching are broad and wide-ranging. On the one hand, educators have the need to direct themselves in the diversity of opportunities. In this case books expand the horizon of the field's kaleidoscope. On the other hand, other colleagues' thoughts support the personal choices of the ESL teacher. By reading colleagues' methodical analysis, an educator compares it with personal experiences and findings. It creates the space for internal dialogue with the possibilities of comparisons and the critical evaluation of personal and other educators' experience. Folse provides theoretical and practical information for ESL teachers with a focus on the development of speaking fluency. The book includes a special case study of improving speaking fluency in the ESL