

## PHENOMENA-BASED LEARNING IN TEFL IN THE MOLDOVAN CONTEXT

### ÎNVĂȚAREA BAZATĂ PE STUDIAREA FENOMENELOR ÎN PREDAREA LIMBII ENGLEZE CA LIMBĂ STRĂINĂ ÎN CONTEXTUL EDUCAȚIONAL DIN MOLDOVA

*Victoria Mascaliuc, dr., lect.univ.  
Universitatea de Stat „Alec Russo” din Bălți*

*Victoria Mascaliuc, PhD, univ. lect.  
Alec Russo Balti State University  
ORCHID: 0000-0001-5325-2904*

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#### **Rezumat**

Articolul subliniază importanța învățării experiențiale în predarea limbii engleze. Acesta urmărește de a determina o legătură între fenomene și eficacitatea formării abilităților lingvistice. Fiind un proces bazat pe cercetare, cursanții sunt expuși la formarea abilităților „soft și hard” la orele de limbă engleză. Autorul descrie modelul bazat pe fenomene ca o strategie care poate fi utilizată la orele de engleză, folosind oportunități de învățare autentice. Adicional, este descris modelul de implementare a acestei abordări în spațiul educațional din Republica Moldova.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** engleză, învățare experiențială, model bazat pe fenomene, cercetare, instruire ghidată

#### **Abstract**

The article underlines the importance of experiential learning in teaching English. It traces a connection between phenomena and the efficacy of training language skills. Being a research-based process, the learners are exposed to training soft and hard skills at the classes of English. The author describes phenomena-based model as one strategy to be used at the classes of English to teach students using authentic learning opportunities. Additionally, a sample is provided to be implemented in the Moldovan context.

**Key-words:** English, experiential learning, phenomena-based model, research, guided instruction

#### **Introduction**

Education is a process that has to satisfy the needs of those involved. Human beings experience real-world happenings and these are examples of phenomena. The term *phenomenon* refers to facts that occur on a daily basis and they represent the life the students have to get experience of. It refers learners to truth and facts and makes them seek for more facts. Phenomena have at the basis inquiry that contributes to gathering information or cumulative knowledge. This process has a psychological explanation too. Psychologists mention that any type of question generates fun and the neurons begin to fire and, thus, curiosity is triggered. The learners start acting as experts in a certain field.

Theoretically, phenomenon-based learning (PhBL) goes back to constructivism. There are many theories that have fed PhBL, according to Silander:

The starting point of phenomenon-based teaching is constructivism, in which learners are seen as active knowledge builders and information is seen as being constructed as a result of problem-solving, constructed out of “little pieces” into a whole that suits the situation in which it is used at the time. When phenomenon-based learning occurs in a collaborative setting (the learners work in teams, for example), it supports the socio-constructivist and sociocultural learning theories, in which information is not seen only as an internal element of an individual; instead, information is seen as being formed in a social context. [...] In curricula, the phenomenon-based approach supports, in particular, learning in accordance with inquiry

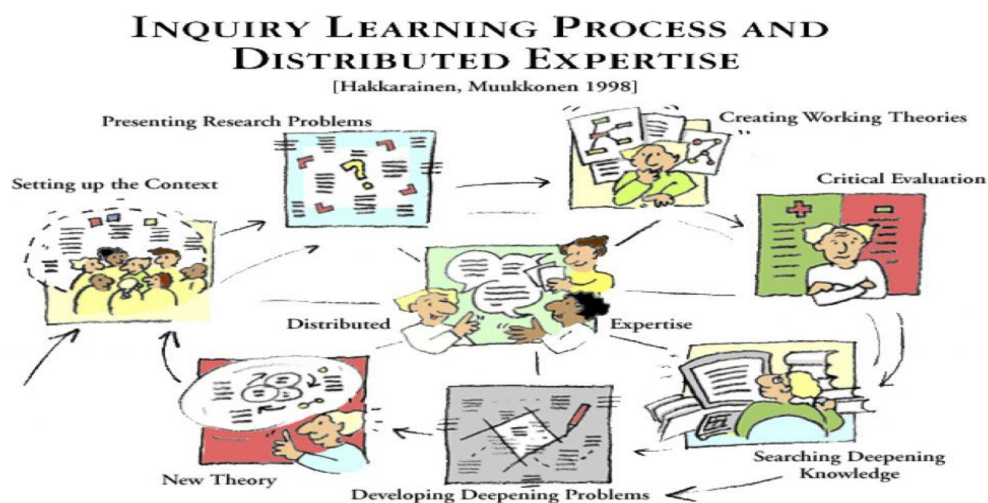
learning, problem-based learning and project and portfolio learning in educational institutions as well as their practical implementation [3, p. 19].

### Implementation

According to Halinen (2014), Finland was the first to launch the idea that “the world is changing around the school” and this new environment asks for some changes in the teaching process. Silander (2015) mentions that globalization has posed new challenges for the Finnish education. Finland was the first to change the methodology of teaching in 2014. This country changed the national core curriculum and conceptualized learning as a cumulative process where learners have a regulatory role. They are in charge with their own learning and develop learning-to-learn skills. The focus is on the transversal competencies development. These competencies are trained when the learning modules are based on integrative instruction (FNBE, 2016, section 4.4).

Phenomena-based learning has at the basis inquiry, problem solving and collaboration. Picture 1. explains how the approach is implemented. The working theory has at the basis a question that is followed by critical evaluation by the learners. This fact stimulates the investigation procedure. The bottom-down research offers the possibility to the learners to either draw conclusions or formulate another question. The results are presented in a certain context.

**Picture 1. Phenomena-based learning in science**



(credit: <https://lessonapp.fi/>)

The process engages the learners in exploring holistically different phenomena that bring authenticity to class. As observable from the picture above, the teacher has to make students go through different phases:

Question phase: this stage helps in creating the research context.

Investigation phase: the learners have to investigate on the question asked.

Improvement phase: the results are communicated by the learners and they are improved.

Assessment phase: the students peer assess their products.

This model of learning has a lot of advantages: (1) the learners are given the possibility to get a variety of experiences; (2) the learners are responsible of their own learning process; (3) the learners develop learning-to-learn skills.

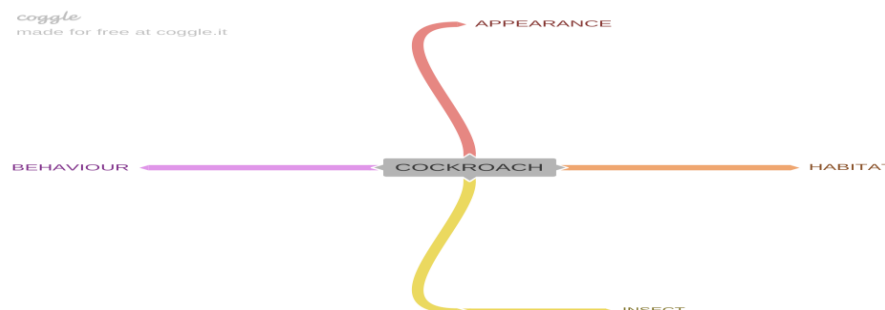
Moldova is passing through a transition period and the more there will be invested in the young generation and the development of their skills, the more competitive the learners will be on the labor market. Phenomena-based learning offers opportunities to learners to develop soft skills that they need for life. From my perspective, this approach can facilitate the learning process and the pupils become responsible of their own learning.

### Sample of implementation

The chosen text is good for A2 English language proficiency. It mentions facts about cockroaches. This text brings authenticity to the English class and motivates the learners to continue the research when the lesson is over: *Cockroaches are insects that have lived on Earth for more than 320 million years. There are more than 3,500 different species, or types, of cockroach. Most live in forests in warm areas. However, some cockroaches live in warm, dark areas of houses, apartment and office buildings, airplanes, and ships. Cockroaches are among the most hated household pests. Cockroaches have a flat, oval body that is black or brown. For insects, they are quite large. The common American cockroach can grow to about 2 inches (5 centimeters) long. Like all insects, cockroaches have a hard shell called an exoskeleton. The exoskeleton protects their soft body parts. Cockroaches have long legs that allow them to run very fast. Many cockroaches also have wings. Cockroaches have well-developed senses. They have long antennae and compound eyes (eyes with many parts), which help them to hunt in near darkness. A pair of small hairs on their backside, called cerci, can sense the slightest movement. Cockroaches in the wild eat rotting plants and animals. In cities cockroaches hide in the daytime and come out at night to eat. They eat food scraps, paper, clothing, and dead insects. Sometimes the food they eat gives them a bad smell. Cockroaches also spread several human diseases* (credit: [cockroach - Kids | Britannica Kids | Homework Help](#))

In accordance with the goal of an English lesson, the teacher aims at training language skills. First, the teacher has to choose the active vocabulary to be remembered and trained. Further, some vocabulary and comprehension exercises should be chosen such as matching, multiple choice, fill-in, paraphrasing and many more. The phenomena-based approach integration starts 15 minutes later throughout the lesson. The next stage is questioning. A2 level learners are not always ready to ask questions. It is recommended to stimulate question creation by mind-mapping (Picture 2.). The collaborative classwork is performed in groups of three.

**Picture 2. Mind-map created via coggle.com**



*Possible questions:*

- What does the cockroach look like?
- Where do cockroaches live?

How do the cockroaches behave in different habitats?

The transition to the second stage of investigation is done by choosing the question to provide with an answer. The guided instruction should fortify the research skills. Here are some possible instructions for the worksheet to be given to groups.

The learners are given about ten minutes to fill in the worksheet (Picture 3.) and to speak on the results of the investigation. All the questions offer the opportunity for problem solving and creativity.

**Picture 3. Worksheet for documentation**

**SHEET (TEAM 1.)**

Names and Surnames: \_\_\_\_\_

**DRAW THE COCKROACH**

**Information about the INSECT (4 facts):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**Answer the selected question**

**Use the WORDS in bold (active vocabulary selected by the teacher) and tell why the insect is important for the world. Could you do it in a creative way?**

The aim of the next stage is to help learners to learn how to evaluate. The essence is to peer assess the modest investigation of the colleagues via the shared worksheet (Picture 4.). Documentation is an indispensable part of the created experience. The teacher's role is to guide the pupils throughout the investigation. The assessment is staged too.

In both worksheets, the last assignment represents the connector between the language skills and the other soft skills trained. The active vocabulary is required to be used when expanding on the information about cockroaches.

**Picture 4. Assessment sheet**

**ASSESSMENT SHEET (TEAM 1.)**

Names and Surnames: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE THE PICTURE MADE BY THE TEAM**

**Mention the facts that you remember (4 facts):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

**What associations do you make with the cockroach?**

**Use the words in bold to foretell the future of the cockroach**

## Conclusion

Education all around the world has been reframed to satisfy the needs of a new generation of learners. Experience is important and it stands at the basis of any achievement. In such a way, the lessons derived from experiential learning stimulate the process of drawing conclusions, making associations, and systematic satisfaction. The main aim of teaching is to

create autonomous satisfied learners, who are able to take responsibility of their knowledge and individualize their experiences to obtain maximum benefit. In this respect, phenomena-based learning is regarded as a wonderful way to teach a new generation of youth in the reframed society. The lessons that follow these concepts provide learners with knowledge through the transformation of experience and expose them to real life in the tiny school environment.

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#### SEMANTIC PECULIARITIES IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH PHRASAL VERBS INTO ROMANIAN BASED ON THE NOVEL "JANE EYRE" BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE

#### PARTICULARITĂȚI SEMANTICE ÎN TRADUCEREA VERBELOR FRAZELOGICE ENGLEZEȘTI ÎN ROMÂNĂ BAZATE PE ANALIZA ROMANULUI "JANE EYRE" DE CHARLOTTE BRONTE

*Oxana Popa, master în filologie,  
Oxana Golubovschi, dr., conf. univ.  
UPS „Ion Creangă” din Chișinău*

*Oxana Popa, master in philology  
Oxana Golubovschi, PhD, Associate Professor,  
SPU "Ion Creanga", Chisinau  
ORCID: 0000-0003-4759-171X*

**CZU: 811.111'25**

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#### Rezumat

Deoarece, un număr mare de expresii fixe, cum ar fi verbele frazeologice, intră zilnic în vocabularul limbii engleze, acest articol își îndreaptă întreaga atenție către descoperirea celor mai des întâlnite particularități semantice care pot apărea în procesul de traducere a acestora în limba română. În același timp, articolul dat oferă o imagine de ansamblu asupra principalelor instrumente de traducere, cum ar fi strategiile și metodele de traducere. Acest articol se proclamă util și interesant de a fi studiat atât de către studenți cât și de către traducători, deoarece dificultățile semantice sunt caracteristice nu doar pentru începători, dar și pentru cei cu experiență profesională.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** verbe frazeologice, caracter idiomatic, natură polisemantică, strategii și metode de traducere, particularități semantic, LS (limba sursă), LȚ (limba țintă).

#### Abstract

As a great number of fixed phrases, such as phrasal verbs enter the English lexicon every day, this article is focused on finding out the most frequent semantic peculiarities which may appear in the process of translating