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DE SANTA ELENA  
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN E IDIOMAS  
INSTITUTO DE POSTGRADO**

**TÍTULO DEL TRABAJO**

The Use of “Realia” and the relationship with English Vocabulary Learning in Third Grade Elementary Learners at the Unidad Educativa Municipal, Técnica y en Ciencias “San Francisco de Quito”

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*Mayta Ñusta Vásquez Saransig*

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*Mayta Ñusta Vásquez Saransig*

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## Resumen

El presente trabajo analiza el uso de la *Realia* como estrategia didáctica para mejorar la adquisición de vocabulario en inglés en estudiantes de tercer grado de Educación General Básica de la Unidad Educativa Municipal Técnica y en Ciencias “San Francisco de Quito”. El objetivo principal fue fortalecer el aprendizaje significativo del vocabulario mediante el uso de objetos reales de la vida real de los estudiantes. Este ensayo se desarrolló bajo un enfoque cualitativo–descriptivo, utilizando técnicas como la observación en el aula, actividades prácticas y evaluación formativa para analizar la comprensión, retención y uso comunicativo del vocabulario. Los resultados evidencian un incremento en la motivación, participación y confianza de los estudiantes, así como una mejora en el reconocimiento y aplicación del vocabulario en situaciones reales. Se concluye que la frecuente aplicación de *Realia* favorece el aprendizaje significativo del vocabulario en contextos educativos reales y significativos para estudiantes de educación básica.

**Palabras claves:** Adquisición de vocabulario, *Realia*, Inglés como idioma extranjero, aprendizaje significativo.

### **Abstract**

This study analyzes the use of Realia as a teaching strategy to improve English vocabulary acquisition in third-grade students at the Unidad Educativa Municipal Técnica y en Ciencias San Francisco de Quito Municipal. The main objective was to strengthen meaningful vocabulary learning through the use of real-life objects familiar to the students. This study was developed using a qualitative-descriptive approach, employing techniques such as classroom observation, practical activities, and formative assessment to analyze vocabulary comprehension, retention, and communicative use. The results demonstrate an increase in student motivation, participation, and confidence, as well as an improvement in vocabulary recognition and application in real-life situations. It is concluded that the frequent application of Realia promotes meaningful vocabulary learning in real and relevant educational contexts for elementary school students.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary acquisition, Realia, English as a foreign language, meaningful learning.

## INTRODUCTION

English vocabulary learning is a primordial part of foreign language acquisition because it allows learner to communicate more effectively and comprehensively. According to Brown (2007), foreign language learning is strengthened when students actively interact with their environment, as this interaction stimulates perceptive and emotional processes that reinforce that aid in language acquisition. In this context, the use of real objects, also known as "Realia," is presented as an innovative pedagogical strategy that facilitates the teaching of vocabulary in a meaningful and contextualized way.

In students at Unidad Educativa Municipal "San Francisco de Quito" is evident some challenges about learning English vocabulary. Despite the usual use of common resources like textbooks, flashcards, and witting exercises, students are not getting meaningful learning or applying what they have learned in real-life communicative situations.

This difficulty is observable in the "Classroom Objects" unit. Words like "ruler," "pencil," "eraser," and "notebook" are simple for students to repeat together. However, many of them are unable to recognize the actual objects in the classroom or create a link between the English word and the actual object. In the same way, it occurs when vocabulary is necessary to follow instructions or answer direct questions. As a result of this confusion there are inappropriate responses and a lack of trust in English. For instance, some students confuse a marker for a ruler during an exercise when they must identify actual things on a table. Also, when asked to point a notebook, only some learners do correctly because they do not know the difference. These errors are not due a lack of prior knowledge of the topic, but rather to difficulty associate the image they have studied with the real object.

Moreover, in communicative activities, a lot of time students depend on Spanish translations, indicating insecurity when they are speaking and difficulty recalling previously acquire vocabulary. This situation is present in typical topics such as food, classroom objects, and body parts, where memorization is given through images and repetition does not promote vocabulary learning.

Reflecting on this experience highlights an important point: The lack of real-world objects ("Realia") usage during the English classes on the part of English teachers and students

immersed in the educational process. Although, traditional and digital resources are used, there is no direct connection between the word and its physical referent. This is essential for 7- and 8-year-old children who require visual, tangible, and manipulative support to learn and memorize vocabulary in a foreign language.

This scenario demonstrate that learning is superficial and meaningfulness, and cannot be transferred to everyday communication. Therefore, it is that pedagogical strategies incorporating the use of real objects are needed to foster better understanding, retention, and application of vocabulary in authentic situations.

### **Problem Statement**

Students frequently make mistakes when identifying or describing classroom things because they struggle to connect English terminology with real-world objects.

The most of current pedagogical approaches use conventional techniques that don't promote contextualized learning.

As a result, learning new language is inaccurate, and not meaningful to real-world communication situations.

## **DESARROLLO**

### **State of Art**

It has long been recognized that acquiring vocabulary is one of the most essential element for understanding a new language. Recent studies indicate that using current technologies and authentic material can make this process more engaging and effective. The research discussed below provides authentic classroom examples as well as theoretical perspectives.

Vivanco (2001) says that teachers and students share responsibility for vocabulary learning in one of the first work, highlighting the need of learner autonomy and teachers guide. Likewise, Campión (2005) linked vocabulary to communicative skill, while Thornbury (2002) suggested strategies for teaching vocabulary in context through frequent, meaningful exposure.

Broader pedagogical frameworks were provided by Brown (2007) and Harmer (2007), who noted that when; students are exposed to actual or life-related materials, motivation and interaction play a crucial role. By characterizing Realia as genuine items that add contextual significance to the classroom, Richards and Schmidt (2010) further supported this concept. By demonstrating how real materials improve motivation and language memory Tomlinson (2011) expanded in these findings.

The conceptual understanding of lexical knowledge was improved by additional research. While Balladares (2014) stressed that passive vocabulary is not always employed in speech, though understood, is not always used in speech. Palapanidi (2013) explained the difference between active vocabulary (creation) and passive vocabulary (recognition). The foundation for useful application in education was established by these contributions.

More recently, scholars have started investigating the students' point of view and the realities of the classroom. In fact, Díaz (2015) affirms that vocabulary is an important part to language acquisition; while Bala (2015) criticized current teaching materials for not being motivating and used in new approaches. On the other hand, Valero and Jiménez (2015) identified that teacher and students' environment incites in the acquisition throughout the same time period. Likewise, Ponce and Almeida (2016) discovered through learners' interviews that

students most of the time found vocabulary learning boring, which requires teachers to use more engaging strategies.

Theoretical evidence from previous papers demonstrates the usefulness of active strategies. According to Vásquez (2018) analysis on the use of Realia, real-world objects increased motivation and allowed meaningful learning. Besides, Burgos (2020) observed digital tools and found that include technology with traditional methods improved vocabulary retention and accurate usage.

Despite these findings, there are breaches in the research about how these strategies are used in Ecuadorian context, mainly at the basic education level. There is also a dearth of long-term studies to evaluate the long-terms effects of digital and genuine tools on vocabulary progress.

On the other hand, teaching methods and strategies have been constantly changing in order to improve learning. These adjustments have had a positive impact on how we learn new knowledge, thanks to the application of different effective methodologies in the classroom, as well as the use of new resources that enhance the process. According to Scrivener (2011) states that modern instructions aim to be more student-centered approach, using active strategies and varied teaching materials that promote participation, critical thinking, and meaningful learning.

Teachers of foreign language are currently searching for innovative methods to include their students in the educational context. They want their students to be willing to actively participate and for the classroom environment to be dynamic and enjoyable. When students feel comfortable and confident, they are prepared to learn the language with interest and enthusiasm. This environment fosters motivation, which drives students to become more involved in the learning process, to seek new knowledge on their own initiative, and to develop more effective ways of learning independently.

Teaching materials are elements specifically developed or designed to be used by teachers in class as aids, intended to facilitate the teaching and learning process, thus facilitating students acquire a deeper understanding of a topic covered in class. They also serve to present concepts in an engaging manner and develop content, thereby achieving the construction of meaningful learning.

Teachers can use a number of useful resources, media, or objects in their classrooms including: authentic materials, academic papers, printed texts, real objects, technological devices, etc. However, the task of selecting the teaching materials to be used is difficult, due to the different class content and objectives, the methodology, the interests and needs of the students, and the learning context. These elements are considered fundamental tools for the development and enrichment of the teaching-learning process, since the use of such materials must guarantee an effective outcome, while also fostering a significant learning situation.

### **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary can be understood as a set of words that a person knows or understands and that appears in the dictionary according to the language. Vocabulary tends to change depending on the context of the spoken word. According to the dictionary (RAE, 2014), the word "vocabulary" comes from the medieval Latin *vocabŭlum*, meaning "word." This information provides several definitions, such as: a set of words in a language; a catalog or list of words, arranged according to a system, and with concise definitions or explanations. Based on Ponce and Almeida definition, vocabulary performs a construction objective and develops meanings through a process that requires effective spoken communication, being able to express ideas clearly. It is used in communication to express ideas and thoughts through a process and a logical order of words.

### **Vocabulary Learning**

Vocabulary is a fundamental component for those studying a foreign language. According to Ponce and Almeida (2016), vocabulary is the main factor in learning English. Therefore, acquiring a large vocabulary is required to be able to speak and understand any language well, including one's native language. Therefore, vocabulary is essential for understanding a language.

Also, it is a supporting element for mastering the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This means that the starting point of a language is word learning. As the author Diaz (2015) explains "vocabulary teaching is the foundation upon which any language is taught."

### **Vocabulary Learning Difficulty**

Learning a second language represents a significant challenge for various reasons. In an exploratory study conducted by the authors Valero and Jiménez (2015), affirms that "learning a second language is a complex process, and therefore, there are a large number of factors that influence its acquisition. These can be grouped into three main areas: environmental, teacher-related, and individual," that is, learning difficulty.

Environmental factors include the social context, the family environment, and the availability of resources for practicing the language. Teacher-related factors refer to the methodology used, their training, and the way they motivate their students. Finally, individual factors include aspects specific to the student, such as their level of motivation, learning style, age, or previous experience with the language.

Even though Vivanco (2001) shows another perspective, author considers it true that it is impossible for language teachers to teach vocabulary, stating that it is a matter that concerns only the student, who must use their own resources to learn at their own pace. However, the teacher should not leave that responsibility only to the student since the student-teacher interaction is fundamental in the process.

Vocabulary learning also represents a challenge due to the many aspects that must be considered when learning a word, that is, all the linguistic aspects. This makes the challenge for the student greater because they must take into account multiple components. This has to do with the methodology, techniques, and resources the teacher uses for teaching. The difficulty lies in the fact that not only the linguistic aspect must be taken into account when students learning a word, but also the methodology the teacher applies. Teachers most of the time use a traditionalist approach. From the perspective of Bala (2015), they consider that in this era of globalization, traditional teaching materials such as textbooks or activity books do not have a significant impact on students and cannot meet their needs or motivate them due to the lack of diversity in teaching.

Finally, considering the opinions of students in a study conducted by Ponce & Almeida, 2016, using a focus group data collection technique, students expressed that learning vocabulary is boring. This type of perception is common in the school setting and is a determining factor as it reflects a lack of motivation. Consequently, learning does not become a meaningful experience.

The application of traditional methods implies a monotonous environment that affects the teaching process (Ponce and Almeida, 2016), so education must be innovated.

### **Realia**

The term Realia refers to real objects that are part of everyday life and, when used as resources within the educational context, serve as examples or aids in the teaching-learning process of a foreign language, making classes memorable for the student by creating a connection between the objects and the word or phrase represented by these elements. Similarly, the British Council website states that "Any real objects used in the classroom to introduce students to real-world situations are referred to as realia." Also, according to Richards and Rodgers (2021), "Realia provides direct access to meaning by allowing learners to experience language through tangible, real-world objects, enhancing contextualized input and retention" (p. 85). This strategy favors vocabulary learning by offering direct contact with the referent, which facilitates comprehension and transfer to communicative use.

Therefore, Realia refers to any real-life element introduced into the classroom by the teacher with the aim of creating meaningful learning in the student based on the representations of each object. Real-life objects are very useful in the educational field as they are materials that can be found inside and even outside the foreign language classroom. According to Şener and Sezer (2022) "Realia refers to the use of tangible objects from everyday life in the classroom to facilitate language learning, especially vocabulary development, by providing contextualized and meaningful input". This modern definition coincides with the traditional view that Realia allows students to relate language content to real-life experiences, making learning more meaningful and practical. Hubbard (1983: 114) states that there are many ways to use real objects, such as:

- \* **Introducing vocabulary:** Illustrating the words you want to introduce without having to use to your native language.
- \* **Describing objects:** Observing the different sizes, shapes, materials, uses, etc.
- \* **Practicing language structures:** Talking about adjectives showing objects of different colors; also, exemplifying prepositions by placing objects in different places or positions.

- \* **Object manipulation activities:** Students carry out activities with certain objects.
- \* **Objects to respond to commands given by the teacher:** Classifying objects of the same color together, opening or closing things, etc.
- \* **Describing a process** for example, how to make a cake, salad or typical food.
- \* **Establishing real-life communication situations:** Talking about a daily routine.

With the help of different real-life objects, students better understand and learn vocabulary, not just memorize the English word. For the benefit of the students at the school, Realia allows students to make connections with their own lives by becoming involved with the object. As a result, students have better understand and retain the meaning of a word when they have seen, touched, tasted, and had contact with an object associated with that lexical form.

In language teaching, real-life objects, known as Realia, has a purpose within the classroom as an aid to teaching new vocabulary by being used as teaching material to exemplify or explain the meaning of a term. They also work a role outside the classroom, as students will recognize the learned object in their surroundings. This not only is used as an example, but also as a useful reinforcement of what has been learned in the classroom.

Furthermore, on the one hand, Abdelkarim (2018) states that "the use of Realia in the classroom helps to foster a more creative and active teaching and learning environment, and also promotes cultural understanding." The last two authors mentioned added that the use of Realia is closely related to real life, showing the cultural context as similar as the country of origin.

On the other hand, there is confusion regarding the term "Realia" with "authentic material." While it is true that there are similarities between the two, given that both can be presented or used in various teaching methods and strategies, there are also a series of distinctions that make a significant difference and need to be clarified. For example, the differences found by the author (Canceles, 1998) are the following:

**Table 1. Realia vs. Authentic Materials**

<b>REALIA</b>	<b>AUTHENTIC MATERIAL</b>
<p>a) Realia are real and tangible objects.</p> <p>b) They can be coins, clothes, maps, dolls, etc.</p> <p>c) They are used to facilitate learning, especially at beginner's levels and for basic vocabulary. These materials are physical and contain little or no text, linking to material culture.</p> <p>d) Their use promotes multisensory understanding, makes learning more memorable, and encourages direct interaction.</p> <p>e) Generally, require some adaptation and are used in activities such as identifying and classifying objects or memory games, serving as visual and tactile support for basic concepts.</p>	<p>a) Authentic materials are original documents and resources created for real communication, not specifically for teaching.</p> <p>b) Material like: newspapers, menus, magazines, letters, advertisements, videos, audios, songs,</p> <p>c) They contain a high level of cultural and contextual content, and are used to develop reading, listening, and cultural comprehension skills with real language at an upper or advanced level.</p> <p>d) These materials expose students to varied language and foster cultural learning, motivating them with current content.</p> <p>e) They can be difficult to beginners and usually requires adaptation for pedagogical purposes. They are mainly used at intermediate and</p>

	advanced levels in reading, analysis and debates activities.
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*Elaboration: Mayta Vásquez*

*Source: Adapted from Tomlinson (2011) and Brown (2007)*

Based on Table 1, a series of distinctions are clearly established, affirming that Realia are real objects that can be seen, touched, smelled, and felt and are present everywhere humans go (trees, cars, places, tables, school supplies, cell phones, etc.), while authentic materials are those designed and intended for a specific community of common speech that contain specific cultural traits (newspapers, podcasts, magazines) to be analyzed within the same culture. Both terms are used at different levels of foreign language learners.

The importance of highlight these differences in order to integrate these materials into the English language teaching-learning process. For this reason, the author (Canceles, 1998) points out that: "it is essential to be precise when using language, because we are talking about different things as if they were the same. So, it is important to note that teachers in the educational field also experience significant confusion between the meaning and use of these two terms. This is maybe the result of teacher inexperience of the principles of Realia and authentic material in teaching. Therefore, it is crucial to understand this concept for proper integration and application.

### **Realia in Education**

Realia is derived from the Latin *realis*, meaning "real" or "existing." In the context of education, this refers to real-world objects that are used as teaching aids to enhance the learning practice. Its use is based on active pedagogical approaches that seek meaningful learning, principally in foreign language teaching. Realia has helped to students to link what they have learned in the classroom and the environment, from traditional methods such as the direct method to current communicative approaches. Estrella (2017).

The pedagogical importance of Realia stays in their ability to make learning real, and contextualized. The author Balakrishnan (2020) states that the use of real objects not only catch students' attention but also allows real interaction with the material, development

comprehension, vocabulary retention, and dynamic participation. Realia fosters critical thinking, independence, and meaningful learning, aligning with 21st-century educational principles. In a foreign language class, items such as invoices, menus, calendars, tickets, and kitchen utensils can teach vocabulary, improve communication, and reveal cultural characteristics. Similarly, in subjects like literature, science, or mathematics, real-world objects can illustrate unusual concepts with practical examples.

Use of Realia not only increases motivation but also strengthens the connection between formal education and daily life. However, for these materials to have a pertinent educational result, they must be included into previous planned pedagogical strategies, tailored to the objectives, needs and level of the students (Balakrishnan, 2020; Estrella, 2017).

Likewise, learning English vocabulary through real-world objects boosts student participation because learners feel a strong attraction and accept the tangible materials used in the learning process, which motivates students to be more responsible of their learning. This approach also fosters creativity, as students recognize these objects as sources of knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. As a result, students develop an active attitude and become more enthusiastic to get new information, resulting in a noticeable improvement in their English vocabulary acquisition. Teacher also become more involved in the educational process, driven to explore a new teaching strategy that create an environment where students can develop and learn naturally using the objects presented in the real-life situations that can be created, and keeping in mind "what is experienced is never forgotten."

### **Advantages of Realia**

The use of Realia in education offers some benefits that enhance the teaching-learning process, specifically in foreign languages. Also, contributes in the classroom is especially enhancing the meaningful learning, allowing students directly connect didactic material to real-life situations in the classroom. This association facilitates conceptual understanding and increases knowledge retention, giving learning a more authentic character and making it pertinent to real-life situations. Balakrishnan (2020).

Realia encourages specific senses in the learning process, for instance: visual, tactile, kinesthetic, auditory, and even olfactory senses. Besides, this multimodal stimulation improves

students' focus and fortifies their long-term memory, which is especially helpful for learning vocabulary in the beginning stages (Estrella, 2017). So, the use of these resources increases students' motivation and participation in classes by boosting their curiosity and involvement. As a result, the learning environment becomes more dynamic and supportive.

Additionally, Realia encourages communicative skills in real-life context. It lets students to make dramatizations, role-plays, descriptions, and individual or group activities using items. Because of its flexibility, Realia can be applied to in several subjects and educational levels, which makes it a helpful tool for beginners' students and simple language instruction.

Finally, it is recommended to integrate these resources into wisely designed pedagogical strategies that are designed with the learning objectives and adapted to the student's level (Balakrishnan, 2020; Estrella, 2017).

### **Disadvantages of Realia**

Although of advantages of using Realia in the classroom, there are some challenges. The most important reason is that many of these real-world objects lack the sufficient linguistic input or contextual support for practicing complex grammatical structures. This makes their usefulness more pertinent at beginner student level, but limited when looking for developing more advanced communication skills (Balakrishnan, 2020).

There are also logistical aspects that can complicate their application such as: find, move, and store the objects needed for a lesson especially if a long variety or number is required when the school has limited resources, or working with many students, it can represent a significant complication. In addition, Estrella (2017) notes that due to time, space, or budget constraints, it is not always possible to include real-world objects into the classroom.

Finally, using Realia in the classroom requires pedagogical purpose. When materials are used without defined aim, they can become a simple decorations or even a class distraction. For them to truly have a positive impact, teachers must integrate them into well-planned activities with defined purposes and adapted to the students' level. If not, what may be an effective tool stays a surface-level experience (Balakrishnan, 2020).

## **Methodology**

The methodology used was qualitative-descriptive approach because it aims to describe how the use of Realia influences English vocabulary acquisition on 35 students of Third grade at Unidad Educativa Municipal Tecnica y en Ciencias “San Francisco de Quito”. To support the application of classroom practices, specialized literature on vocabulary acquisition, Realia, and meaningful learning was revised focusing on exploring students’ experiences, interactions, and observable behaviors during learning activities, as well as changes in their motivation, participation, and use of language.

Moreover, classroom observation, formative assessment, and classroom activities were used as methods. Classroom practices included the use of real objects, multisensory activities, and oral tasks that allowed students to see, touch, and use vocabulary in meaningful, and real contexts. Classroom observation was the main technique for collecting qualitative information, as it made it possible to evidence students' participation, their interaction with objects, their oral responses, and observable behavioral changes during English classes. Finally, formative assessment was applied on a regular basis to supervise students' vocabulary recognition, pronunciation, and oral use, as well as their ability to follow simple instructions and connect words with real objects.

### **Contradictions between Theory and Practice and Areas for Improvement**

There are discrepancies between the pedagogical principles mentioned in the specialized literature and what actually occurs within the educational context, especially at the primary education level. The following are some of the principal contradictions:

#### **a. Theory promotes contextualized and multisensory learning; practice remains focused on memorization methods.**

Vocabulary should be taught through meaningful experiences, authentic materials, interaction with the environment, and the use of Realia to create clear connections between the word and its referents, according to authors such as Harmer (2007), Brown (2007), Richards and Schmidt (2010), and Tomlinson (2011).

On the other hand, the examined research (Ponce & Almeida, 2016; Bala, 2015; Díaz, 2015) confirms that in practice, vocabulary teaching is still to focus on using of the textbook, memorization, static images, and mechanical copying exercises, which result in monotonous classes and limited learning outcomes.

#### **b. Theory states that students learn best through active interaction; practice shows limited participation.**

According to Scrivener (2011), Estrella (2017), and Balakrishnan (2020) in order to promote meaningful learning, motivation, and classroom participation, students should actively engage in dynamics activities manipulate things, and interact with their surroundings.

In contrast, Ponce & Almeida (2016) and Bala (2015) note that many students find acquiring vocabulary learning “boring,” demonstrating that real-world interaction and practical language use are incomplete.

#### **c. Realia and Authentic materials; conceptual confusion**

Canceles (1998) and Tomlinson (2011) highlight the importance of having clear the differences between Realia (real-world objects) and authentic materials (documents made for real life).

On the contrary, the text notes that many teachers do not understand these concepts and do not how to apply them in classes, resulting in irrelevant material and an application without a clear purpose.

**d. Disagreements between Motivational Theory and Student Engagement in schools.**

According to Brown (2007), Harmer (2007), and Tomlinson (2011), motivation increase when used materials are appropriate, authentic, and engaging. Nevertheless, researches like those by Ponce & Almeida (2016) and Bala (2015) demonstrate the use of traditional methods results in boring learning experiences meanwhile students are not motivated.

**e. The gap between communicative vocabulary theory and actual classroom use.**

The contributions of Thornbury (2002) and Campión (2005) explain that vocabulary should be linked to communicative competence. However, in practice, Balladares (2014) and Palapanidi (2013) show students develop more passive than active vocabulary: they recognize words, but they don't use them to communicate.

**2. Areas for Improvement Identified**

Based on the differences between the literature and practice, several areas for improvement have been identified with the aim of enhancing the English language teaching process:

**a. Gradually integrate Realia with a pedagogical purpose.**

The use of real objects should be thoughtfully planned to promote meaningful, multisensory experiences within the context, as recommended by Richards & Rodgers (2021), Estrella (2017), and Balakrishnan (2020). It is necessary to move from occasional use to systematized use within learning units.

**b. Transform traditional methodologies through active learning strategies.**

Activities focused on repetition and translation need to be replaced with hands-on activities, role-playing, games with real objects, projects, and real-life communicative situations, as recommended by Scrivener (2011) and Tomlinson (2011).

**c. Train teachers in the proper use of Realia and in the difference between authentic and real materials.**

Professional development workshops on the subject can help resolve the conceptual misunderstanding noted by Canceles (1998). These workshops use practical ways to clearly and accurately explain the functions, and pedagogical uses of this notion in the classroom.

**d. Promote motivation through varied, real, and relevant resources.**

To break the traditional method that Bala (2015) and Ponce & Almeida (2016) identified in classrooms, teachers must innovate their materials and strategies, including everyday objects, elements of the environment, and touchable resources.

**e. Design activities that strengthen receptive and productive vocabulary.**

According to the distinctions established by Balladares (2014) and Palapanidi (2013), it is necessary to design activities that allow students to understand, remember, and use words in real-world contexts.

**f. Improve access to educational materials.**

Studies such as Estrella (2017) highlight some limitations like space, time, and material accessibility. Educative institutions should implement Realia to facilitate the use of these real-world materials in classrooms to improve the educational process.

## **Solution Proposal**

Implement Realia as a teaching strategy to improve vocabulary acquisition in English.

Foreign language learning is strengthened when students interact with authentic materials that reflect real-world language use, as these foster meaningful understanding and connect the classroom to reality. (Tomlinson, 2011) Also, Richards and Rodgers (2021) distinguish that the use of realia, understood as the incorporation of real objects from the everyday environment, allows students to associate vocabulary with concrete referents, increasing motivation, active participation, and learning retention.

### **Foundation**

Education is in continuous progress as teachers are looking for new methods in order to achieve an effective and meaningful learning. In the last years, a new strategy has been considered important, this is the use of Realia, refers to bring an object of the real-life to classrooms in order to the students can interact directly with them. As a result, it can help to understand better the concepts, especially when the goal is learn a new language looking for more practical and long-lasting learning.

Students struggle to recognize and use English vocabulary in real-life situations because classes have depended on traditional methods: memorizing words, using plain images, and repeating activities that do not connect with daily life. This results in basic and meaningless learning. In this context, at the Unidad Educativa Municipal, Técnica y en Ciencias “San Francisco de Quito during English classes, a growing interest has been observed in the implementation of use of Realia as a pedagogical strategy to enhance learning in third-year Basic General Education students. However, the actual impact of this methodology on students English vocabulary acquisition and the overall learning process at this educational level remains unknown.

Realia involves incorporating real, everyday objects into learning activities to increase student motivation, participation, and meaningful performance. Students can improve their comprehension and practical application of the language by connecting English vocabulary to the daily context through the use of real items like classroom objects, vegetables, fruits and goods.

The current teaching methods used in the third-grade at the Unidad Educativa Municipal Técnica y en Ciencias “San Francisco de Quito” are ineffective because it is difficult to include strategies based on Realia to attach learning to students’ daily activities. This restriction directly affects focus and meaningful learning by causing demotivation, limited involvement, and disinterest in the subject matter.

According to Brown (2007), Harmer (2007), and Tomlinson (2011) make it clear that language learning is more effective when experienced in a close and multisensory approach (moments when children can touch, feel and connect), with experiences that show reality. Additionally, Richards and Rodgers (2021), and Estrella (2017) point out that using Realia (real objects) helps students’ associate words with real things, increasing motivation and engagement build confidence, and make vocabulary feel natural rather than forced.

In addition, it is essential to integrate Realia as a pedagogical strategy to improve the learning process of Third-grade Basic General Education students at the Unidad Educativa Municipal Técnica y en Ciencias “San Francisco de Quito”. Based on these factors the following research question is proposed:

**How does the use of Realia influence English vocabulary learning among third-grade elementary students at the Unidad Educativa Municipal, Técnica y en Ciencias “San Francisco de Quito”?**

### **General Objective**

Strengthen meaningful learning of English vocabulary through the use of didactic activities that use real-world objects (Realia), to enhance the comprehension, retention, and communicative usage of vocabulary in everyday situations.

### **Specific Objectives**

- ✓ Integrate real objects into English instructional units.
- ✓ Design multisensory activities that connect words with objects.
- ✓ Implement real communicative situations that encourage vocabulary use.
- ✓ Evaluate learning through practical, performance-based tasks.

## **Proposal components**

### **1. Planned incorporation of Realia into the teaching units**

The teacher will select real objects available in the classroom, home, or environment, such as:

- ✓ **School supplies:** book, school-bag, glue, eraser.
- ✓ **Classroom objects:** chairs, desk, window, door, board.
- ✓ **Everyday objects:** fruits, clothes, containers.

These materials will be classified and used according to the language objectives of each curriculum unit.

### **2. Multisensory activities based on object manipulation**

Activities will be designed to add movement, observation, touch, and action to reinforce the word-object connection, such as:

- ✓ **“Touch and Identify”:** Student touches an object inside a bag and say the name.
- ✓ **“Find the Object”:** Look at around the classroom to find a specific object.
- ✓ **“Show me...”:** Give physical responses to teacher commands.
- ✓ **“Object Classification”:** Classify objects by shape, size, color, or material.

These activities increase active thinking, motivation, and long-term retention.

### **3. Integration of vocabulary in real communicative situations.**

To promote active vocabulary use, activities such as the following will be implemented:

- ✓ Role-plays using real objects (e.g., “School supplies store”).
- ✓ Following instructions using contextualized commands (e.g., “open the window”)
- ✓ Short dialogues involving real interaction between students using objects from their surroundings.

These activities align with the principle of the communicative approach.

### **4. Formative assessment through performance**

Assessment will focus on demonstrating the practical use of vocabulary through:

- ✓ Checklists
- ✓ Direct observation
- ✓ Mini presentations
- ✓ Object classification

It will allow for assessing the student actual real progress based on their performance and active participation.

### **Expected benefits**

The implementation of Proposal solution will help to students with the following aspects:

- ✓ Improve motivation and involvement in English classes.
- ✓ Enhance vocabulary recognition and usage in daily life.
- ✓ Reduce frequent errors when students identify and describe classroom objects.
- ✓ Multisensory experiences improve language memory.
- ✓ Increase confidence and independent when speak English in real situations.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ The use of Realia in vocabulary acquisition facilitates meaningful and comprehensible learning by allowing students to associate English words with real-life objects, which increases motivation and confidence compared to traditional methods.
- ✓ Realia foster the multisensory learning because allow students to see, touch, and manipulate objects, improving vocabulary comprehension, retention, and the development of basic communication skills.
- ✓ The replacement of traditional methodologies and incorporation of real-world materials as part of English language practice within the classroom to foster meaningful, practical English vocabulary learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Teachers should regularly use Realia into English vocabulary lessons to enhance meaningful and comprehensible learning by enabling students to associate words with real-life objects increasing motivation and confidence in comparison with traditional teaching methods.
- ✓ Teachers should design and implement multisensory activities using Realia that allow students to see, touch, and manipulate objects in order to strengthen vocabulary comprehension, retention, and the development of basic communication skills.
- ✓ It is recommended that English teachers progressively replace traditional methodologies with instructional practices that integrate real-world materials from student's environment as a regular component of vocabulary teaching.

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## ANNEXES

### Students Observation Checklist

**Objective:** To assess students' English vocabulary learning through observation of their recognition, association, and oral use of words during Realia-based classroom activities.

**Grade:** Third Grade EGB

Evaluation Criteria	Yes	No	Sometimes
Recognize classroom objects when they are shown.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name real objects correctly in English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate the English word with the correct object.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow simple oral commands using real objects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use vocabulary orally in short responses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pronounce vocabulary clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Show confidence when speaking English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate actively in vocabulary activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate understanding without Spanish translation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retain vocabulary previously learned.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Classroom practices



**ENGLISH VOCABULARY TEST (Formative assessment)**

**LEVEL PRE-A1**

**OBJETIVE:** To identify student's degree of recognition, understanding, and basic use of the lexicon, and to guide the improvement of the teaching-learning process.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Look at the pictures. Write the correct animal's name. (5 points)**



a: pig

b: \_\_\_\_\_

c: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Match the numbers with the correct classroom objects. (5 points)**



1. book
2. sharpener
3. glue
4. eraser
5. pencil case
6. notebook

**3. Unscramble and write the names of the days of the week. (5 points)**

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YWEEDNDAS 

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S	A	T	U	R	D	A	Y
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ASTURDYA

4. Listen to the teacher and circle the correct answer. (5 points)

- a.    
- b.    
- c.    
- d.    

**5. Speaking part. Listen to the teacher and answer the questions. (5 points)**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Excelent (1 pt)</b>	<b>Good (0.5 pt)</b>	<b>Regular (0 pt)</b>
1. What's your name?			
2. How are you?			
3. How old are you?			
4. What color do you like?			
5. Where are you from?			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**6. Listen to the teacher and do the command. (5 points)**

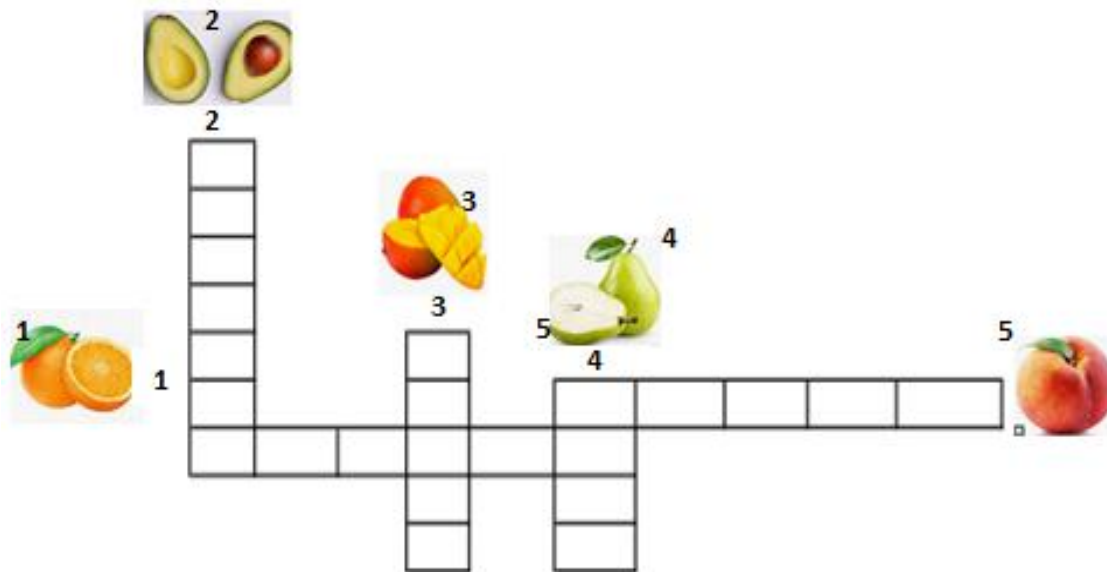
<b>Command</b>	<b>Excelent (1 pt)</b>	<b>Good (0.5 pt)</b>	<b>Regular (0 pt)</b>
1. Touch your knees!			
2. Clap your hands!			
3. Blink your eyes!			
4. Stamp your feet!			
5. Wave your hand!			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**7. Listen to the teacher and answer the question orally. (5 points)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Excellent (1 pt)</b>	<b>Good (0.5 pt)</b>	<b>Regular (0 pt)</b>
1. What color is the pencil?			
2. What color is the chair?			
3. What color is your backpack?			
4. What color is the ball?			

5. What color is the sky?			
TOTAL			

8. Complete the crossword with the names of food. (5 points)



Fuente: Elaboración propia