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**TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TO PAKISTANI ESL STUDENTS
THROUGH REALIA AT PRIMARY LEVEL**

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ABSTRACT:

This study highlights the importance of Realia in the process of English language learning at primary level. Out of many languages spoken, English language holds the key position in the economic uplift of the developing country like Pakistan. The literature is replete with the notion that English is not taught as a language but as a subject in Pakistan. For securing the better academic output of the class, Pakistani English language teachers use different methodologies and realia is one of these where a teacher uses real items from real life situations for the better comprehension of the young students. These young students acquire the skills and information which enable them to perform better in daily life. The sample consisted of twenty class one students selected through systematic randomization where the students were taught through realia for a period of two weeks. The statistical analysis of the data collected through the pretest and posttest scores of the sample revealed statistically significant gain in the performance of the students.

INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan is a multilingual country with seventy plus spoken languages where English enjoys the supreme language status despite Urdu being the national language (Rahman, 2011). English is taught as a compulsory subject from the beginning of the academic career and moreover, English is also the medium of instruction. It's a fact that even despite learning English till graduation level; students have lower academic scores in formal assessments (Muhammad, 2013). In Pakistan, language is taught through traditional classroom practices where the focus is to memorize the words first and then apply these words to various contexts which lead to cramming rather than understanding of the language. According to Bala (2015), realia is a term for real things-concrete objects-that are used in language classroom to build background knowledge and vocabulary. To make the learning experience livelier, there should be the inclusion of sensory abilities in teaching through realia so that students may smell, hear, see, touch and taste the real objects in order to boost their perception of new topics (Ornstein & Levine, 2006) because the use of realia has been found as one of the best alternatives which make the learning process more comprehensible and enjoyable (Krashen & Terrell, 1995). Realia plays a vital role in English language teaching due to the fact that real life objects may better help the learner to learn and understand the concept of given vocabulary in English language. Realia helps to increase the level of motivation by enhancing the understanding of a specific point (Carney & Levin, 2002).

According to Hatch and Brown (1995), vocabulary is a word list that speakers use to communicate in a particular language to communicate our ideas and to express our feelings, thoughts, needs and to ask or inquire something. According to Rokhmawati, (2010), Realia is a term used in education to denote objects taken from real life to aid in classroom instruction because realia provides a student the environment in the classroom where the student can learn through his own active involvement in the process of language learning (Mohammed, 2012). Realia is very useful with younger children. Sukrina (2013) conducted a study for improving the vocabulary of learners through realia. The findings revealed that there was a significant improvement in the performance of the experimental group students, as compared to the performance of the control group students. Andini (2015) explored the use of realia in improving the vocabulary of grade one students. The findings revealed that the use of realia was very helpful and students enjoyed learning through realia.

Significance of the Study:

The current study is very significant because it aims to introduce the modern approach to teaching English language at primary level by making the learning process natural and interesting. The present study has the potential to explain the abstract and complex concepts with realistic entities/ objects which may produce long lasting concepts in the memory of the learners by enhancing the involvement and attention of students in the classroom activities. This research highlights the importance of Realia and Policy makers as well as curriculum developers need to include the segments of realia in textbooks. There is scarcity of research on the use of realia for teaching English language at primary level and the present study holds the foundational place in this context.

Research Question:

Present study addresses the following key research questions: Does the integration of realia improve the English language performance of grade one students?

Research Methodology:

The present study is quasi experimental in nature because similar studies are helpful in academic settings especially in social sciences (Dinardo, 2010). The sample consisted of twenty class one students of a public sector primary school where they were taught through realia for a period of two weeks. The data were collected through pretest and posttest where the students had to match the columns: one having the word and the second having the picture. Gordon and Miyake (2001)'s ethical considerations were followed in the present study.

Data Analysis:

Before the start of the study, all the students appeared in pretest where they had to match the columns. There were ten items and time limit was twenty minutes. Afterwards, the students were taught through realia for a period of two weeks where they learnt vocabulary items followed by practice activities. After two weeks, the same students appeared in posttest which was similar in nature as that of pretest. The comparison of the scores in both assessments highlights the importance of realia as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Pre and Posttest Scores

Sr. No	Pre-Test	Post-Test
1	4	10
2	3	7
3	3	7
4	4	8
5	5	6
6	3	6
7	6	7
8	5	8
9	7	10
10	3	9
11	4	4
12	4	4
13	4	4
14	3	3
15	4	5
16	3	5
17	0	3
18	5	8
19	2	6
20	8	6
Total	80/200	126/200

From the table above, it's clear that not only the students improved individually but also the class performance improved significantly on the whole. In pretest, the students got 80 marks out of 200 total marks with a mean score 4.00 with standard deviation 1.747 as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean & SD of Pretest Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PRETEST	20	4.00	1.747	.391

Even from the same table 1, there can not only be observed the improved individual performance but also the improved collective performance with a mean score of 6.00 and standard deviation 2.310 which is in favour of the intervention through realia, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Mean & SD of Posttest Scores

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
POST-TEST	20	6.30	2.130	.476

To find out the statistically significant difference in the performance of the students before and after the intervention, paired sample t test was run through SPSS. The statistical findings reveal the marked gain ($p = 0.000$) in the performance as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Paired Sample t test

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
pair 1	PRETEST POSTTEST	-2.300	2.130	.476	-3.297	-1.303	-4.829	19	.000

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

The major investigation of the present study was to map the difference in the performance of the students before and after the intervention through realia. The statistical findings revealed that realia had the potential of increasing English language performance of the students. Realia proved more thought provoking and beneficial in conveying the students the sense to capture idea about of the basic items used in daily life. Realia played a vital role in making the learner autonomous and self-sufficient. The use of Realia in the English language classrooms can empower the young learners which may lead to better academic outcomes. Realia facilitates the teachers as well students to learn new knowledge and perform better in the long run. By the analysis of results, this study showed that with the application of Realia methodology, interest and motivational level of the learner can be increased. Owing to the needs of the modern era, teachers should adapt their teaching strategies according to the learning needs of their students which will not only

enhance the learning experience of the students but also improve the institutional performance. Realia facilitates the teachers in teaching process to clarify the ideas to young minds and it also helps in minimizing the problems related to interest and motivation of the students towards learning, as students found it friendly and were interested to participate consciously. The application of realia in regular classroom settings may help in reducing the dropout ratio of many less motivated students. Realia increases interaction between teachers and learners which may enhance their communication skills. Out of school children may prefer to join school again which may improve the enrollment of school learners. Realia is the need of hour in order to nurture the young minds for learning English language. The use of realia can bring a positive change in the attitude of learners towards learning English language. Realia methodology proved fruitful for language learning because it creates link between academic world and real world. Therefore, students will be better able to perform well inside the school and outside the school. Realia is an important teaching aid to teach vocabulary, structures, match words meaning and concepts.

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