

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHENOMENOLOGY AND PHENOMENON BASED APPROACH IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract:

Phenomenon based teaching is an innovative pedagogical approach that emphasizes experiential learning through real-world phenomena. It encourages students to actively engage in the learning process by immersing themselves in authentic, contextualized scenarios. By integrating technology, PBL offers unique opportunities to enhance learning as well teaching by providing dynamic auditory experiences and tailored feedback.

Key words: problem-based, phenomenology, teaching process, real-life situations, authentic, holistic

doi: <https://doi.org/10.2024/d9hhe423>

Introduction

The field of foreign language teaching has seen a shift towards a more holistic and immersive approach in recent years. One of the key pillars of this approach is phenomenology and a phenomenon-based approach, which focuses on the experiential and perceptual aspects of language learning. This approach is gaining traction as it places the learner at the center of the learning process and emphasizes the importance of the learner's experience and interaction with the language

Phenomenology, a philosophical approach that originated in the early 20th century, seeks to understand and describe the structures of conscious experience. In the context of language learning, phenomenology emphasizes the learner's direct experience of the language and the meaning-making process involved. This means that language learning is not just about the acquisition of grammar rules and vocabulary, but also about the learner's personal experiences, emotions, and perceptions of the language.

Deeper understanding of phenomenon-based approach

A phenomenon-based approach, on the other hand, focuses on the exploration and understanding of real-life situations and events as a starting point for language learning. Instead of starting with abstract grammar concepts, learners are encouraged to engage with authentic materials and situations, such as videos, texts, and conversations, that are relevant to their lives and interests. This approach allows learners to see the language in action and to develop a more natural and intuitive understanding of its use.

In "How to create the school of the future: revolutionary thinking and design from Finland," Mattila and Silander (2015) develop their thinking on

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phenomenon-based teaching and learning within the context of digital pedagogy. Silander (2015a, p. 16) argues that holistic real-world phenomena help initiate learning, provided they “are studied as complete entities, in their real context, and the information and skills related to them are studied by crossing the boundaries between subjects.” Examples of phenomena can include such topics as climate change, the European Union, media and technology, water or energy. A phenomenon is thus seen as:

- » An authentic object of observation.
- » A systemic framework for the things to be learned (systemic model).
- » A metaphorical framework for the things to be learned (analogous model).
- » A motivating “base” for attaching the things to be learned (Silander, 2015a, p. 18).

Phenomenon-based learning starts with observation of a phenomenon from different points of view. Silander (2015b) argues that phenomenon-based learning consists of five dimensions: holist city, authenticity, contextuality, problem-based inquiry learning and learning process. Depending on how the specific approach is implemented in a classroom, the results can range from a superficial study of the phenomena with limited evidence to a more advanced application of learning. In its advanced potential, holist city refers to the multidisciplinary of phenome- non-based learning, which is not integrated in traditional school subjects but rather focuses on a systematic, comprehensive exploration of current and actual events in the real world. Authenticity implies the use of methods, tools and materials, which are necessary in real-world situations to solve problems that are relevant to students’ lives and significant in the community. Theories and information have an immediate utility value, while experts and professionals from various fields are included in the learning community and learners are encouraged to take part in real expert culture and practices. A real environment, rather than a traditional classroom, is considered the authentic learning environment.

The third dimension, contextuality, refers to learning of phenomena as systemic entities.

The importance of phenomenology and phenomenon-based approach with several authentic reasons.

So, why is a phenomenology and phenomenon-based approach so important in foreign language teaching? One of the main reasons is that it places the learner at the center of the learning process. By focusing on the learner's experiences and perceptions, teachers can tailor their approach to the individual needs and interests of their students, making the learning process more engaging and effective. This approach also encourages a deeper and more meaningful connection to the language, as learners are able to see its relevance and applicability in their daily lives.

Furthermore, a phenomenon-based approach encourages a more authentic and communicative use of the language. By starting with real-life situations and events, learners are exposed to the language in context, allowing them to develop a more natural and fluent use of the language. This approach also promotes a more holistic understanding of the language, as learners are able to see how different aspects of the language, such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, come together in real communication. At the same time, phenomenon-based teaching is embedded in a problem-solving environment, where the teacher starts by posing questions or problems and the students “build “answers together to questions or problems posed concerning a

phenomenon that interests them” (Silander, 2015 a, p. 17). Instructional goals are negotiated, not imposed, and evaluation serves as a self-analysis tool. Teaching is learner-centered, and theories to be learned by the students are connected to practical situations and phenomena. To address the study of phenomena in its holist city, team teaching with different subject teachers is considered an important way of working (Silander, 2015b). In the learning process, teachers are seen as facilitators of learning tasks, who use their expertise not necessarily to transmit facts but, more important, to encourage and guide students to deal with a problem student themselves have identified (Silander, 2015 b).

In conclusion, phenomenology and a phenomenon-based approach play a crucial role in the teaching of foreign languages by placing the learner at the center of the learning process and promoting a more authentic and communicative use of the language. By focusing on the learner's experiences and perceptions and starting with real-life situations and events, this approach can lead to a deeper and more meaningful connection to the language and a more natural and fluent use of the language. As the field of foreign language teaching continues to evolve, the importance of phenomenology and a phenomenon-based approach cannot be overstated. Also from a phenomenological perspective, learning as an experience implies that students must undergo experiences; they cannot construct them. And this situation gives rise to an element of uncertainty and ambivalence, which educators need to be prepared to encounter.

Last but not least, phenomenology argues for the responsive relation between teaching and learning, which in itself is a third dimension that comes into being through the common endeavors of teachers and students. This unity, overlooked by approaches that focus predominantly on teaching or predominantly on learning, is essential when the purpose is educational.

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