THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REALIA IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract. This article explores the effectiveness of using realia in teaching English to young learners. Realia, defined as real-life objects used in classroom instruction, is believed to enhance students' engagement and comprehension. The paper examines how realia supports vocabulary acquisition, improves motivation, and facilitates meaningful learning. The findings suggest that incorporating real objects into lessons significantly benefits young learners by making language learning more interactive and context-based.

Keywords: realia, young learners, English language teaching, vocabulary acquisition, interactive learning, classroom techniques.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada kichik yoshdagi o'quvchilarga ingliz tilini o'qitishda realiyalardan (realia) foydalanishning samaradorligi tadqiq etiladi. Realiya — dars jarayonida qo'llaniladigan hayotiy, real ob'ektlar bo'lib, ular talabalarning darsga jalb qilinishini va mavzuni tushunish darajasini oshiradi deb hisoblanadi. Maqolada realiyalar lug'at boyligini oshirishni qanday qo'llab-quvvatlashi, motivatsiyani yaxshilashi va mazmunli ta'lim olishga qanday ko'maklashishi ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, darslarga real narsalarni jalb qilish til o'rganishni interfaol va kontekstga asoslangan holga keltirish orqali kichik yoshdagi o'quvchilarga sezilarli foyda keltiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: realiya, kichik yoshdagi o'quvchilar, ingliz tili o'qitish, lug'at boyligini oshirish, interfaol ta'lim, auditoriya texnikasi.

Аннотация: В данной статье исследуется эффективность использования реалий (realia) в обучении английскому языку детей младшего возраста. Реалии, определяемые как предметы реальной жизни, используемые в классном обучении, способствуют повышению вовлеченности и понимания учащихся. В работе рассматривается, как использование реалий поддерживает усвоение лексики, повышает мотивацию и способствует осмысленному обучению. Результаты исследования показывают, что включение реальных предметов в уроки приносит значительную пользу младшим школьникам, делая изучение языка более интерактивным и контекстно-ориентированным.

Ключевые слова: реалии, младшие школьники, преподавание английского языка, усвоение лексики, интерактивное обучение, методики работы в классе.

Teaching English to young learners requires engaging, meaningful, and age-appropriate methods. Traditional teaching approaches that rely heavily on textbooks and abstract explanations often fail to capture children's attention or support long-term retention. Young learners tend to learn best through concrete experiences, visual aids,

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19642350

and active participation. Therefore, educators increasingly seek innovative strategies to make language learning more effective and enjoyable.

One such strategy is the use of realia, which refers to real objects brought into the classroom to facilitate learning. Realia can include everyday items such as fruits, toys, clothing, or classroom tools. By connecting language to tangible objects, teachers create a more immersive and authentic learning environment. This paper aims to analyze the effectiveness of realia in teaching English to young learners, focusing on its impact on motivation, comprehension, and vocabulary development.

The use of realia in teaching English to young learners provides a powerful multisensory learning experience that aligns closely with how children naturally acquire knowledge. Young learners are typically in the early stages of cognitive development, where concrete operational thinking dominates. This means they understand concepts better when they are directly linked to physical objects and real-life experiences. By incorporating realia into the classroom, teachers create opportunities for students to engage visually, physically, and emotionally with the learning material. For instance, when teaching vocabulary related to food, presenting actual fruits or snacks allows learners not only to see the object but also to touch, smell, and sometimes taste it. Such sensory involvement strengthens memory retention and deepens understanding, making learning more effective than purely verbal instruction.

In addition to enhancing comprehension, realia plays a crucial role in facilitating vocabulary acquisition among young learners. Vocabulary is a fundamental component of language learning, and its development requires repeated exposure and meaningful context. Realia provides both. When learners encounter new words alongside real objects, they are able to establish direct associations between the word and its meaning without relying heavily on translation into their native language. This supports more natural language acquisition and encourages learners to think in English. Furthermore, repeated interaction with real objects during different classroom activities reinforces lexical items and promotes long-term retention. For example, using classroom objects such as pencils, books, or bags in daily instructions helps students internalize commonly used vocabulary through constant exposure.[1]

Another important advantage of using realia is its positive impact on learner motivation and engagement. Young learners often have limited attention spans and may quickly lose interest in traditional, text-based instruction. Realia introduces an element of novelty and excitement into the classroom, capturing students' attention and sustaining their interest. When children are given the opportunity to interact with tangible objects, learning becomes more like play than formal study. This playful atmosphere reduces anxiety and creates a supportive environment where students feel more confident to participate. Activities such as role-playing with real objects, guessing games, or describing items encourage active involvement and foster a sense of curiosity. As a result, learners are more willing to use English spontaneously and take risks in communication.[2]

Moreover, realia supports the development of communicative competence by encouraging authentic language use. One of the primary goals of modern language teaching is to enable learners to use language meaningfully in real-life situations. Realia helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication. Instead of practicing isolated vocabulary or grammar structures, students use language in context to describe objects, express preferences, ask questions, and give instructions.

For example, a simple activity involving clothing items can lead to meaningful exchanges such as describing what someone is wearing or discussing favorite outfits. These interactions promote not only linguistic competence but also pragmatic and social skills, which are essential for effective communication.

In addition, realia can support differentiated instruction and cater to diverse learning styles. Not all learners process information in the same way; some are visual learners, while others benefit more from tactile or kinesthetic experiences. Realia addresses this diversity by providing multiple entry points to understanding. Visual learners benefit from seeing the object, while kinesthetic learners gain from handling and manipulating it.[3] This inclusive approach ensures that more students can engage successfully with the lesson, thereby improving overall learning outcomes. It also allows teachers to design varied and flexible activities that accommodate individual differences within the classroom.

Despite its many advantages, the use of realia is not without challenges. One of the primary difficulties is the practical aspect of sourcing and managing materials. Teachers may find it time-consuming to collect appropriate objects for each lesson, particularly when dealing with abstract topics such as emotions or complex concepts.

Additionally, classroom management can become more demanding when students are excited or distracted by the presence of real objects. There is also the issue of storage and organization, especially in classrooms with limited space. However, these challenges can be addressed through careful planning, creativity, and the use of substitutes such as pictures or models when real objects are not available.[4]

Furthermore, it is important for teachers to use realia purposefully rather than as a mere decorative element. The effectiveness of realia depends largely on how it is integrated into the lesson. Teachers need to design activities that actively involve students in using the objects to practice language skills. Simply showing an object without meaningful interaction may not lead to significant learning outcomes. Therefore, pedagogical planning and clear learning objectives are essential to maximize the benefits of realia in the classroom.[5]

In conclusion, realia is a highly effective tool in teaching English to young learners. It enhances engagement, improves vocabulary acquisition, and promotes meaningful communication. By providing concrete and interactive learning experiences, realia helps bridge the gap between language and real-life context. Although there are some practical challenges in its implementation, the benefits outweigh the limitations. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to incorporate realia into their teaching practices to create a more dynamic and effective language learning environment.

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