USING REALIA TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE SKILLS OF TEENAGERS AND ADULT LEARNERS IN ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract. This article examines the role of realia in improving language skills among teenagers and adult learners in ESL classrooms. Realia, defined as the use of real-life objects in teaching, provides contextualized and meaningful learning experiences. The study highlights how realia enhances speaking, listening, vocabulary acquisition, and learner engagement. The findings suggest that realia is an effective instructional tool not only for young learners but also for older students, as it promotes practical communication and increases motivation in language learning environments.

Keywords: realia, ESL, teenagers, adult learners, communicative competence, vocabulary development, language skills.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola ESL (ingliz tili ikkinchi til sifatida) darslarida o'smirlar va kattalar o'rtasida til ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda realiyalarning (real narsa va buyumlarning) o'rnini o'rganadi. Realiya o'qitishda hayotiy ob'ektlardan foydalanish deb ta'riflanadi va u kontekstual hamda mazmunli o'rganish tajribasini ta'minlaydi. Tadqiqotda realiyalar nutq so'zlash, tinglab tushunish, lug'at boyligini oshirish va o'quvchilar faolligini qanday kuchaytirishi yoritib berilgan. Topilmalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, realiya nafaqat yosh o'quvchilar, balki kattalar uchun ham samarali o'quv vositasi bo'lib xizmat qiladi, chunki u amaliy muloqotni rag'batlantiradi va til o'rganish muhitida motivatsiyani oshiradi.

Tayanch so'zlar: realiya, ESL, o'smirlar, katta yoshli o'quvchilar, kommunikativ kompetensiya, lug'at boyligini oshirish, til ko'nikmalari.

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается роль реалий в улучшении языковых навыков у подростков и взрослых учащихся в классах ESL (английский как второй язык). Реалия, определяемая как использование предметов реальной жизни в обучении, обеспечивает контекстуализированный и значимый учебный опыт. В исследовании подчеркивается, как использование реалий улучшает навыки говорения, аудирования, усвоение лексики и вовлеченность учащихся. Результаты показывают, что реалии являются эффективным учебным инструментом не только для младших школьников, но и для взрослых учащихся, так как они способствуют практическому общению и повышают мотивацию в среде изучения языка.

Ключевые слова: реалии, ESL, подростки, взрослые учащиеся, коммуникативная компетенция, развитие словарного запаса, языковые навыки.

In modern English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, teachers are required to adopt teaching methods that address the diverse needs of learners, including teenagers and adults. Unlike young learners, these groups often bring prior knowledge, learning experiences, and specific goals to the classroom. However, they may also face

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challenges such as lack of motivation, language anxiety, or difficulty applying theoretical knowledge in real-life situations. Therefore, effective teaching strategies must focus on practical communication and meaningful interaction.

One such strategy is the use of realia, which involves incorporating real-life objects into the teaching process. While realia is commonly associated with teaching children, its application in classrooms with teenagers and adult learners has gained increasing attention. By connecting language instruction to real-world contexts, realia helps learners develop practical language skills that can be used outside the classroom.

The integration of realia into ESL classrooms provides learners with authentic and context-rich opportunities to use language. For teenagers and adult learners, authenticity is particularly important, as they often seek practical outcomes from language learning. Realia allows teachers to simulate real-life situations by using everyday objects such as menus, tickets, brochures, or household items. These materials help learners understand how language functions in real-world contexts and prepare them for actual communication outside the classroom. For example, using a restaurant menu in class can help learners practice ordering food, asking questions, and expressing preferences in a realistic and meaningful way.[1]

One of the most significant benefits of realia is its ability to improve speaking and listening skills. Communication is a central goal for both teenagers and adults learning English, yet many learners struggle with fluency and confidence. Realia-based activities encourage interaction by creating situations where learners must use language to complete tasks. Role-plays, problem-solving activities, and discussions involving real objects promote spontaneous speech and active listening. For instance, using real-life documents such as travel tickets or schedules can lead to conversations about travel plans, thereby enhancing both comprehension and production skills. This interactive approach helps learners become more confident and fluent in their use of English.[2]

In addition to improving oral communication, realia plays an important role in vocabulary development. Teenagers and adult learners often need to acquire a wide range of vocabulary related to everyday life, work, and social interactions. Realia provides concrete references that make vocabulary learning more effective and memorable. Instead of learning words in isolation, students encounter them in meaningful contexts, which aids comprehension and retention. For example, bringing actual grocery items into the classroom allows learners to practice naming products, discussing prices, and describing preferences.[3] This contextualized learning supports deeper understanding and practical application of vocabulary.

Another advantage of using realia is its positive effect on learner motivation and engagement. Many adult learners attend ESL classes with specific goals, such as improving their career prospects or integrating into an English-speaking environment. Teenagers, on the other hand, may require additional stimulation to remain interested in lessons. Realia introduces variety and relevance into the classroom, making lessons more dynamic and engaging. When learners see a clear connection between classroom activities and real-life situations, they are more likely to stay motivated and actively participate. This increased engagement leads to better learning outcomes and a more positive attitude toward language learning.[4]

Furthermore, realia supports the development of functional and task-based language skills. Task-based learning emphasizes the use of language to accomplish specific objectives, and realia fits naturally into this approach. By using real objects,

teachers can design tasks that mirror real-world activities, such as filling out forms, making purchases, or giving directions. These tasks require learners to use language in purposeful ways, thereby enhancing their communicative competence. For example, using actual application forms can help adult learners practice filling in personal information, which is a practical skill they may need in everyday life.

However, the use of realia in ESL classrooms also presents certain challenges, particularly with older learners. Some adult students may initially perceive realia-based activities as simplistic or more suitable for children. Therefore, it is important for teachers to select materials that are relevant, age-appropriate, and aligned with learners' goals. Additionally, preparing and organizing realia can require extra time and effort. Teachers must carefully plan how to integrate these materials into lessons to ensure that they contribute meaningfully to language learning objectives. Despite these challenges, the benefits of using realia outweigh the limitations when implemented effectively.[5]

In conclusion, realia is a valuable and effective tool for improving language skills among teenagers and adult learners in ESL classrooms. It enhances speaking, listening, and vocabulary development while increasing learner motivation and engagement. By providing authentic and meaningful learning experiences, realia helps bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-life communication. Although there are some challenges in its application, thoughtful planning and appropriate material selection can maximize its effectiveness. Therefore, incorporating realia into ESL teaching practices is highly recommended for fostering practical language competence.

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