

Using realia in teaching English to ESL students.

Feruz Atabekova.

Teacher of Jizzakh Polytechnic Institute. Jizzakh.region. Uzbekistan
dilnoza_kurbonova8386@mail.ru

Abstract

This article highlights the pedagogical aspects of developing learning competences of ESL students of using realias in English classes. In this article it is clearly shown the how relevant is to understand the realias for students in learning English. Also, several guidelines, and methods are provided for developing student learning competences in English classes.

Key words: realia, competence, cultural literacy, ESL learners

I. Introduction

Today as the world is changing rapidly, great attention is paying to learning foreign languages. There are many, reasons why learning a new language is a good idea. It allows to communicate with new people. It helps you to see things from a different perspective, or get a deeper understanding of another culture. It even has health benefits, as studies have shown that people who speak two or more languages have more active minds later in life. In fact, one in five people on the planet speak or understand at least a little bit of English. This makes English one of the most useful languages you can learn. That's nowadays great attention is given to teaching English. And on teaching English we bump into some problems how to explain some words like realia to ESL learners. Realia for ESL can make the learning experience more memorable and create connections between objects and vocabulary words or other language concepts. This can make it easier to recall information. For in-person classes, it adds a kinesthetic element for people who learn better with hands-on activities. For online classes, it provides a visual aid to engage students. Additionally, realia is more dynamic than a written word or flashcard used to teach a concept.

II. Review and Discussion

What is realia? Realia are the words that denote special features of culture, everyday life, folklore and historical epochs of cultures, within they exist. Belonging to only one culture, they do not have any equivalents in the other.

Realia refers to authentic objects from real life that one uses in the classroom to teach a specific concept. Realia can be both physical and virtual, as long as it is something used in the real world.

As Vinogradov V emphasizes realia is a word that expresses a reality or event that belongs to a single language group. Realias belong to a group of words that are inextricably linked to the culture of a particular nation but are completely foreign to another nation. In the early stages of language learning, the learner may encounter realities. Very common realities include topographic place names, household item names, art-related words, and so on.

Vlaxov S. and Florin S. interpret a group of realities encountered in communication through transcription. In their view, realities with a national color can be transmitted through transcription and translated using a functional element of reality that represents a false reality.

So, realias, that is, words denoting the objects, concepts and situations that do not exist in the practical experience of people who speak a different language. This includes words denoting various items of material and spiritual culture, peculiar only to a particular nation, for example, the names of:

a) national dishes: e.g. xolva, patir non, palov, xandon pista, pashmak, oqchoy, shirqovoq;

b) the types of folk clothes and shoes, dance: e.g. munajat, yor-yor, kovush, kalish, paranji;

c) the types of folklore: e.g. yallama, yor-yor, ziyofat, afandi;

d) phrases denoting political institutions and social phenomena specific only to a certain nation: e.g. domla, mirza, oqsoqol, qalandarboshi;

Readers of English can not catch the meaning of the phrase “nahorgi osh”. In Translation we may give a description or use the footnote technique. Nahorgi osh – (gathering of men and eating pilaf together early in the morning/ at dawn on special occasions such as: weddings or new baby arrival ceremonies.)

Similarly, in the English language there are no matches for Uzbek nouns: pudding, mousse, muffins. On the other hand in the Uzbek language there are no lexical correspondences to English words: glimpse, floorer, exposure (in the sense of liability to the forces of nature: rain, sun, wind, cold).

III. Methods

In teaching realia to ESL students can be incorporated into a ton of fun activities that can liven up your in-person or virtual classroom and get students excited about learning English. Here are some methods to be used in teaching realias while teaching English to ESL learners.

Method 1. Following directions

One of best ways of using realia is to give students directions to carry out with the objects. For example, if you're teaching prepositions, have students take out the items from their pencil bags, and give directions like, "Put the pencil under the eraser" or, "Put the eraser in the pencil bag." Or, for a lesson on comparing objects say, "Hold the pencil higher than the eraser." It's a great way to make students active participants in the lesson. Again, this game can easily be played in both the physical or virtual classroom.

Method 2. Guess what it is.

Fill a bag with realia and have students take turns trying to guess what one of the objects is by putting their hand in the bag and feeling it. They can use vocabulary to describe the object to their classmates as they guess. Also this game can be adapted to the virtual classroom by hiding an object in a bag or under a cloth. Students can look at the shape and listen to you describe the object (e.g., it's heavy, soft, it's round, etc.) while they try to guess what it is.

Method 3. Ask students to bring in their own realia

Get to know students better by asking them to bring in several items from home that they feel represent them. If you're teaching online, students can hold objects up to their camera instead. Have them present these items to the class and explain why they chose each object. For a variation of this activity, have classmates guess how the objects represent each other. Students love to share things about themselves and are usually excited about activities that involve getting to talk about their own lives.

Method 4. Act out a scene

It doesn't matter what concept you're teaching, acting out scenes and roleplaying is a wonderful way to help students memorize the material and encourage speaking skills through

an easy activity. Try using realia to inspire the students and really get them invested in the role they're playing.

For example, if you're teaching a lesson focused on ordering food at a restaurant, bring in some food items and a menu and have students take turns acting out a scene in which one student is the waiter and another is the customer. Realia will help them generate lines and guide them to review essential vocabulary.

Students can act out situations in the virtual classroom as well. Tell them to bring certain items to class ahead of time, and then have them use the objects to create a dialogue with another student(s). If the teaching platform you're using allows it, enlarge the camera feeds of the students currently acting so the rest of the class can easily see who is speaking.

Method 5. Game of guessing price

Set up a row of objects and have students try to guess what each of the items costs. Reveal the real prices at the end of the activity. This is a great game to play to practice numbers and shopping vocabulary (e.g., how much does it cost, is it expensive, etc.). You can alter this activity to have students try to organize the objects from the least expensive to the most expensive, which can help with giving commands, vocab related to directions, and more, e.g., move the basketball to the left of the T-shirt. You can also choose a theme—like groceries or clothing—for the objects in order to target specific vocabulary.

IV. Conclusion

All in all we can admit that realia reinforces language skills and appeals to both visual and kinesthetic learners of all ages. Most teachers use realia to demonstrate the meaning of vocabulary words. Think of the difference between teaching students the words for fruit versus showing them the real thing and having them guess the name. It's especially helpful for ESL students in language learning.

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