Pseudo Versus Genuine Eclecticism

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چکیده

در دنیای امروزی، هر روز به گنجینه‌ی روش‌ها و نگرش‌های علم آموزش افزوده می‌شود. ناگفته پیداست که هر یک از این روش‌های نوین دارای ضعف و قوت‌هایی خاص خود هستند. دیگر نمی‌توان چنین گفت که روشی متناسب با تمامی موقعیت‌ها و محیط‌های آموزشی است، بلکه می‌باید گفت که چه روشی بیش از دیگر روش‌ها متناسب با یک موقعیت خاص و کلاس آموزشی معین است.

کارشناسان و متخصصان خبره‌ی علم آموزش (و به‌خصوص آموزش زبان) براین باورند که وجود عوامل مختلف و گوناگون، یک وضعیت آموزشی را از دیگر وضعیت‌ها متمایز می‌سازد. به دیگر بیان، اجماع نظر براین امر است که هر وضعیت آموزشی خصوصیات منحصربه‌فردی دارد و از این روی، بهترین و کارآمدترین روش آموزشی می‌باید براساس این ویژگی‌های منحصربه فرد که معلم، شاگرد، محتوا و محیط آموزش را شامل می‌شوند، انتخاب شود.

آموزش زبان نیز از این قاعده مستثنا نیست. لذا مدرسان در جهت بهینه‌سازی آموزش می‌باید از گنجینه‌ی نظریه‌ها، روش‌ها و فنون، بهترین روش‌ها را برای هر دوره‌ی آموزشی خاص، طراحی و اجرا کنند. بدیهی است، هرگونه برداشت سطحی و نابخردانه از این امر و ایجاد ملغمه‌ای بی‌تأمل و بدون تفکر از روش‌های موجود و به‌کاربستن آن در تمامی کلاس‌های آموزشی، می‌تواند موجبات ناخرسندی و نارضایتی فراگیران و عدم نیل به اهداف آموزشی را فراهم سازد.

این مقاله، ضمن تأکید بر ضرورت درنظر گرفتن جمیع جوانب آموزشی به لزوم به‌کارگیری آمیزه‌گرایی (التقاط‌گرایی) صحیح و حقیقی اشاره می‌کند و آن‌را از آمیزه‌گرایی کاذب و ناصحیح متمایز می‌سازد. ضروری است دبیران محترم هنگام تدریس و پس از تدریس، شیوه‌ی آموزش خود را مورد تحلیل و بازبینی قرار دهند و تغییرات لازم را در آموزش‌های بعدی اعمال کنند. اگر این مهم محقق شد، آمیزه‌گرایی به مفهوم صحیح و حقیقی خود اجرا خواهد شد.

کلیدواژه‌ها: آمیزه‌گرایی، التقاط‌گرایی، آمیزه‌گرایی صحیح و حقیقی، آمیزه‌گرایی کاذب و ناصحیح

Abstract

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the term "eclectic" as choosing what appears to be the best from diverse sources, systems and style. Many teachers currently claim to take a genuine eclectic approach and partly because of a greater concern for maintaining students' interest. However, the EFL literature and classroom observations indicate that what teachers practice is pseudo eclecticism or semi- eclecticism the end result of which may be an unproductive mish-mash of fun-and-games that satisfies the students and makes teachers feel content but leads nowhere. There is a hope that the results of the present study will open new horizons to understanding methodology for English language teachers all over the country.

KeyWords:eclecticism; pseudo eclecticism; genuine eclecticism; approach; methode; TEFL/TESL

Introduction

Eclecticism, the origin of which is from the Greek word 'eklektikos' meaning choosing the best, was first practiced by a group of ancient philosophers, who attached themselves not to one system, but instead selected from among existing beliefs those that seemed most reasonable to them. Out of this collected material they constructed their new system of philosophy.

Eclecticism is currently an important feature of contemporary TEFL/TESL teaching methodology. Teachers are bocoming less and less inclined to strictly follow one prescribed teaching method and more and more determined to combine knowledge of established theories with the product of their own personal reflection on the reality of the classroom environment. Teachers are now more confident and aware of their role in judging the needs of their students and in adapting content and method to the level and peculiarities of the students

in the teaching-learning process. While still recognizing the valuable contribution of theorizers to the field, teachers feel an urge and necessity to be more active and involved in the immediate practical conditions they experience in the classroom.

Teachers do not practice their profession in an ideal environment; neither do they teach idealized students; in a real class there are students of all levels, attributes and attitudes. Teachers try to make a balance between the linguistic factor and the human factor. This is not an easy task and poses, in fact, the greatest challenge facing the English teaching specialists. Diverse learning conditions and learner variables have led the teachers to adopt eclecticism practiced in the classroom for a good number of years. However, the eclecticism concept is interpreted in many different ways. Mostly, teachers' understanding of eclecticism is misleading and erroneous. As such, the present study deals with contrasting the

dichotomous classification of eclecticism; namely, pseudo (false) and genuine (real) eclecticism.

Background

TEFL practitioners as well as theorizers now unanimously agree that "each group has its own special characteristics, and that successful teaching requires the recognition and acknowledgement of this uniqueness" (Bolster, 1983, p. 298; cited in Larsen-Freeman 2000). According to Larsen-Freeman (2000,p.183) "when teachers who subscribe to the pluralistic view of methods pick and choose from among methods to create their own blend, their practice is said to be *eclectic*".

Brown (2000) also approves of eclecticism. He states that Every learner is unique. Every *teacher is unique. Every learner-teacher relationship is unique, and every context is unique. Your task as a teacher is to understand the properties of those relationships. Using a cautious, enlightened, eclectic approach, you can build a theory based on the principles of second language learning and teaching* (p.14).

Reliance upon a single theory of teaching (or a single method that is informed by one relatively narrow set of theoretical principles) has been criticized because adherence to the use of a delimited number of procedures can become mechanistic and inflexible (Gilliland, James & Bowman,

1994; Lazarus & Beutler, 1993).

Schwab (1969 & 1971) has discussed two additional weaknesses of single-theory reliance: the incompleteness of theories and the coexistence of competing theories. Accordingly, there seems to be an agreement on the importance of the uniqueness of each educational situation and the complexities of contextual factors, hence a passport to eclecticism.

Care should be taken not to confuse eclecticism with pseudo-eclecticism. The former is genuine, principled and done within a systematic framework that is constrained. On the other hand, unconstrained pluralism describes the use of activities, presumably without the use of a single theory or contextual considerations. This type of eclecticism has often been criticized because it may be arbitrary, atheoretical, incoherent, naive, uncritical, unsystematic, and lacking in philosophical direction (e.g., Glascott & Crews, 1998; Lazarus & Beutler, 1993; Schwab, 1971). In a relevant critique of communicative language teaching, Allen (1983, p.24) has argued that "[i]n the absence of a well-defined theory, there is a danger that the development of communicative language teaching materials will be guided not so much by principle but by expedience, rul of thumb, and the uncoordinated efforts of individual writers." In relation to counseling, an even stronger critique of unconstrained pluralism has been provided by Lazarus

and Beutler (1993):

This smorgasbord conception of eclecticism, in which one selects concepts and procedures according to an unstated and largely unreplicable process, is both regrettable and misguided.... The haphazard mishmash of divergent bits and Pieces and the syncretistic muddleay idiosyncratic and ineffable clinical creations, are the antithesis of what effective and effecient counseling represents (p.381)

Most supporters of eclecticism do not advocate unconstrained pluralism and instead propose principles that will lead to coherent choices of learning activities (the principles proposed by Brown, 2000; Celce- Murcia, 1991, among others). The use of a principled eclecticism overcomes many of the above-mentioned weaknesses of unconstrained pluralism. However, the principles must still be made explicit and subjected to critical evaluation. Otherwise, principles could be found to be contradictory and irreconcilable (Larsen-Freeman, 2000,pp. 180-81; Lazarus & Beutler, 1993, p. 383). In addition, the principles of curriculum design must include valid psychological principles of learning (i.e., selecting items that are learnable), rather than principles that only categorize aspects of language as being simpler or more basic according to logical or linguistic criteria (e.g., Long & Crookes, 1993; Nunan, 1988; Sharwood Smith, 1976,pp. 46-47; Dorn, 1984; Tyler, 1949).

Finally, if the effectiveness of principles is to be assessed, then they must be made explicit in a manner that can be evaluated. Following such an assessment, principles may be confirmed, rejected, or modified. In sum, evaluation of eclecticism should involve an examination of the guiding principles that are proposed. By proposing pedagogical guidelines, principled eclecticism may provide a valuable alternative to absolutism, relativism, and unconstrained pluralism.

Eclecticism in the Iranian EFL Context

In the Iranian context, sad to say, sometimes it is observed that an unprincipled pluralism mistakenly called eclecticism is practiced. On the one hand, methods are avoided on the pretext that that no single method is the best, on the other hand, under the guise of eclecticism, a haphazard set of ideas from the theoretical stock of the field is formulated and applied invariably to all classes regardless of the peculiarities of classes taught (Razmjoo & Rizai, 2006). This "one size fits all" attitude needs serious reconsideration. True that in the *post-method* era, seeking the best method is no longer warranted; however, eclecticism should not be equated with an arbitrary and unsystematic amalgamation of methods.

Genuine eclecticism while not relying solely on the so called "pre- packaged", prescriptive methods involves careful

planning for each class, bearing in mind different variables in each particular class including the students needs, gender, age, the setting and so on. An eclectisist can be likened to a magician who in fact has a "bag of tricks" and tries to use the right trick or tricks at the right time depending on the situation, the audience he wants to entertain and other factors which are bound to vary from one situation to another. It goes without saying that after a while if he constantly uses the same set of tricks over and over, he will not succeed. Similarly, teachers need to think of varying factors in the teaching –learning process and come up with the right set of plans or "tricks" which is the most appropriate for a given context in order to best handle a class.

It can be easily seen in some classes across the country that some practitioners purportedly practice eclecticism, while holding simplistic views about it. Teachers who practice genuine eclecticism follow three important phases in their instruction process: teaching, reflecting and changing.

The following figure presents the principles of genuine eclecticism versus pseudo eclecticism.

Teachers who stick to pseudo eclecticism might use a single method and practice it every year because they were trained based on that method or they might benefit from some techniques brrowed from various methods and try to utilize them in all classes without considering the various factors that

are important in an educational context. The big misconception is that these teachers might claim that they practice eclecticism while what they are doing is pseudo and not genuine eclecticism.

It is hoped that the English teachers in junior high school, high school and pre-university centers consider this distinction and be cautious regarding the fundamental distinctions between pseudo eclecticism and genuine eclecticism. Accordingly, they are expected to associate their own methodology with the three commonplaces of the educational system; that is, learners, textbooks and contexts (Riazi, 2003); that is, different learners, textbooks and contexts might necessitate different methods, techniques and procedures.

Moreover, the three parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility as the main variables in any educational context proposed by Kumaravadivelu

Figure 1.Genuine Eclecticism versus Pseudo Eclecticism

Genuine Eclecticism	Pseudo Eclecticism
Dynamic	Static
Contextualized	Decontextualized
Well-grounded	Amalgamated
Flexible	Fixed
Real-life situation	Fabricated situation
Exploratary	Prescriptive
Particular	general
Context-sensitive	Context-independent

(1994, 2001, 2006), the pioneer of post-method, should be taken into account: 1) *Particularity:* Language pedagogy, to be relevant, must be sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context, embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu; 2). *Practicality:* A post-method pedagogy must rupture the reified role relationship between theorists and practitioners by enabling teachers to construct their own theory of practice. In other words, pedagogy of practicality seeks to overcome some of the deficiencies inherent in the theory-versus-practice, theorists'theory versus teachers'theory dichotomies by encouraging and enabling teachers themselves to theorize from their practice and practice from what they theorize; and 3) *Possibility:* A post-method pedagogy must tap the socio-political consciousness that participants bring with them in order to aid their quest for identity formation and social transformation; that is, to empower participants (Critical Discourse Analysis). As such, learners, teachers, and teacher educators are considered as explorers in the post-method pedagogy. In the same direction, Bax (2003a) and Bax (2003b) rightly concluded that it is time to replace all methods and approaches as the central paradigms in language teaching with a Context Approach which places context at the heart of the profession. As such, it is time to consider a genuine eclecticism in the form of a context-based approach.

In addition, English language teachers should be aware of the fact that one technique, approach, method or material is inadequate in the classroom as one size does not fit all (Carter & Nunan, 2001) These techniques and materials should be updated and used in the class based on the most recent changes and innovations in the field. If such objectives are fulfilled, the teachers are more likely to practice what they are expected to.

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