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# Realia --- A source of motivation in second language learning

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching second language is one of the most abstruse tasks for the teachers to confine the involvement of the students and additionally motivate them so that they may backlog knowledge in vigorous learning milieu. The educational researchers and the educators are probing different techniques and resources which may contribute to the effectual erudition. They are incessantly exploring certain pedagogical and audited strategies so that they can maximize the intellect of the learners. In this era of educational technology “Realia” is one of the important teaching aid that is being used by teachers to motivate their students.

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### Introduction

#### Significance of Realia

According to Longman Dictionary of language teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992) realia means, “Actual objects and items which are brought into classroom as examples or as aids to be talked or written about and used in teaching”

Robertson Dickens and Hofmann in their article, “Bringing the Real World into the Classroom” (1995), say that realia is, “something which has a purpose outside of the ESL classroom and can be brought into the classroom”

Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1994) explains realia as the objects of any origin used to illustrate vocabulary and structure in the L2.

According to Zukowski-Faustia (1997) realia is “concrete objects and the paraphernalia of everyday life”. In 2008, Admin describes realia in these words:

“Realia in EFL terms refers to any real objects we use in the classroom to bring the sclass to life”.

And Munford (1995) has described realia as everyday articles that enfold us by linking them to language and beholding them in new ways.

In a nutshell, it can be said that realia means real life objects, which are taken to the class rooms by the educator to develop students’ understanding of the targeted topic or language successfully.

#### Data Analysis

The psychologists have proved that the maximum attention span of an adult learner is 20 minutes. To sustain the attention and interest of the learners, various learning stimuli are necessary and realia seems to be an effective one. Teaching is a communication and in a successful communication there are three important aspects: the person who is delivering a message, the message and finally the receiver. This can be represented graphically as:

Speaker----- Message -----Receiver

For effective communication the message must be decoded rightly, if not, the message becomes a type of riddle for the learner. According to Asokhia (2005):

Meaning does not exist in isolation or in the words but in the context which the words are used. L2 users/learners must be well exposed to usages of words through teaching aids as guides

to learning grammar, concepts, spellings and even pronunciation.”

So, if a learner just listens about an unknown thing it seems obvious that he will use his imagination to build its image according to his understanding. It may be accurate or it may lead him to a misconception. But if an instructor shows him a thing as well as lend him that thing in his hand, he will surely not only learn about it but also feel it and will be able to relate it with his daily life. Doing so, it enables the learner to get firsthand knowledge of the thing or topic under consideration. It not only proves to be the best utilization of the simple objects for example coins, tickets, envelops, newspapers, flowers etc, but also motivates the students by providing the three dimensional objects to see as well as feel them. Thus, the mind of the learner is stimulated and they become able to involve their senses along with their creativity. Meanwhile, it also saves time and facilitates the teachers by saving them from providing the lengthy details and drawing funny pictures on the board. As a result, the students are motivated to learn faster and achieve higher language proficiency. One seems to be thankful to certain teaching aids like realia for not only the achievements of the determined learning goals but with a good deal of understanding the crux of the targeted concepts of the language. In Winneba District (2007-2008)), a survey sample of teachers with numerous years of teaching experience of between (03) and twenty-five (25) years, assert that learning aids consolidate pedagogy. These learning aids attenuate their talk and chalk method. According to Tenton Lakota:

Tell me and I will forget,  
Show me and I will learn,  
Involve me and I will understand.

It is the biggest contribution of realia that it involves its learners and gives them firsthand knowledge. They not only learn the things but also understand them by doing with their own hands.

#### Literature Review

A Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1 536) intimidated cramming as a technique of studying and endorsed that children must learn through the help of pictures or illustration.

John Amos Comenius (1592-1670) compiled a book named as **Orbis Sensulium Pictus** (The world of Sense Objects) and he enriched it with almost 150 depictions on different facets of daily life. The book is regarded as the initiative towards illustrated textbook for childhood education. This book enjoyed the prestigious status as extensively promoted and was utilized in almost every centre of childhood education in all over the world. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and other scholars emphasised the requirement of depiction and activities. Rousseau abandoned the incorporation of words through teachers and he emphasised 'things'. He suggested that the pedagogies utilized for childhood education should be aimed to their actual inquisitiveness.

During the first quarter of the 20th century, Nelson I. Greene used the term 'Visual Education'. Eric Ashby (1967) explored four revolutions in education:

- i) education which is acquired from home to school,
- ii) written word is considered as means of education,
- iii) development of publishing and utility of books and
- iv) the use of telecommunication department as the fourth revolution incorporated in education.

Research done by Cobun described that

- The sense of Taste causes 1 Percent of learning
- 1.5 Percent is resulted to learn from the sense of Touch
- 3.5 Percent of what is learnt is from the sense of Smell
- 11 Percent of what is learnt from the sense of hearing
- 83 Percent of what is learnt is from the sense of sight

So, by keeping an eye on the above mentioned theories, one can conclude that realia is the outcome of the modern theories about teaching the children with the help of different audio-visual aids. It enables a child to see the objects with his very eyes and avoid the vagueness of mind that may block the understanding of a concept. It not only lends the learners the tongue to taste but the hands to touch, nose to smell, ear to hear and eyes to see the subject matter.

#### Methodology

The teaching aids we need may be closer than we think. Classroom aides are all around us, but sometimes we need to think about the best way to choose and use an object. Here are some of the examples of using realia on some of the topics included in the syllabus of the primary level. (Reference book: English Language Learning Skills by Nickelson Andrews, Paramount Publisher, 2011)

- For teaching the "News Headlines", the newspaper can be taken and shown to the class.
- The topic "Advertisement" can be taught with the help of bringing any real life advertisement to the students.
- A teacher can teach "Preposition" by bringing a tie in the class and by giving them a demonstration about how to tie it by giving and showing direction, focusing on the practical implication of the use of preposition. The toy animals can also be used to tell the students about the use of appropriate preposition related to the position.
- If an instructor wants to tell the students about the wild life, the students can be taken to the field trip to a zoo.
- The commonly used envelopes and tickets can be used while talking about the letter writing and GPO.
- When an instructor talks about any foreign country, he can use its flag or its currency as a teaching aid.
- A rubber band can be used to teach the students about the long syllables and the short syllables, by stretching it on a greater or lesser degree.

- A seashell can be brought to the class to teach the students the poem, "Seashell".

All the examples mentioned above, are the forms of Realia. These are the simple initiatives ideas. The vast world of creativity and novel ideas are yet to be explored and brought in the class rooms of young learners so that they may bring their learning places very close to their daily lives.

#### Tentative Instrument:

- The researcher will take the interview of the head of the department of English and three section heads (Garrison Academy). Different classes would be observed where different concepts would be taught with the help of realia. A questionnaire will be designed to be filled by the teachers.

#### Sampling:

The research will be done on middle level. The English lessons will be observed. The sample size would be 120 students (4sections) of the same level. They are homogeneous and they are organized in their sections on the basis of their last session's annual result. So, all of them are mix ability groups. The questionnaire will be filled by 30 teachers including three section heads and one head of the department.

#### Results And Conclusion

30% teachers viewed the first statement (a) as True that using realia is a student/ learner-centered approach. 30% teachers agreed that when the teachers use realia it emphasizes conceptual clarity over cramming. 30% teachers accepted that use of realia emphasizes communication in second language learning and realia relies heavily on not only looking at the things but also feelings as well as experiences the targeted objects or subject matter. 30% teachers viewed that teaching with the help of realia requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English and special and expensive objects to be taken in the class is not true at all.

30% teachers agreed that the use of realia gives the learners a chance to relate their learning environment to their daily lives is true. 4% teachers considered that using realia in the classroom requires higher knowledge of the target language culture. 30% teachers estimated that it is preferable to show the real life objects to the learners instead of giving them the lengthy details. 30% teachers believe that some cheap common related things can be used to show the students to develop their understanding of the relevant topic. 30% teachers showed willingness in saying that the teacher can maximize the understanding of the learners by using certain A/V aids as realia.

Consequently, the experienced teachers have found realia as an effective source of motivating the learners and proved that realia does not always require high proficiency knowledge of targeted language culture and expensive objects.

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**Lahore Leads University  
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Respected Participant,

This questionnaire has been developed based on the research topic, "Realia---A Source of Motivation in English language learning. It is purely a research based activity. All the information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. Please read the questionnaire carefully and fill it according to your own views. We just want to have your opinions and cooperation.

Thank you,

Researcher: Noor Fatima

Instructor: Madam Shumaila Ahmad

**Questionnaire**

**Name of the Institute:** ----- **Teaching**

**experience:** -----years ----- months

(Please read the statements below and mark one.)

a. Using realia is a student/learner-centered approach.

(i) True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

b. When the teachers use realia it emphasizes conceptual clarity over cramming.

(i)True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

c. The use of realia emphasizes communication in a second language learning.

(i) True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

d. Realia relies heavily on not only looking at the things but also feeling as well as experiencing the targeted objects or subject matter.

(i) True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

e. Teaching with the help of realia requires teachers to have a high proficiency in English and special and expensive objects to be taken in the class.

(i)True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

f. The use of realia gives the learners a chance to relate their learning environment to their daily lives.

(i)True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

g. Using realia in the classrooms requires higher knowledge of the target language culture.

(i) True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

h. It is preferable to show the real life objects to the learners instead of giving them the long and lengthy details.

(i)True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

i. Some cheap common lesson related things can be used to show the students to develop their understanding of the relevant topic.

(i) True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know

j. The teacher can maximize the understanding of the learners by using certain A/V aids as realia.

(i)True (ii) Not True (iii) Don't know