

The Use of Realia to Improve Young Learners' Vocabulary

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Abstract

This study is to find out the effectiveness of using the realia in improving young learners vocabulary. This study was a library research. Realia is a real-life object that can be used in the classroom in order to help the learning process. The result of this study show that The usage of realia in the classroom is regarded to be beneficial in the learning process. There are numerous benefits to doing so, including: the learning experience becomes more memorable for the student. Because the roles of the students are also crucial in supporting the lesson, the students were more active in receiving information during the learning process, the items were easily recognized and their names were quickly remembered by the students. Last but not least their interest in the lesson was piqued, and they were less likely to become bored during the lesson.

Keywords: Realia; Young Learners; Vocabulary; Improving

INTRODUCTION

Learning English has become commonplace in Indonesia. Since the first year of elementary school, almost all pupils in Indonesia have had English as a subject. Many countries have introduced English at the primary level in the hope that early exposure may help students strengthen their English skills (Jin & Cortazzi, 2018). Many parents compete to get their children into English as soon as possible. It is because some people believe that learning a language at a young age is superior to acquiring it at an older age. Early learners are children who begin learning at a young age (Maru et al, 2021). Young learners, particularly those aged six to twelve, learn differently than adults and have specific features that must be considered by the teacher (Pikirang et al, 2021). Young learners are more excited and vibrant than adult learners, and they are more active in a variety of interesting activities. Their qualities influenced how they learned in class (Rorintulus et al, 2021). They have short attention spans and are eager to learn new things. They are also easily bored, enjoy playing, and are skilled at replicating or mimicking anything. Young learners, unlike adult learners who have firmly established their first language, can

communicate verbally but are still developing their communicative abilities, particularly in reading and writing (Pinter, 2017).

According to the characteristics of young learners, they may have encountered various difficulties in the classroom. The main issue is that kids are not always engaged in studying (Liando, 2012). There are several reasons why young learners are uninterested in learning English. To begin with, the English teaching and learning process is still traditional. Although the curriculum, tactics, and procedures have evolved, teachers continue to use the same method (Maru et al, 2022). Another reason is the restriction on the use of media in the classroom. The majority of primary English teachers were not trained to educate young students (Le, 2019). Unfortunately, most teachers are unable to develop or do not have the time to find media to assist classroom activities. Their motivation in learning English was partly motivated by a lack of vocabulary.

Vocabulary, according to Azureen and Suhaila (2019), has become an important part of learning a new language. For young learners, the first words they learn may serve as a solid foundation for future learning. Vocabulary is one of the most significant aspects of language that cannot be isolated from the process of learning English (Pajow et al, 2021). It is difficult to master the four language skills without first acquiring or understanding a variety of vocabulary, which is essential in language learning. Thus, teaching vocabulary early rather than later is preferable. Active vocabulary and passive vocabulary are the two types of vocabulary (Templeton in Surina, 2019). Active vocabulary refers to terms that the student understands, can accurately pronounce, and can use productively in speaking and writing. Passive vocabulary, on the other hand, refers to terms that pupils identify and understand while reading or listening to someone talk, but they do not utilize the words in speaking or writing.

Young learners require an enjoyable and enjoyable classroom activity to stimulate them to learn English, particularly new vocabulary. To help with this, teachers could plan an enjoyable activity in the classroom that is connected to the qualities of young learners (Lumentut & Lengkoan, 2021). When educating young learners, teachers must continually keep in mind that they are dealing with kids who have varying abilities, expectations, motivation levels, knowledge, and, last but not least, distinct learning styles. It requires optimal conditions and requirements to allow young learners to advance their learning, and finally the goal of teaching English to young learners will be met. (Paranduk & Karisi, 2021) There are numerous options available to teachers for making the classroom more appealing. The advancement of technology has the potential to alter the learning process. The use of media in the teaching and learning process benefits both teachers and students, especially young students. It's not simply because they're entertaining or aren't dull; it's partially because the entertaining parts elicit a want to interact, and partly

because such activities can be unpredictable (Halliwell cited in Mardasari in 2020). According to Ferlazzo and Sypniewski (2018), teachers must cope with the demands of varied students who may have varying degrees of competency.

There are numerous media that teachers can employ in the classroom, particularly to help students improve their vocabulary (Lengkoan et al, 2022). In this post, the author want to delve deeper into one of the learning media known as Realia. Realia is a real-world object that the teacher use in the learning process. The fundamental benefit of incorporating real-world things into the learning process is that it makes the learning experience more memorable for the students. For example, if the teacher is teaching fruit and vegetable terminology, it may be more beneficial for children if they can touch, smell, and see the objects while hearing the new word.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Young Learners

People who learn at a young age are known as young learners. Young learners were divided into three age categories by Utami, Fauzanti, and Rochsantiningsih (2019): (1) preschool, (2) primary school years, and (3) early adolescents. Preschoolers are 3-5 years old, primary schoolers are 6-12 years old, and early adolescents are students who have graduated from elementary school. Meanwhile, according to Cahyati, Parmawati, and Atmawidjaja (2019), the most essential attribute of a young learner is their proclivity to be active, and teachers must pay attention to which children are active and which are passive. Another distinguishing feature of children is their high level of activity and proclivity for curiosity. Last but not least, children's attention spans are limited to 15 to 20 minutes (Kandati & Tatipang, 2021). Young students have shorter attention spans and a high level of physical activity. They are quickly bored and lose interest after a short time. It is vital to augment the exercises with a variety of brilliantly colored sights, toys, puppets, or realia in order to keep them involved.

Realia

Realia is a type of media that can be used in the classroom. Realia are real-life things that are used in classroom instruction to help pupils understand other cultures and real-life circumstances. Any real things utilized in the classroom are referred to as realia (British Council as cited in Hadi, 2018). Because students are free to employ their senses, using realia as a medium in the learning process will make it more remembered and pleasurable. Realia is a technique used by foreign language teachers to help pupils make connections between words for ordinary objects and the objects themselves. There are several types of Realia that a teacher can use, including:

- The real object being learned and which the student may see, such as stationery (book, pencil, eraser, bag, pen, ruler, etc.), classroom items (table, chair, blackboard, picture, chalk, etc.), body parts (hand, hair, eyes, nose, ears, mouth, foot, etc.), and so on.
- A duplicate of the object if the genuine object, such as animals (cow, goat, frog, cat, lion, dog, etc.), vehicles (bus, train, plane, motorcycle, etc.), occupations (Doctor, soldier, steward, policeman, fisherman, etc.) cannot be brought to the classroom. The teacher can utilize dolls or toys in place of the genuine object.

Vocabulary

The importance of vocabulary in language teaching and learning cannot be overstated. It means that if you wish to learn a language, you must first acquire vocabularies. Vocabularies should be taught to children as a foundational skill before they learn grammar and other language-learning abilities. Because a good vocabulary allows learners to convey more of what they feel and want to say. There are two types of vocabulary: active and passive vocabulary. The term "active vocabulary" refers to terms that a student understands, can pronounce correctly, and can employ in conversation and writing. Passive vocabulary, on the other hand, refers to terms that pupils may recognize and understand while reading or listening to someone talk, but which they do not use in speaking or writing. The two categories of vocabulary were identified by Gruneberg and Sykes (in Susanto, 2017). The first type of vocabulary is the one that was taught to the students and that they were expected to know. The second one, on the other hand, refers to terms that pupils would know when they met them but would most likely be unable to pronounce.

METHOD

This study is based on library research. The term "library research" refers to research that is backed up by additional sources on the writer's chosen topic. The majority of these resources were books, journals, newspapers and other editorials, and encyclopedias. However, with the advent of the internet, digital sources of knowledge have proliferated. These digital knowledge sources include, but are not limited to, online libraries and periodicals, online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, and blogs. According to Snyder (2019), library research is a data collection approach that combines issue solving with a review examination of existing books, journals, notes, and reports. Media in educating young learners, young learners, realia, vocabulary, realia for young learners' vocabulary were the keywords used to find connected sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The use of realia in enhancing young learners' vocabulary has been the subject of numerous studies, the majority of which have been conducted. It appears that the use of realia in the classroom, particularly when teaching vocabulary to young learners, produces a variety of outcomes, depending on the sources used. The majority of them stated that the usage of realia in the classroom offers numerous benefits for young learners. Many studies have shown that teaching English should begin at a young age since young learners are extremely effective at their age, according to the findings (Mwalongo, 2016; Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018). Suwartono and Oktavia (2019) asserted that teachers are required to be innovative in the course of the teaching and learning processes. The use of realia can make the process of teaching English words to young learners flow more smoothly and efficiently. Realia can make the learning experience more memorable for pupils by delivering the material to them in a memorable manner. Because the roles of the students are also crucial in supporting the lesson, the students were more active in obtaining information throughout the learning process. Realia allowed the pupils to quickly recognize the objects and recall their names because they were familiar with them. It means that they will be able to better absorb the information that is provided. Aside from these benefits, employing realia can make the learning experience more enjoyable and appealing. As a result, the pupils' interest in the subject has grown, and they are less likely to become bored throughout the course of the lecture.

Real-life media can help students improve their vocabulary, and it is a more effective and simple medium to use in the classroom. We can also use real-life media to educate students about things that are in their immediate environment, such as when they visit a museum, where the teacher can also demonstrate a real-life object. Furthermore, realia can be used to motivate students by providing them with the type of direct experience that cannot be obtained through other learning media, no matter how well contrived (designed) they are, and to allow young learners to apply various senses, allowing them to see it, touch it, and smell it, thereby increasing the effectiveness of learning. Motivation is essential in learning languages, just as it is in studying other topics (Prosic-Santovac, 2017).

In contrast, there are several disadvantages, such as the fact that importing real objects into the class is not always straightforward. The realia can be utilized if the material provided is about items that are in the class, a part of the body, or something that is stationary. Because the actual replicas of those objects are easy to locate and transport. However, if the subject matter is an animal, a vocation, or a fruit, it is more difficult to bring the realia. To get around this, the teacher can use a duplicate of the original object, which will cost more money, but it will be more effective.

CONCLUSION

The usage of realia in the classroom is regarded to be beneficial in the learning environment. There are numerous benefits to do so, including the following:

- The learning experience becomes more memorable for the student.
- Because the roles of the students are also crucial in supporting the lesson, the students were more active in receiving information during the learning process.
- The items were easily recognized and their names were quickly remembered by the students.
- Their interest in the lesson was piqued, and they were less likely to become bored during the lesson.

Meanwhile, there are several disadvantages to using realia as a currency. It is difficult to introduce a real object into the classroom, especially if the object is not readily available in the classroom setting. In addition, the teacher will have to spend more money in order to supply the realia. Despite the fact that there are certain advantages and downsides, the author concluded that the use of realia in the classroom for the purpose of teaching vocabulary to young learners is beneficial, and that this media should be used by the teacher in the classroom.

As a final note, the author would like to encourage teachers to incorporate realia media as one of the learning medium in their classroom activities, particularly when teaching vocabulary. If a teacher is reluctant to spend additional funds on delivering the realia, the writer explains that the school, for example, can afford to do so through the Dana BOS grant program. Furthermore, the writer suggests that realia media can be employed in other areas of achievement, such as listening skill to improve students' pronunciation, and that it would be beneficial if future research looked into another type of ability in English other than hearing.

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