

The use of Realia in Saudi English language classroom

- 1.Yasir Ahmed Ali,Saudi Arabia, Yasir.ahmad.ali44@gmail.com
- 2.Dr.Muhammad Mooneeb Ali,Higher Education Department, Government of the Punjab, mooneebali@gmail.com
3. Dr.Rukaiza Khan,Assistant Professor,National University of Sciences & Technology,NUST, Pakistan, rukaiza.khan@ceme.nust.edu.pk
4. Zeenath Khan, Assistant Professor of English ,University of Peshawar, Pakistan , znath.khan80@gmail.com
5. Ayesha Habib,Lecturer, H&S, SEECS, NUST, ayesha.habib@seecs.edu.pk

Abstract

The study explored the opinions of using realia in language classrooms In Saudi English learning situations. The use of realia is an effective strategy. An International Secondary school was selected by purposive sampling for teaching grammar through realia. Grade eight class was selected randomly for teaching in which 60 heterogeneous students were taught countable and uncountable nouns through lesson plan and realia. 40 students from the class were taken randomly for feedback through a questionnaire. The data revealed that the students preferred learning from realia and it motivates them while developing their language skills. Results exhibited that participants liked using realia and it proved to be quite effective at Secondary level. The study also showed that activity-based teaching method is better than the traditional one.

Keywords: Realia, Grade 8, English, Saudi School, Saudi Arabia.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Teaching English in the modern world needs transitivity (Ali et al., 2024). The textbook based teaching is least impactful due to varied reasons. Modern learning demands modern methods of technology dependent learning (Ali et al. 2025)

In Saudi Arabia, the use of technology powered- realia in English language classrooms is very little. It is considered a new way to connect real-life objects or

Corresponding Author e-mail:

Yasir.ahmad.ali44@gmail.com
mooneebali@gmail.com,
[rukaiza.khan@ceme.nust.edu.p](mailto:rukaiza.khan@ceme.nust.edu.pk)
[k,znath.khan80@gmail.com](mailto:znath.khan80@gmail.com),
ayesha.habib@seecs.edu.pk

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things in the language classrooms. The English language teachers take less interest to bring realia as technology dependent A.V aids in their classrooms. Though, it takes less time, less effort, easy to develop and has more advantages than textbooks (Arteaga, 2025). It is an activity-based teaching- learning process in which most of the time learners participate actively and the teacher just assists (Yasin et al., 2023). In order to involve learners in activity-based learning, we need to use non-traditional strategies such as using realia in the teaching of the use of realia in language classrooms to motivate learners and develop language skills. So, we have to use realia as the best strategy for activity-based language learning. (Zambrano et al., 2025) In this study, researcher investigated the effectiveness of using realia in language classrooms to motivate and develop the language skills of the students by recording their opinions about it.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The conventional ways of teaching and learning are unimpactful and creating boredom in learners. The typicality in teaching has led to lack of understanding and frustration amongst students. In traditional teaching setting, only textbooks“

teaching is treated as one main construct while in. Students are not fascinated to learn even if they have some purpose to learn.

1.3 Research Questions

01: What opinions do Saudi learners hold regarding the use of realia for the improvement of grammar?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To check the opinions of learners regarding of using realia in the language classrooms.
2. To find out whether realia motivate learners and develops their language skills.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The present study is going to add some key elements to the existing area of research. This research will reflect the impact of realia at the secondary school level by recording their opinions. In traditional teaching-learning process, learners do not work in group activities. Learners are passive listeners and the teacher gives a lecture. In non-traditional strategy, the teacher is a facilitator and learners do more practice in different activities like individual work, pair work and group work. The teacher uses realia in language classrooms for developing

language skills in the students, for that, they take more interest and understand better. So, this research is significant in many ways. First it will use realia in Saudi English context which is a rarely used. Second, it will

enquire about the opinions of the learners who learnt using realia. In this way, authentic and reliable information and replies can be collected which can help in future researches

for research analysis.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

Let's we analyze the discourse of this research project.

1. Only International school was selected for research analysis.
2. Only Secondary level was selected for the research analysis.
3. Only 8th class was taken for analysis.
4. All the participants were students, taken for the analysis.
5. Only the heterogeneous class was taken for the research analysis.
6. Students were taught through the lesson plan and analyzed.
7. Only realia were used in class and considered for analysis.
8. Only English grammar topic was selected for research analysis.
9. Only countable and uncountable nouns were taught through realia for the analysis.
10. In order to check the effectiveness of realia, the feedback was taken through a questionnaire

2.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Construct of the Study

Skill development is a very difficult process which is continuous and takes much time. There are four skills in English language learning. Those skills are listening, speaking, writing and reading. All these skills are interlinked and can be acquired at the same time. In language classrooms, it is very much necessary to motivate students and develop their language skills through different activities. So, for the development of language skills, the strategy of realia can be used for developing the language skills of the students. Through this strategy, learners can improve their language skills. They will take more interest and participate lively in all activities.

21. Realia

Realia, defined as tangible objects used in classrooms to teach language and concepts more effectively, has been widely recognized in second language acquisition as a powerful instructional tool (Nadilla, 2024). Its integration into English language teaching has shown a significant positive impact on student engagement, comprehension, and retention of knowledge. Özverir, Herrington, and Osam (2016). Numerous researchers argue that realia bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world, making abstract concepts more tangible and relatable for learners (Fahri, 2024; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Harmer, 2001).

The convergence of literature highlights realia as not just a supplementary tool but a core pedagogical strategy. It provides students with real-world connections, fosters critical thinking, and promotes active learning especially in grammar instruction where abstractness often hinders comprehension (Arrobo, & Guamán Luna, 2024). The current study aligns with existing literature in confirming that realia significantly enhance grammar teaching in Grade 8 Saudi classrooms by improving motivation, engagement, and linguistic understanding (Zakaria et al., 2023).

In particular, the use of realia in teaching grammar often considered a dry subject

provides concrete examples and aids in better conceptual understanding (Kelsen, 2009). For instance, Yasin et al. (2023) emphasized the effectiveness of using physical materials to teach linguistic structures, noting that realia increase student motivation and contextual learning. Similarly, a study by Mahmoud (2018) in Egyptian schools demonstrated that realia-enhanced lessons improved students' comprehension and long-term memory in vocabulary and grammar acquisition. This is aligned with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which supports the use of interactive, context-rich tools to scaffold student learning (Zaida, 2024).

Moreover, realia support multi-sensory learning by engaging visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners (Altaikhaineh, Alaghawat & Younes, 2023; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). In Saudi classrooms, where English is taught as a foreign language, realia address cultural and linguistic gaps by making the lesson more familiar and contextual (Sukumaran & Xuan, 2023, Al-Seghayer, 2011). This method also supports collaborative learning, as shown in studies where students working with real objects were more likely to engage in group discussions and peer-supported tasks (Yuting & Yutong, 2023; Ahmed & Bidin, 2016).

Some past research explains the value of using realia. Murodulloyeva (2023) examined the use of realia in vocabulary lessons among college-level learners in Uzbekistan. The study found that integrating physical objects significantly enriched students' vocabulary mastery by linking classroom content to the real world, thus increasing engagement and retention (Murodulloyeva, 2023). Then, in a semi-experimental study, Saadeh (2023) demonstrated that 6th-grade students taught English vocabulary through realia in Tulkarem (Palestine) achieved much higher post-test scores than their peers learning via traditional methods, underlining realia's substantial impact at the primary level (Saadeh, 2023). Kulmamatova (2024) analysed how using realia can make English lessons more engaging and contextually meaningful. Her study with Uzbek university students revealed that real-life objects foster immersion, multi-sensory learning, and improved understanding—transforming lessons into enjoyable, memorable experiences (Kulmamatova, 2024).

1. RESEARCH METHODO LOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study was qualitative research in which the opinions of those students were taken who were taught in a classroom by technology powered- realia activities. The lesson was planned for teaching language skills. The realia were used as the main source of activity-based learning. The effectiveness of the strategy of realia was judged by students' feedback through a questionnaire.

3.2 Population

Heterogeneous students of grade (were taken for the study to know the effectiveness of teaching-learning through realia at Secondary level.

3.3 Sample Size

60 students of class five participated in the study. 40 students were selected randomly from the class to get feedback on the effectiveness of the lesson taught through realia.

3.4 Instruments

The instruments applied in this study were

the lesson plan and questionnaire. The main data collection tool was a close-ended questionnaire.

3.5 Sampling Technique

As a first step, the school in Saudi Arabia was chosen through a purposive sampling method. Furthermore, the class was picked up by simple random sampling technique through pick draw technique (pick and choose). Sixty heterogeneous students were present in 9th class. However, only forty were selected as a simple random sampling for feedback.

3.6. Research Process

This study has been conducted to find out

the effectiveness of using realia in language classrooms for motivation and skill development of the students. The International school was selected purposively viewing the convenience, practicality, permission and accessibility of the researcher. Then the grade 9 learners and teachers were trained and observed for this experiment to view the outcomes. The lesson plan was designed and executed at grade eight students. A class of 60 students was taught using realia and 40 students were selected randomly for the feedback through a questionnaire either the lesson went well and the realia technique was effective at this level and students got the lesson and the educational objectives were achieved or not.

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1. Profiles of the respondents

S. No	Name of respondent	Class	Age (years)	Gender	Residence	Social status	Language
01	Aliza	9th B	11	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
02	Iqra	9th B	11	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
03	Ansa	9th B	10	Female	Eastern	Poor	Arabic

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					Province		
04	Nimra	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
05	Zarish	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
06	Laraib	9th B	09	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
07	Mishal	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
08	Insha	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
09	Noirish	9th B	11	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
10	Eman	9th B	11	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
11	Maria	9th B	09	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
12	Ambr	9th B	11	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
13	Walia	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
14	Hajira	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
15	Zainab	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
16	Saman	9th B	11	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic

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17	Tania	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
18	Hifza Fatima	9th B	10	Female	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
19	Abdullah	9th B	09	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
20	Habibullah	9th B	10	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
21	Saif Waseem	9th B	10	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
22	Abdul Hadi	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
23	Ghulam Mustafa	9th B	10	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
24	Shahmeer	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
25	Fahad	9th B	12	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
26	Saifullah	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
27	Sufyan Shah	9th B	12	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
28	Abrash	9th B	12	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
29	Al Rayan Ali	9th B	10	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
30	Moghes Ahmad	9th B	10	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic

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31	Talha	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
32	Abdullah	9th B	10	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
33	Tayyab	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
34	Adnan	9th B	12	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
35	Sawai	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
36	Majid	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
37	Uzair Ali	9th B	10	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
38	Shehroz	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
39	Atif	9th B	11	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic
40	Waqar	9th B	12	Male	Eastern Province	Poor	Arabic

4.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire was used as data collection tools. The relevant data were collected through a questionnaire as a qualitative data collection tool. The lesson was designed and

executed in grade eight and realia was used to take educational objectives. Teaching and learning were purely activity-based. Forty students shared their opinions about the use of realia. Fifteen items were given in the

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questionnaire and it was purely close-ended questionnaire. The students gave their feedback and their feedback on each item is discussed below.

Thematic analysis was done to get the answers

4.3 Analysis of the questionnaire through themes

Themes Identified:

1. Positive Emotional Engagement

Many students expressed enjoyment and interest during lessons involving realia.

Sample (Student 4): "Yes, I really enjoyed the class because we touched the things."

Sample (Student 15): "It was fun and not boring."

2. Enhanced Understanding of Grammar Concepts

Students reported improved understanding of abstract concepts like countable and uncountable nouns.

Sample (Student 9): "I finally understood countable nouns because I

could see them."

Sample (Student 23): "Real things made the grammar rules clear to me."

3. Better Retention and Recall

Many students noted that using real objects helped them remember vocabulary and concepts.

Sample (Student 31): "Yes, I remembered other fruits after seeing the ones in class."

Sample (Student 8): "Objects helped me to remember the lesson."

4. Motivation and Interest in Learning

Realia appeared to increase attention and active participation.

Sample (Student 12): "I took more interest and wanted to answer questions."

Sample (Student 35): "I liked group work and was not shy to talk."

5. Simplicity and Effectiveness of the Method

Students described the approach as simple, effective, and not confusing.

Sample (Student 19): "Yes, it was very easy to learn with objects."

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Sample (Student 29): "The activity helped me understand quickly."

6. Strong Vocabulary Building

Linking real objects to words helped with new vocabulary.

Sample (Student 6): "I knew the names because I touched the items."

Sample (Student 21): "It helped me link the word to the thing I saw."

7. Support for Collaborative Learning

Positive feedback on group activities and peer interaction.

Sample (Student 11): "Group work was helpful and fun."

Sample (Student 36): "My friends helped me understand."

8. Support for Daily Integration in Teaching

Most students recommended realia be used regularly.

Sample (Student 1): "Yes, every day we should learn like this."

Sample (Student 28): "Teachers should always use real things."

4.4 Summary

Fifteen questions were asked by the students in the form of a questionnaire as feedback from the students' side on the effectiveness of the use of realia in the language classrooms. Most of the students were in favor of the use of realia in the class. Whereas, only a few students were against on some little points. Now the data reveal that using realia in language classrooms is an effective tool for teaching and learning. It is an indication that the use of realia in the language classrooms has an excellent performance. The objectives were achieved up to the mark and the whole lesson went interesting and ample informative. So, it is safely concluded that realia can be used in the language classrooms because it is an effective strategy to motivate the students and develop their language skills. Here are the findings based on the thematic analysis: The majority of students enjoyed and appreciated lessons that involved realia. It was stated by them that realia significantly enhanced their understanding of grammar, especially countable and uncountable nouns. Students were of the view that they can demonstrate better retention and recall of vocabulary through real-life object

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association. Further, it was also shared that the use of realia increased motivation, interest, and participation in class activities. Learners found the method easy to understand and effective in clarifying concepts. Going ahead, they shared that Linking objects to words helped them in build vocabulary more efficiently. Another important aspect were the group activities using realia which promoted peer support and collaborative learning. Learners appreciated this element of realia. Students also suggested that realia-based teaching should be adopted regularly. An important finding from this thematic analysis tells us that lessons were perceived as more engaging and less monotonous with realia for the students. Finally, it was observed that this technique proved especially beneficial in a Saudi International school context with diverse learning needs. Thus, it can be said that Thematic analysis of responses from 40 Grade 8 students indicates that realia is a highly effective pedagogical tool in English language teaching. It enhances student motivation, clarity, understanding, vocabulary acquisition, and collaborative learning. Most students favoured daily usage of realia, reflecting its accessibility, ease,

and educational impact in Saudi International schools.

4.5. Discussion

The findings of this study align with prior research emphasizing the effectiveness of realia in second language acquisition, particularly in making abstract concepts more concrete and comprehensible. The use of realia in the English language classroom allowed students to directly engage with physical objects, thereby enhancing their understanding of countable and uncountable nouns concepts often considered difficult for young learners. Here, the outcomes connect with the study by Murodulloyeva (2023) who examined the use of realia in vocabulary lessons among college-level learners in Uzbekistan. Students' responses and reflected the increased motivation, better retention, and improved clarity realia. Further the outcomes from students' responses indicate that learners were motivated and attracted towards this learning type as they felt exposed to sensory-rich, contextual experiences, their comprehension and interest improve significantly. This is also advocated by Saadeh (2023) who demonstrated that 6th-grade students were taught English

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vocabulary through realia in Tulkarem (Palestine) and they achieved much higher post-test scores than their peers learning via traditional methods

Additionally, the frequent mention of positive experiences with group work and active participation suggests that realia not only support linguistic outcomes but also promotes social interaction and collaboration. In a traditional classroom setting where rote memorization often dominates, such hands-on and interactive approaches can bring a necessary shift toward student-centred learning.

Furthermore, students' desire for realia to be used daily highlights its accessibility and relevance. This is also justified by Kulmamatova (2024) who analysed how using realia can make English lessons more engaging and contextually meaningful. These outcomes, strongly suggest that teachers and curriculum designers in Saudi Arabia and similar contexts should consider integrating realia regularly into language instruction to enhance engagement, participation, and long-term learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion

The use of realia in teaching English to Grade 8 students at a Saudi International school has

shown significant educational benefits. Thematic analysis of their feedback indicates that realia boost student interest, makes grammar concepts easier to grasp, strengthens vocabulary recall, and encourages teamwork. Learners reported greater enjoyment and advocated for the frequent use of real-life objects in class. The physical and visual interaction with tangible items contributed to clearer comprehension and active involvement. Overall, the study highlights that realia is not merely an add-on, but a powerful and essential tool for enhancing language instruction especially where learner engagement and conceptual clarity are priorities. This study concludes that realia is very much effective at Secondary level and also an essential teaching tool which gives students more understanding than textbooks. It increases activity-based teaching and learning. Students taught through realia memorize easily. It is also a kind of fun that provides a practical and attractive learning approach. Through realia technique debate, discussion and communication activities improve. Kinesthetic learning is the type of learning that students will most effectively acquire, mostly because they will have hands-on

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experience. So, realia bring a welcome change in the class, a break from typical class activities like reading and writing. It is more interesting than the material from the textbooks and can be on subjects that will really engage the students. Our students will be expected to use real material when they leave our classes.

1. Recommendations

Following are the recommendations:

1. The teacher should teach using realia because learners learn easily with real objects.
2. The local administration should support technology powered realia-based teaching at every level.
3. Realia should be part of the prescribed textbooks
4. Realia may be used at the Higher Secondary level also
5. Textbooks should be designed to use realia activities in each lesson.

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Questionnaire for checking the effectiveness of realia

Name of student: _____ Class: _____

School: _____

Please read the questions carefully and tick YES or NO correctly.

S.N	QUESTIONS	YES	NO
01	Did you enjoy and like the lesson taught through realia?		
02	Were the objects of realia interesting?		
03	Can you learn and understand better through realia?		
04	Should this technique be adopted in everyday teaching?		
05	Did you understand countable and uncountable noun?		
06	Did you understand better from real objects?		

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07	Was this technique simple and easy?		
08	Was activity based teaching effective?		
09	Are you clear about countable and uncountable noun?		
10	Should a teacher use realia in each lesson?		
11	Was this technique time saving?		
12	Were the group work activities good?		
13	Was this a link between the object and the word?		
14	Did you recall the other same things like these objects?		
s15	Were you involved and took full interest in the lesson?		