

## ‘Effectiveness Of Using Realia In Teaching English Vocabulary For ESL Learners’

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**Abstract:** This paper entitled ‘Effectiveness of Using Realia in Teaching English Vocabulary for ESL Learners’. The researcher is interested to discuss the process of teaching English vocabulary to ESL learners because learning English vocabulary is very important for the second language learners at different academic levels. This paper deals with teaching English Vocabulary by using realia for ESL learners, to recognize the advantages and disadvantages of using real objects in teaching English vocabulary. Researcher realized that some suggestions and recommendations are needed to achieve better teaching and learning process. Researcher hopes this project will give benefit for everyone who cares in the field of ESL second language teaching and learning.

**Key words:** Realia, vocabulary; academic vocabulary and context.

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### I. Introduction

Visual aids have been classified as important components of the language classes over the years. They have been considered as useful tools for teachers of ESL in almost every trend of second language teaching. As a positive impact of visual materials that many universities have created catalogues of visual aids that trace the history of using visual literacy and visual education. In continuation, the researcher is providing a brief overview on the importance of visual aids particularly realia throughout. Most of the language teachers seem to agree that the use of visuals particularly real objects can enhance language teaching, as they help teachers to bring the real world into the classroom.

#### Significant of the study

Using realia in the EFL classroom serves to foster a more creative and active teaching and learning environment and promotes cultural understanding. Realia refers to the practice of using real, tangible things in the classroom to help students connect with English on different levels. It involves visual, tactile and functional methods for teaching ideas, concepts, vocabulary or grammar. It’s also extremely useful to help the students to grasp the cultural differences or learn practical skills.

#### Statement of the Problem

Statement of the problem based on the description of the study, the researcher would like to determine the problem of this study according to the following questions:

1. How does the implementation of realia improve Learners’ learning ability in ESL classrooms?
2. How is the improvement of the ESL learners’ learning ability after being taught through using realia?

#### Objectives of the study

- 1- To recognize the effective use of realia as technique for teaching English vocabulary for ESL learners.
- 2- To determine the impact of using realia on the ESL second language learner.
- 3- To identify the advantages of using realia in teaching English vocabulary for ESL classrooms.

#### Questions of the study

- 1- To what extent that using of realia is an efficient technique in teaching English vocabulary?
- 2- In what way does realia affect the motivation of ESL second language learner?
- 3- What are the advantages of using realia in teaching English vocabulary For ESL learners?

#### Hypotheses of the study

- 1- Realia is a very effective technique in teaching English vocabulary for ESL learners.
- 2- The appropriate use of realia in teaching vocabulary leads to good motivation among ESL learners.
- 3- Using of realia as a classroom technique for teaching vocabulary has a useful advantages.

### **Tools of data collection**

A questionnaire consists of 30 items has been design by the researcher for English language teachers who deal with teaching English for ESL learners classes.

### **Limitations of the study**

The current study is prepared for English language teachers at secondary school level in the academic year 2016 – 2017.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Definitions of Realia**

Realia is consisting of actual objects or items facsimiles which are used in the classroom as aid to facilitate language acquisition and production. Realia is an objects or activities used by teacher to demonstrate real life situations, objects that educators use to help students understand others cultures and real life circumstance, real things. Realia or real items are useful for teaching and learning in the classroom. Objects that are intrinsically interesting can provide a good starting point for a variety of language work and communication activities. Realia also make learning process more enjoyable. (Harmer: 2002: 140)

Realia refers to real objects, specimens or artifacts-not copies, models, or representation from a particular culture. Indeed, authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines. Catalogs, timetables, films are designed for use in real life situations not for use as instructional tools. Although not designed for instructional use, realia and other authentic materials. Including, non-print mass media, provide a wide range of printed and spoken messages that can be used as primary or secondary material in a foreign language classroom. Other examples include telephone books, tickets and radio and television broadcasts. Geltrich-Ludgate and Tovar (1987) give over seventy examples of realia with recommended uses for each item listed.

**Realia:** According to Nunan (1999) Realia is defined as “objects and teaching props from the world outside the classroom that are used for teaching and learning”. Under this statement, realia is considered as real objects, which are used to aid in practicing a new language, as a way to present meaningful examples from the real world. Along with this idea, the British Council site states that “realia refers to any real objects that used in the classroom to bring the class to life”. In this way, realia is seen as objects used as a way of teaching, considering it as examples or aids of a foreign language.

Richards and Platt (1998) regards realia as “actual objects and items which are brought into a classroom as examples or as aids to be talked or written about and used in language teaching such as: articles of clothing, kitchen utensils, items of food, etc.”, while Zukowsky and Faust (1997) contemplate it as “concrete objects and the paraphernalia of everyday life”, i.e., realia is understood as an infinite number of things from the real realm.

**Firstly:** Cancelas and Ouviaña (2003) mention that these concepts, realia and authentic materials, are dissimilar due to their various uses in the language classroom and especially, their ambiguous definitions. Furthermore, these two authors exemplify realia as a “tailor’s box which constitutes the means of easy use, minimal cost that does not need any kind of previous preparation”, because it includes a variety of resources, such as: toys, bags, pieces of clothing, photographs, maps, puzzles, menus, letters, magazines, timetables, and films

**Secondly:** Berwarld (1987) indicates that “Realia refers to real objects, specimens or artifacts – not copies, models or representations- from a particular culture. Indeed, authentic materials are designed for use in real life situations, not for used as instructional tools. Realia and other authentic materials provide a wide range of printed and spoken messages that can be used as primary or secondary material in a foreign language classroom”, by saying this, this author associates realia with a foreign culture jointly.

Realia is closely related to the Natural approach. Accordingly, realia comes to be indispensable for the effectiveness of language acquisition, because the implementation of these materials create a more natural setting, where the learner learn a foreign language, much like a child learns his native language in early stages. Considering this, through the use of realia, language acquisition is generated naturally, thus representing a paramount advantage.

### **Realia as a Methodological Tool**

Nowadays, for a great number of language teachers, “teaching” is not an easy task, especially for those who teach in EFL classrooms. Among the reasons that emerge from this statement are included: large classes, the English language is not deemed as a second language, students’ motivation towards the learning of English is not the best, and finally the techniques used by the teachers are not the most appropriate in relation to the students’ needs, that is to say, their learning styles, type of intelligence, social background, and disabilities are not considered as prominent elements, in some cases.

In point of fact, students learn more when information is presented in a variety of modes than when only a single mode is used. As maintained by Stice (1987), “students retain 10 percent of what they read, 26 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they say as they do something”. Under the results of these data, it can be deduced that the way how vocabulary is presented is regarded as crucial, therefore diverse techniques must be applied in order to promote the students’ involvement and engagement in it.

Oxford R. L. (1990) held that teachers should balance their teaching methods, somehow structuring the class so that all learning styles are simultaneously or at least sequentially accommodated, so as to achieve effective foreign language learning. Furthermore, to motivate students to learn, teachers may contextualize vocabulary in situations where students can relate to in terms of their personal experiences, rather than simply as more vocabulary to memorize. It can be assumed that by linking the students’ experiences with their own learning process guarantees an effective storage of newly learned vocabulary.

The following comparative chart shows some of the most common techniques that can be used with realia. This chart includes the name of the technique, the learner’s role, teacher’s role and the sort of materials used in each activity.

### III. Comparative Chart

**Table (1)**

<b>Technique</b>	<b>What do learners do?</b>	<b>What does the teacher do?</b>	<b>Materials used</b>
<b>Role-play</b>	Learners perform a situation with the aid of materials	Teacher creates a scenario, in which learners have to perform accordingly.	Materials promote and encourage communication in a real-like setting.
<b>Concentration</b>	Learners, instead of saying their own names, say the name of an object, which is given them.	Teacher gives any object to learners and waits for their answers.	Any object (such as: classroom objects or items of clothing)
<b>Drilling</b>	Sitting in a circle, learners pass on object to their classmate on their left. They say the name of the object, and then they pass the object to the next learner.	Teacher monitors how the students work on the activity.	Objects from everyday life, such as fruit, utensils or articles of clothing.

#### **The Advantages and Disadvantages of Realia**

One of the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language is the lack of innovatory materials, in fact; Domke establishes that “a solution to the scarcity of effective materials is the implementation of creative classroom activities that move beyond reliance on textbooks”. The implementation of real objects, in the foreign language, in accordance with the Department of Language and Cultural Equity, can “enliven a classroom, by using the senses to involve the audience in what is being presented. The learning is natural and not forced”. This idea agrees with the Natural approach conception, previously stated, in which the learners are presented and taught a foreign language in a more realistic way, i.e. there is nothing artificial or contrived about objects, by which young learners are taught in an authentic setting, all to be performed on the spot of the class. It can be deduced that the main asset of realia is that it makes the learning experience more memorable for the learner, because realia comes to be innovatory and unusual when it comes to language acquisition. According to Gairns and Redman (1986), there “are several techniques that favour the long-term retention of newly-learned vocabulary”. Indeed, realia is primarily included in a category of teaching techniques to present vocabulary, associated with “Visual techniques”. In accordance with Gower et al. (1995), when presenting new vocabulary, realia often “illustrates meaning more directly and quickly than through verbal explanation”, i.e., this technique gives the opportunity to cut down unnecessary teacher talking time, because it helps the students to understand the meaning of new language as well as to convey the meanings and context in a clearer way. Apart from that, Hunt & Beglar (1998) states that realia “can help learners because they not only hear the word but also receive visual reinforcement”. Taking into account visual aids, French (1983) states that “real objects are better than pictures whenever we have them in the classroom”, it is believed that when referring to real objects in the classroom, it makes allusion to windows, doors, walls, floors, desks, clocks, etc. This author promotes the idea that real objects are more accessible and cheaper than any other resource. Needless to say, French (1983) says “real objects attract the students’ attention and aid concentration: the latter could be supported by the idea that realia adds variety and interest to a lesson and helps to make associated language memorable.

### Selection and use of teaching aids

Teaching aids are the resources and equipment available to use in the classroom, as well as the resources that brought in the class. They include cassette recorders, CD players, videos and overhead projectors, visual aids can help learners understand the teacher him/ herself, aids are used by thinking carefully about the main aims and the subsidiary aims of a lesson, and then choosing the most appropriate ones. (Spratt: 2007: 119).

### Realia for powerful learning

Category	Realia	Uses
Household items	Eating utensils, kitchen appliances (from different cultures), miniatures such as household furniture, old-fashioned items no longer commonly seen	Active experiences, vocabulary development, role-playing, story reenactment, pre-reading activities, oral language practice, story problems in math
Food	Fruit, vegetables, unusual items unfamiliar to children; many plastic food items are available for classroom use	Sensory experiences, vocabulary development, acting out stories, grammar activities (singular plural)
Clothing	Different kinds of hats, gloves, sweaters, jackets, boots, any examples of ethnic clothing to support understanding	Vocabulary development, story reenactment, writing support, oral language practice
Literacy materials	Books, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedia, reference books, checkbooks, bank books	Role-play, vocabulary development, easy access for research, exposure
Flowers and plants	Examples of flowers and plants being studied or read about; unusual plants such as large sunflowers, pumpkins	Vocabulary development, sensory experiences, size comparisons
Animals	Classroom pets, house pets, farm and zoo animals, birds	Sensory experiences, vocabulary development

McCauley, D (1976).

### Some great ways to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by the use of regalia in the classroom:

#### 1. 5 o'clock tea

This is by far the best way to teach table manners, requests, or expressions related to ordering or serving tea, coffee, or any meal in a home setting. For the following dialogue:

- Would you like some tea?
- No, thank you.
- What would you like?
- I'd like some coffee, please.
- With milk and sugar?
- Just black coffee.

Simply bring a children's tea set (it's a lot easier to bring to class) complete with tea cups, saucers, spoons, teapot and/or coffee pot, sugar bowl, creamer, etc... and have students practice offering and serving each other coffee or tea. You may also choose to add cakes, pies, cookies, or anything that will make your 5 o'clock tea truly unforgettable.

#### 2. Eating out

Design and print out a simple menu with the food you'd like to teach including starters, main courses, and desserts. In small groups, have one student play the role of waiter and take orders, while the other students order their meals. Then have students switch roles. You may also include as many props as you'd like, like a full table setting to teach tableware vocabulary. Students may ask the waiter for a missing item like a spoon, fork, or napkin

#### 3. Location, location, location!

To teach prepositions of place take common classroom objects like pens, pencils, books, etc...and place them on or under desks, and around the classroom; then have students simply tell you where each item is, or take turns asking each other where their own personal items are. This also works great for teaching "this",

“that”, “these”, and “those”, as the perspective of having items near and far from you clearly illustrate the differences between the demonstrative pronouns.

#### **4. Asking for directions**

Get some real city maps from the local tourist office and give one to each pair of students. Have them take turns asking and giving directions to popular city sights.

#### **5. Tell me about your family**

Real family photos are great for not only learning about relationships but also physical descriptions. Have students bring one family photo each and describe family members. Students may also take turns asking classmates questions.

#### **6. Let's have a fashion show**

Children love to play dress up, and what a better way for them to learn items of clothing and colors than put them on and strut around the classroom to show off their unique style? Adult learners can also model the clothing they're wearing.

#### **7. Celebrate the holidays**

Learning English is not only about learning to speak in a foreign language. Students should learn about cultural elements as well. Special holidays like Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas offer unique learning opportunities. To teach students about Halloween, plan a celebration complete with pumpkin carving, costume contest, and typical games like bobbing for apples. Give your students the chance to experience the holidays and not just read about them.

#### **8. The Job Interview**

Do you have students who will be applying for jobs in English? Try to get your hands on some real job applications and have students practice filling them out in class. You may also conduct job interviews using real life interview questions. This type of practice will not only teach them the vocabulary they should know, it will give students the boost of confidence they need.

### **IV. Methodology**

This study entitled “Effectiveness of Using Realia in Teaching English Vocabulary for ESL Learners”. The following chapter will be devoted to the methodology that followed to investigate the collected data; the research conductor has adopted the descriptive method, because it has great value in providing facts on which professional judgment can be based. The research conductor identified the hypothesis of the research and selected the data instrument which is represented in a questionnaire; the data has been collected, analyzed and discussed.

#### **Population of the study**

The research conductor attempts to generalize the results of the study through a group of teachers of English language at the secondary school level. The population number was [41] teacher, they are males and females. All of them are teaching English language at secondary schools level in the academic year 2017-2018.

#### **Sample**

The sample of this study is represented by [41] English language teachers, who teach at different schools and their experience range from (1–20) years and more, however, some of them are bachelor holders and others have Diploma and Master Degree in ELT.

#### **Tools of Data collection**

##### **Questionnaire**

The designed questionnaire consists [30] items with five options [agree-disagree-neutral-strongly agree-strongly disagree], it has been designed to cover three dimensions. The items 1-10 are designed to measure the importance of realia in English language teaching. The items 11-20 are designed to determine the impact of realia on the (ESL) second language learner. The items 21-30 are devoted to identify the advantages of realia in teaching English vocabulary for ESL classrooms. Moreover, the prepared questionnaire ask the teachers to write their [gender – qualifications – graduating college – experience years] to enrich the statistical analysis of the study.

### **The Questionnaire Validity**

Validity is the most important quality to be considered in the development, interpretations and the use of the language test. Therefore, to ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, certain procedures were followed and the prepared version of the questionnaire presented to specialize people in the field of teaching English for ESL learners, second the questionnaire modified in regard of wording, the number of items and restatement of certain items. Finally the questionnaire collected, analyzed, scored and tabulated.

### **The Questionnaire Reliability**

Individuals' performance may be affected by different factors in testing conditions such as fatigue, anxiety and carelessness, thus, they may obtain scores, which are inconsistent from one occasion to the next. Reliable questionnaire should have the same scores if it is given in a future time to the same group of subjects.

### **Procedures**

Certain procedures were followed to prepare the questionnaire. First, the prepared version of the questionnaire is presented to experts' people who have long experience in the field of ELT. Second, this questionnaire which consists of different items were designed and used according to the nature and contents. Then, it is distributed among English language teachers at secondary school level who teach at different schools, and it is constructed through the following steps:

The proposed questionnaire is designed first.

The questionnaire is presented to experts' people to check face validity.

The corrections are made according to the recommendations of those people.

The questionnaire consists five options for each item, so a respondent has to tick the appropriate one [agree-disagree-neither-strongly agree-strongly disagree].

The questionnaire is distributed among [41] teacher of English at secondary school level.

Finally, the questionnaire is collected analyzed and statistically tabulated.

## **V. Data Analysis and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The following chapter will be devoted to present, analyze and discuss the results of the collected data using the questionnaire as a tool for data collection. The results of the presented questionnaire will be discussed and interpreted in details. The following tables are a general statistics for English language teachers who teach English language at different schools with different qualifications.

### **Are there any differences for the benefit of gender?**

To know that, the researcher used a test for the differences between the two groups and the results showed that there is no statistical significance because the calculated morale level is greater than the standard level of 0.05. Therefore, there are no differences in respondents' responses.

**Table 1:** T- test of gender statistic

Gender	No.	Mean	Standard deviation	T-Value	Degree of freedom	Morale level	Conclusion
Male	35	134.6	10.83	0.74	36	0.47	Not – sig
Female	6	131.00	13.04				

### **Are there any differences to support to the scientific qualification?**

In order to know that, the mono- variance analysis was used "Anova" and found that there are no differences because the level of calculated morale 73. That means it is greater than the standard level of the standard 05. Therefore, there are no differences to support the scientific qualification.

**Table 2:** T- test of scientific qualification statistic

Source	Squs. Total	Degree of freedom	Squs. Medium	F. average	Morale level	Conclusion
Between squs.	79,42	2	39.71	.91	.74	Not – sig
Inside squs.	4828.18	38	127.06			
Total	4907.61	40				

### **Are there any differences to support experience?**

To find that the mono- variance analysis was used "Anova" and found that there are some differences because the level of the calculated morale is 02. (i-e was less than the standard level of significance 05).

Therefore, there are some differences in experiences after using “Duncan” post analysis and the significance was for the benefit of 20 years’ experience.

**Table 2:** T- test of experience statistic

Source	Squs. Total	Degree of freedom	Squs. Medium	F. average	Morale level	Conclusion
Between squs.	1199.99	3	399.99	3.99	.02	Sig. for the benefit of more than 20 years
Inside squs.	3707.62	37	100.02			
Total	4907.61	40				

**Are there any differences to support the type of college?**

To know this, a test was used for the difference between the two groups. The researcher found that there is statistical significance because the level of calculated morale 02. That means it is less than the standard level of 05. So that, there are some differences in the responses of respondents attributed to the type of college for the benefit of colleges of education.

**Table 2:** T- test for the type of college statistic

College	No.	Mean	Standard deviation	T-Value	Degree of freedom	Morale level	Conclusion
Education	29	136.62	11.22	2.40	39	.02	Sig. for the benefit of Education Colleges
Arts	12	128.00	8.26				

**Reality of the questionnaire:**

To recognize that, a mono-group tests was used and the results showed that, there was a statistical significance because the calculated morale (.000) is below the standard level (05.) which means respondents' responses were for the benefit of strongly agree responses.

**Table 2:** T- test of one group statistic

Number	Hypothesize mean	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T-Value	Degree of freedom	Morale level	Conclusion
41	90	134.10	11.08	25.49	40	.000	Sig. for Strongly agree responses

**VI. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The following chapter will be devoted to the summary for the whole study, findings, conclusion and recommendations.

**Summary**

The questionnaireis used as an effective toolto collect the required data. The sample is taken systematically from forty one English language teachers who teach English language at Secondary school level. Moreover, different statistical methods were used and relevant data was collected from the study sample. Finally, the questionnaire was constructed from three dimensions with thirty items concerning various aspects of the study. Thus, the data was discussed analyzed and the main findings were carried out.

The study also discussed the main factors that participated in the teachers’ performance such as the absent of visual aids particularly realia in teaching process, and the absence of using realia in teaching English vocabulary for ESL classrooms

**The main findings**

1. The success of English lesson depends on the teacher’s knowledge about the different types of teaching aids.
- 2- The proper use of realia as an efficient visual aid helps teachers to achieve efficient learning.
3. The appropriate use of realia in ESL classroom serves to create an active teaching environment
4. The using of realia helps to create a link between the objects and the words or phrases they represent.
5. The use of real objects encourages students to learn texts with interest, and understand the abstract ideas in the text.

### **Recommendations**

- 1- The language teachers should understand the nature of visual aids during preparing and usage of visual aids.
- 2- The language teacher should be familiar with the different types of teaching aids and their utilizations.
- 3- The language teacher must use the teaching aids intelligently; otherwise they become useless and harmful.
- 4- The language teacher must know the scientific procedures and techniques to improve teaching and learning process through visual aids usage.
- 5- The language teacher must know how to choose the appropriate aid that best serves his teaching purpose.

### **VII. Conclusion**

The use of realia in the classroom supports English learners in a wide variety of ways. Introducing real objects that can be seen, felt, and manipulated is a powerful way to connect vocabulary to real life. The use of realia is motivating to students because they can actually use the real objects in the way in which they are intended to be used. Realia introduces an authentic hands-on nature to many lessons. The use of real objects conveys meaning in a way that no photograph or illustration can. The study used a questionnaire consisting of thirty statements as a tool to measure three dimensions so as to assess the effective use of realia to teach English vocabulary. The impact and disadvantages in teaching vocabulary for (ESL) learner. Finally, the research conductor has recommended the above suggestions to serve the field of English language teaching at the secondary school level.

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