

**Tran Thi Hong Hanh  
Nguyen Pham Nguyet Linh  
Lecturers**

**School of foreign language - Thai Nguyen university**

## **ENHANCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AT THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY THROUGH THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING APPROACH**

**Abstract:** This study investigates the application of experiential learning in foreign language education at Thai Nguyen University as a strategic response to the increasing demand for practical language competence amid global integration and the ongoing digital transformation of the educational landscape. Anchored in established theoretical frameworks of foreign language pedagogy and experiential learning, alongside the author's professional teaching experience, the research critically analyzes the persistent limitations of conventional, teacher-centered instructional methods. In light of these shortcomings, the paper advocates for a pedagogical shift towards innovative, learner-centered approaches, with an emphasis on experiential learning as a core methodology. The findings underscore the effectiveness of this approach in promoting learner autonomy, advancing communicative and intercultural competencies, and enhancing the long-term retention of language skills.

**Key words:** *experiential learning, foreign language instruction, higher education, Thai Nguyen University, student-centered pedagogy.*

## **ОВЫШЕНИЕ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТИ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКАМ В ТХАЙНГУЕНСКОМ УНИВЕРСИТЕТЕ НА ОСНОВЕ ЭКСПЕРИЕНЦИАЛЬНОГО ПОДХОДА**

**Чан Тхи Хонг Хань  
Нгуен Фам Нгует Линь  
Магистры**

**Институт Иностранных языков  
при Тхайнгуенском университете  
Вьетнам, г. Тхайнгуен**

**Аннотация:** Настоящая статья посвящена изучению интеграции экспериментального подхода в преподавание иностранных языков в Тайнгуенском университете с целью удовлетворения растущих требований к практическому владению языками в условиях глобальной интеграции и цифровой трансформации образования. Основываясь на теоретических положениях методики преподавания иностранных языков, теории обучения через опыт, а также на собственном преподавательском опыте, авторы анализируют ограничения традиционных методов обучения и предлагают современные педагогические стратегии, в частности, использование экспериментального подхода. Результаты исследования показывают преимущества данного подхода в развитии автономности обучающихся, коммуникативных и межкультурных навыков, а также в долговременном усвоении языкового материала.

**Ключевые слова:** обучение через опыт, преподавание иностранных языков, высшее образование, Тайнгуенский университет, образовательные инновации, обучение, ориентированное на студента.

In the face of rapid global integration and the digital transformation of education, the role of foreign languages has become increasingly prominent in shaping the competencies and employability of graduates. Within this context, Vietnamese higher education institutions, including Thai Nguyen University, have acknowledged the need for effective language instruction. However, based on both classroom observations and institutional reports, we have found that many learners still face significant challenges in applying foreign language skills in real-world contexts. These shortcomings are partly attributed to the continued reliance on conventional teaching practices that emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical usage.

From our professional experience as foreign language lecturers, we have observed a pressing need to redefine instructional strategies in a way that promotes student engagement, autonomy, and real-life communication. Experiential learning—an approach that centers on learner participation in authentic, reflective, and active processes—offers a transformative potential in bridging this gap.

### **1. Theoretical Background: Experiential Learning in Language Education.**

Experiential learning, as conceptualized by David Kolb (1984), views learning as a cyclic process encompassing four stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. This cycle emphasizes

the importance of engaging learners not just cognitively, but emotionally and behaviorally through authentic experiences.

In the realm of foreign language education, experiential learning encourages students to apply linguistic knowledge in meaningful settings, such as role plays, field interviews, cultural immersion tasks, or collaborative projects. This approach aligns with the communicative and competency-based trends in modern pedagogy and provides a solid theoretical framework for our practical proposals.

## **2. Practical Benefits of Experiential Learning: Insights from Teaching Practice**

Through years of teaching at Thai Nguyen University, we have witnessed the transformative effect of experiential tasks on student learning outcomes. Based on our application of this approach, several pedagogical benefits have emerged:

- **Authentic Communication Practice:** Learners demonstrate increased fluency and confidence when engaging in activities situated in real-life contexts.
- **Higher Motivation and Active Participation:** Experiential tasks naturally stimulate curiosity and reduce passive learning behaviors.
- **Improved Knowledge Retention:** Learning through experience leads to deeper cognitive processing and long-term retention.
- **Holistic Skill Development:** Activities designed with an experiential approach foster critical thinking, collaboration, adaptability, and intercultural awareness.
- **Contextualized Language Use:** Exposure to cultural nuances deepens learners' understanding of language beyond grammar and vocabulary.

## **3. Current Challenges in Foreign Language Instruction at Thai Nguyen University**

Despite institutional support and ongoing curriculum reforms, our teaching experience reveals several persistent obstacles:

- **Pedagogical Inertia:** A segment of faculty members continues to use teacher-centered methods with limited communicative interaction.
- **Insufficient Language Practice Environments:** Opportunities for students to use the target language outside the classroom remain scarce.
- **Heterogeneous Proficiency Levels:** Variations in student backgrounds and learning readiness complicate lesson planning.
- **Resource Constraints:** Many instructional materials are outdated or lack relevance to contemporary communication needs.
- **Learner Motivation Gaps:** A portion of students demonstrates minimal intrinsic interest in language acquisition.

These issues highlight the necessity of adopting innovative strategies that address both cognitive and affective dimensions of language learning.

## **4. Strategic Recommendations for Experiential Language Teaching**

#### ***4.1. Curriculum and Material Design***

- Develop modular courses that explicitly embed experiential elements, such as workplace simulations or project-based communication tasks.
- Enrich learning resources with digital tools, multimedia content, and real-world scenarios.
- Assign performance-based projects that require language use in academic, community, or cross-cultural settings.
- Integrate cultural content using films, guest lectures, and intercultural exchanges.

#### ***4.2. Teaching Methodology Innovation***

- Offer continuous professional development in experiential pedagogy for faculty.
- Encourage instructors to act as facilitators rather than knowledge transmitters.
- Apply interactive methods such as:
  - Task-Based Learning
  - Project-Based Learning
  - Role-playing and Simulations
  - Gamification and Language Games
  - Immersive Technologies (e.g., VR/AR)

#### ***4.3. Creating Immersive Learning Environments***

- Establish English-speaking zones and student-led language clubs.
- Organize campus-wide events (e.g., English Days, debate contests).
- Promote independent learning through e-portfolios, blogs, and reflective journals.
- Strengthen international partnerships to facilitate student exchange and virtual interaction.

#### ***4.4. Competency-Based and Experiential Assessment***

- Employ diverse assessment modes, including presentations, interviews, and group discussions.
- Emphasize formative evaluation with regular, constructive feedback.
- Utilize rubrics that clarify performance expectations and support self-assessment.

#### **Conclusion**

Adopting an experiential learning approach in foreign language education is not merely a pedagogical trend—it is a necessity in cultivating adaptive, competent, and globally minded graduates. At Thai Nguyen University, our teaching experience affirms the positive impact of this approach on learner outcomes and engagement.

Nonetheless, the successful implementation of this strategy depends on systemic changes, including institutional support, faculty readiness, and learner empowerment. With a collaborative effort among educators, administrators, and students, experiential learning can become a cornerstone of quality education in the 21st century.

### **References:**

1. Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
2. Schank, Roger C. (1995), *What We Learn When We Learn by Doing*, Technical Report No. 60. Northwestern University, Institute for Learning Sciences.
3. Кизлевич Е.Е. (2020), *Образование взрослых в структуре непрерывного образования России. День работников сельского хозяйства и перерабатывающей промышленности*, Москва.
4. Поцикалова К.И. (2017), *Роль внутрифирменных учебных центров в эффективности деятельности организации*. Научно-методический электронный журнал «Концепт».
5. Nguyễn Thị Bình (Chủ biên, 2016), *Hệ giá trị – mục tiêu phát triển nhân cách người học của hệ thống giáo dục*, NXB Giáo dục Việt Nam, Hà Nội.
6. Nguyễn Thị Hằng (2014), *Định hướng hình thành năng lực tổ chức hoạt động trải nghiệm sáng tạo cho sinh viên sư phạm*, Tạp chí Khoa học, Trường Đại học Sư phạm Hà Nội.