

UDC 37

## Eclecticism as a method of teaching EFL

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### Abstract

The article deals with the peculiarities of foreign language teaching and learning at nonlinguistic universities. There is an illustration of the opinion in terms of the Dogme lessons suggested by Scott Thornbury and how this approach can be applied while teaching EFL to students at university. The author focuses on the issue of efficiency of foreign language teaching and learning at non-philological programs in current conditions. Some difficulties that teachers face on a daily basis are analyzed. To overcome these difficulties the approach to improve the work is described and it lies in the combination of lots of materials and strategies that a teacher may use. Due to this the term «eclecticism» is described. The author describes the stereotypes and misconceptions related to the eclectic approach and the methodological techniques how to improve the efficiency of this method. Additionally, the article provides the lesson plan as an example of the method in action. In conclusion it's vital to say that the importance of communicative competence is significant in the modern world and it's crucial to support the development of necessary skills for students. The speedy development of the technologies makes the approach of *eclecticism* the most efficient method of teaching foreign languages at universities. Watching videos significantly increases motivation of students, improves their knowledge of vocabulary and dramatically beefs up the skills of listening and speaking in their professional sphere.

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Foreign language teaching and learning, non-philological programs, eclecticism, meta-disciplinary approach, skills and abilities

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## Introduction

The technological development is in full swing and it's useless to prevent it from happening in classrooms. New generations of students are demanding and picky in their choices, being indifferent to the trends is not less than harmful for teachers.

Undeniably, students are closer and closer to visual perception of the information and the easiness for them to watch and remember is really impressive.

The dramatic role of video is indisputable. Although television isn't completely lost for youngsters, still its popularity is going down, while Youtube channels are gaining their audience with a fantastic pace.

What is fascinating about the video resources, bloggers, influencers? They cover a great variety of interests, videos are of different length and genres, the topics being discussed online can be enumerated endlessly. While some may point out that these sources are a huge distraction, students pick up the language watching online videogames tournaments, webinars and series with subtitles.

The video format is a tremendous resource for teachers to work with and the methods and approaches could be of different shapes and formats.

## Dogme lessons

In 2000 the book by Scott Thornbury *Teaching Unplugged. Dogme in ELT* was released. Technically it's something natural to suggest going cold turkey on technologies, when we are overwhelmed with them. I suppose that calling for this «detoxication» was a part of checking the abilities of teachers, the wake-up call for alternatives, it was some sort of trying if the teachers were still aware of techniques, if they were ready to the open dialogue: not being a mediator, but an active participant of the process during the lesson. Looking at this movement from the point of view like honing craftsmanship is reasonable and necessary, because losing touch with reality is ruining for the profession.

The basic features are illustrated, and the approach is conversation-driven, materials-light, focused on emergent language [Harmer, www], it reminds of speech clubs, that allow students to address the issue like language barrier. The anxiety to speak is overcome by immersing oneself in the dialogue with a native speaker, for instance. It may take place, I'm not sure, that it must be a mainstream, but to some extent to change the environment from a structured, well-known course to some sort of impromptu, that will have its outcome.

To my mind, improvisation is a symbol of mastership and this approach will be beneficial for advanced students. Let's take into consideration the group of students from the faculty of programming, for example, and allow them to prepare the speech about cutting-edge technologies in the format of stand-up comedy, I mean, to deliver the speech in such a way, that is comprehensible for non-specialists as well — the students will remember this Dogme lesson, and I suppose to tell the story without «special effects» in a fascinating way is magic.

I'm a strong advocate of various technologies during the lessons, evidently, we cannot do without them unless we want our course to be obsolete. The wise use of materials and technologies at hand enriches the course, however, sometimes solo performance is a breath of fresh air.

## Eclecticism

Eclecticism (from Greek *eklektikos*, “selective,” or “choosing the best”), is a conceptual approach that does not hold rigidly to a single paradigm or set of assumptions, but instead draws upon multiple theories, styles, or ideas to gain complementary insights into a subject, or applies different theories in

particular cases.

While teaching English, not being terrified by using various materials and technologies and juggling them skillfully is a vital ability, as standard methods and approaches require standard, ideal conditions, which is nonsense in the real classroom. Rarely teachers spend comfortably time with mini-groups up to 6 students of the same level. No doubt, it happens from time to time, but still at nonlinguistic universities huge groups with mixed levels are a norm, which imposes dramatic limitations or creates constant challenges during each lesson or while preparing to this lesson.

The paramount task for a modern teacher is to work out a balanced lesson to meet the expectations of all students in a group. To consider eclecticism as a destroying force is myopic. It is the approach that makes the resources at teachers' hand efficient and powerful tools bringing fruitful results for students.

This approach doesn't undermine the existing traditional courses with textbooks, but its creation will definitely make the course engrossing and effective for the future specialists. Eclecticism cannot be overwhelming as this characteristic won't add flexibility to the approach. Combining and mixing different sources like videos, audios, texts, discussion topics and themes for writing essays and other works changes the way students see and acquire the information. Moreover, it provides so sought-after freedom for a teacher to choose the exact sources for a particular group.

I would like to draw your attention to a lesson plan that I see as an example of eclecticism while teaching receptive skills. Below you will see the profile of the procedures and the suggested exercises to work with.

### Receptive Skills Lesson Plan

#### College Essay Tips — How to Tell a Unique Story to Admissions

<b>Lesson Objective:</b> Students will demonstrate listening comprehension of main ideas and details of a video on essay writing for college applications through completion of speaking and writing tasks.		
Step I – 12 minutes	a) Lead-in Stage: T=>C b) Work in 3 mini-groups (1) SSS (2) SSS (3) SSS	a) It's necessary to get students to be engrossed into the topic. As a starting point a teacher draws attention of the audience to the statement « <i>You never get a second chance to make a first impression</i> » and asks the students to raise hands if they agree. There might be quick remarks why they feel so. b) To spark the interest more to the topic in question the students are asked to work in mini-groups answering the questions from the section «warm up» ( <b>ex 1</b> from the worksheet). Then the teacher will ask for the feedback.
Step II – 8 minutes	Work on vocabulary Individual work plus work in mini-groups while checking the answers	In the target video there are several important phrasal verbs and adjectives crucial for the comprehension. In the materials the students can see the definitions of the phrasal verbs. <b>Ex 2</b> will allow to practice the usage of the verbs and catch the idea of the contexts. As an extension of this task it's possible to suggest coming up with their own examples while working in mini-groups. Word formation is an indispensable part of playing with the target language, students will find it helpful to work with paper dictionaries while completing <b>ex 3</b> from the worksheet.
Step III - 12 minutes	Work on reading to practice the essential vocabulary more before watching the	The reading section of this lesson stimulates the students to plunge into the problem, grab more useful vocabulary and notions and via answering the question of <b>ex 4</b> make this lexis active. Moreover, due

	video Individual work Mini-groups	to the answers of their partners they will practice their listening abilities, which will increase their confidence before working with the video podcast. One more significant possibility is to raise the cross-cultural awareness as students will share experiences about the reality of their home countries. What is more, the students will be familiar with the pronunciation of key notions in the connecting speech which eradicates a number of barriers for the comprehension of the video content.
Step IV - 12 minutes	The first round of watching the podcast Work in mini-groups	The students are focusing on <b>ex 5 and 6</b> from the worksheet before watching the video they will have one minute to familiarize themselves with the tasks. These tasks aim at general comprehension of the video, mainly the general idea of the podcast and key facts from it. After watching the video, the students take their time discussing the facts and providing the arguments to support their opinions. After the teacher get their responses and the feedback.
Step V - 15 minutes	The second round of watching and the creative task Work in mini-groups	After the second round of watching the students will devote their time to analyze the examples from the video ( <b>ex 7</b> ) which helps them to recollect more facts about the content and to practice the vocabulary in their discussions. <b>Ex 8</b> evokes the mobilization of their experience and they share their vision with the groupmates. This task is the final point of the discussion, it requires the creative approach of the students while suggesting their own ideas. During this final stage they accumulate their practical experience with the knowledge they have acquired during this exact class.

## WORKSHEET

### Warm up

*«You never get a second chance to make a first impression»*

Ex. 1 Discuss in your mini-groups the following questions:

Does a first impression matter? In what sort of circumstances? Give your grounds.

What do people first notice about the others?

Are first impressions normally right or wrong?

Do you think people judge too early and too easily?

What would you look for to make a portrait of a person if you had only an essay written by that person?

Essential vocabulary study

Ex. 2 a) Study the following phrasal verbs:

boil down to	if a statement or an argument boils down to a single statement that statement is the main point or cause
stand out	to be very easy to see/notice
shine through	if a quality shines through, it is strong and easy to see, usually in a particular situation

Ex. 2 b) Fill in the gaps using the phrasal verbs of this lesson. Pay attention to the form of the verbs

(NB! You need one phrasal verb for the three sentences from the block).

I

I'm sure illnesses \_\_\_\_\_ in all childhood memories.

Those days still \_\_\_\_\_ as the greatest ones in my life.

A yellow background will make the black lettering \_\_\_\_\_.

II

It \_\_\_\_\_ to a question of priorities.

The real problem \_\_\_\_\_ to identifying the nature of the problem itself.

It \_\_\_\_\_ to whether you think the extra features and quality are worth extra money.

III

Take off your make-up and let your natural beauty \_\_\_\_\_.

She is quiet woman but her passion and enthusiasm \_\_\_\_\_ in her music.

You need to make posters so that you can \_\_\_\_\_.

Word formation

Ex. 3 a) Consult a paper dictionary and fill in the gaps using the correct form of the word in CAPITAL letters.

1. Dickens' characters are very vivid and _____.	MEMORY
2. The strangeness of the whole situation comes across very strongly, together with a certain _____ quality.	EMBLEM
3. His playing has many moments of _____ insights.	REVELATION
4. The gold-rimmed spectacles gave her a _____ air.	STUDY

**Ex. 3 b) Answer the questions about the words with which you filled in the blanks.**

In which word are there 3 shwa sounds?

Which word(s) have/s two stresses?

In which word is there the sound /æ/?

**Ex. 4 Read the article below and answer the questions:**

Why do universities and colleges need an essay from applicants?

What is the key to success?

What are the common mistakes made by applicants?

Do you have a similar procedure in your country?

What would you value in essays if you were an admissions officer?

**Crafting an Unforgettable College Essay**

*Most selective colleges require you to submit an essay*

*or*

*personal statement as part of your application.*

It may sound like a chore, and it will certainly take a substantial amount of work. But it's also a unique opportunity that can make a difference at decision time. Admissions committees put the most

weight on your high school grades and your test scores. However, selective colleges receive applications from many worthy students with similar scores and grades—too many to admit. So, they use your essay, along with your letters of recommendation and extracurricular activities, to find out what sets you apart from the other talented candidates.

*Telling Your Story to Colleges*

*So, what does set you apart?*

You have a unique background, interests and personality. This is your chance to tell your story (or at least part of it). The best way to tell your story is to write a personal, thoughtful essay about something that has meaning for you. Be honest and genuine, and your unique qualities will shine through.

Admissions officers have to read an unbelievable number of college essays, most of which are forgettable. Many students try to sound smart rather than sounding like themselves. Others write about a subject that they don't care about, but that they think will impress admissions officers.

You don't need to have started your own business or have spent the summer hiking the Appalachian Trail. Colleges are simply looking for thoughtful, motivated students who will add something to the first-year class.

**Ex. 5 Watch the video. What question does it answer?**

What are the main tips to build your powerful personal brand?

How significant is it not to neglect the role of the application essay?

What are the crucial hints to make an outstanding application essay?

**Ex. 6 Tick the formulas to success covered in the video:**

Being funny is a key to success.

Tell your story in an effortlessly recognizable way.

Draw attention of admissions officers to as many facts of your biography as possible.

Reveal extraordinary facts about your personality.

Do not repeat the facts from your transcript unless you have revelatory information.

Start early and write several drafts of your essay and let your family members edit it.

**Ex. 7 Watch the video again and make notes. Recollect the ideas supporting the following facts from the video.**

Branding is a powerful versatile tool.

Admissions officers need something exceptional to draw a conclusion.

Recounting is meaningless, reflection is influential and impressive.

Your personality should be on display.

Ex. 8 a) Which three recommendations from the video do you consider of the highest priority? Which one was number 1 in the list of your partners?

b) Think about one extra recommendation that you would like to add to the list. Discuss the options with your partners.

c) Do you feel that the same recommendations can be useful while writing a cover letter when a

person applies for a job?

## Conclusion

In conclusion it's vital to say that the importance of communicative competence is significant in the modern world and it's crucial to support the development of necessary skills for students. The speedy development of the technologies makes the approach of *eclecticism* the most efficient method of teaching foreign languages at universities. Watching videos significantly increases motivation of students, improves their knowledge of vocabulary and dramatically beefs up the skills of listening and speaking in their professional sphere. However, it's significant to prepare students, and discussion topics and exercises with texts enforces their critical thinking and speaking abilities. The creation of courses with the combined and versatile materials will definitely diversify the current programs and intensify the educational process, which will be fruitful for the future generations.

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## Применение метода «эклeктика» при обучении английскому языку в неязыковых вузах

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### Аннотация

В статье описываются особенности преподавания и изучения иностранного языка в рамках программ неязыковых высших учебных заведений. Приводится иллюстрация применения метода Dogme, предложенного Скоттом Торнберри. Данный метод, введенный на рубеже XX и XXI столетий, подразумевает полный отказ от технологий и подготовки

материалов к занятию, в статье анализируется практичность данного подхода при изучении иностранного языка студентами технических вузов. Также автор сконцентрирован на вопросе повышения эффективности подходов при обучении иностранному языку, проанализированы трудности, с которыми преподаватель сталкивается в современных условиях, работая со студентами. По мнению автора для преодоления данных трудностей необходимы умело сочетаемые материалы и тщательно продуманные планы практических занятий, а также многообразие стратегий и тактик, используемых преподавателем на занятии. В связи с этим вводится понятие «эkleктика» в преподавании иностранного языка. Автором рассматриваются заблуждения, связанные с данным подходом, и описываются возможные методы эффективной работы на основе эkleктики в обучении иностранному языку. В дополнение представлена разработка плана занятия с примером возможных упражнений в качестве иллюстрации данного метода в действии.

#### Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

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Обучение и изучение иностранного языка, неязыковой вуз, эkleктика, метадисциплинарный подход, навыки, умения.

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