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EXPLORING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF REALIA-BASED SCAFFOLDING DURING EFL SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

Abstract

The demanding task of teaching English speaking skills to junior high school students compels EFL teachers to strategically utilize teaching aids, including realia, for effective scaffolding of students' speaking performance. This research aims to explore students' perceptions regarding the implementation of realia in the English-speaking classes and determine the obstacles encountered when using realia in EFL classes at Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri (SMPN) 1 Dlingo. The respondents in this study were 36 students enrolled in class IX B of SMPN 1 Dlingo in the academic year 2024-2025. There were 19 female, and 17 male participants, and their ages ranged between 15 and 16 years. They had been learning English for more than five years and were at pre-intermediate level when the data were obtained. A mixed-method approach was employed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. An online questionnaire was administered to gain insight into students' perceptions regarding the use of realia in English speaking classes. The questionnaire results were analysed

using a 4-point Likert Scale scoring rubric. Additionally, a semi-structured interview was used to explore the obstacles students encountered when speaking English and using realia. The results were analysed using interactive models proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and data conclusion. The findings of the questionnaire revealed that the majority of respondents held a positive view of the use of realia in enhancing students' speaking skills. Meanwhile, the results of the semi-structured interview with the respondents identified the obstacles pertaining to both internal and external factors.

Key words: English, obstacles, perception, realia, speaking skills

1. Introduction

The high bargaining position of English as an international language has contributed to its wide use in education by many countries, including Indonesia. Thus, English is a mandatory foreign language at all levels of education in Indonesia-from primary to university level. Students can learn English language skills namely by reading, listening, speaking, and writing, as well as through language components, such as vocabulary and grammar (Asan and Sezgin 2020). According to Sukavatee and Khlaisang (2023), English language teaching (ELT) has been around for centuries and it reflects continual changes throughout its history.

Among the language skills, speaking plays a vital role in conveying messages through spoken communication, which differs significantly from written communication (Souisa and Gaite 2020; Wahyuningsih and Afandi 2020). The literature review reveals that speaking is the most important aspect of oral communication, which includes comprehension as a receptive skill (listening ability) and speaking as a productive skill, i.e, what we hear as input, and what we speak as output. In producing linguistic utterances, a speaker requires linguistic knowledge and skills (Nget et al., 2020). Knowledge of foreign languages (FL) is not just an educational complement but a requisite to achieve full professional and personal development (Muñoz, Galves, and Buyse 2024).

In their teaching practice, most EFL teachers in Indonesia do not provide much time for their students to practice English (Ardhana and Sadikin 2025). As a result, students' learning motivation and engagement are very low. Therefore, teachers should provide interesting teaching aids to engage students in the learning process. Besides, it is important to use appropriate teaching aids and materials for successful language learning because they play an important role in promoting teaching and learning. Realia are a learning medium that can facilitate more engaging foreign language teaching and learning activities (Arifatin et al. 2023). According to Harmawan, Pangesti and Rokhyati (2019), realia present one of the learning media that can be used in the classroom for teaching speaking and may create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Harmawan and Amri (2018).; and; Ediyani et al. (2020); state that realia can be any real object used in the classroom, and they help students to deepen their comprehension. Moreover, realia bring real life to the classroom because they enable learners to connect to the real world by allowing them to touch, feel, and smell what they are learning, (Herrel and Jordan 2012). Furthermore, realia, such as real-life objects or posters of fruits, miniature cars, animals, houses, foods, and beverages will make the learning process more memorable and fun.

Mokalu (2022); confirms that realia can be effectively implemented in the classroom to enhance students' learning outcomes. His findings suggest that the use of realia in the classroom supports learning, as students become more involved and attentive during class. Similarly, Harmawan and Amri (2018); found that realia are useful for students with low motivation, limited vocabulary, or those who are shy and afraid to speak. They state that realia help create a fun and engaging classroom environment, which in turn fosters students" interest and motivation to speak. Furthermore, the use of realia mayincrease students" motivation (Amumpuni and Rahmasari 2019; Fajariyah and Yulia 2019); and their interest in learning a foreign language, as well as encourage communication (Bhatti, et al. 2021; Patmi and Sabaruddin 2021).

Some other studies, for instance Asan and Sezgin (2020), revealed that the use of realia is beneficial for students in education and training settings, and Mauliza (2018); confirms that realia significantly increase students' speaking achievement. Teachers are encouraged to use realia with a variety of assessment methods and techniques for measuring students" ability. Realia as learning tools may help students in learning activities and to understand the material provided (Adrianty 2021; Ibad and Sarifah 2021; Sistiowati et al. 2023).

Based on previous studies on realia as a medium of learning English, we determined that research had been conducted in some schools ranging from primary to senior high school. However, specific studies on using realia to scaffold junior high school students' speaking performance in speaking courses are limited, to the best of the authors' knowledge. In most of the previous studies, quantitative research methods were used. The present study employed a mixed-method research design to examine students' perceptions of using realia in speaking classes. In addition, it explored the obstacles encountered in English-speaking classes.

The researchers' preliminary study conducted at SMPN 1 Dlingo revealed that learning and teaching were mainly conducted using conventional methods, without the presence of engaging and effective learning media. Consequently, students demonstrated low motivation and limited engagement during speaking class activities. Several issues were identified during the researchers' classroom observation, such as students' low self-confidence, shyness, low level of vocabulary knowledge, and fear of making mistakes. To this end, it may be beneficial to conduct a study to further explore students' perceptions and problems encountered during speaking classes using realia as a medium for learning English speaking skills. By examining previous research, this study aims to reveal some challenges students experience and the documented advantages of incorporating realia in language instruction. In the present study, students' perceptions were examined through indicators, such as their ability to acquire and comprehend the material (Hamka 2002).

The findings of this study will hopefully be beneficial for teachers, students, and future researchers regarding the roles of realia in foreign language teaching, especially in speaking classes. Furthermore, the findings of this study may help students improve their speaking skills by enhancing their theoretical knowledge about the importance of realia for developing speaking skills.

Given the importance of fostering enjoyment in developing English language speaking skills in the classroom, it is important to create a thematic learning situation which

will encourage greater student engagement in speaking activities. To this end, the researchers aimed to examine the students' perspective on using realia and further explore the challenges encountered in their speaking class by focusing on two research questions: 1) What are students' perceptions of using realia in the English-speaking class? 2) What are the obstacles encountered by students when speaking in an English-speaking class?

2. Method

Research design

The present study utilized a mixed methods design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were obtained from the students' questionnaires based on the indicators of perceptions proposed by Hamka (2002) and presented in the form of numerical data. The qualitative data were obtained from semi-structured interviews with three respondents focusing on the obstacles they encountered in developing their English-speaking skills.

Research respondents and instruments

Thirty-six respondents attending class IX B of SMPN 1 Dlingo in the academic year 2024–2025 participated in the present study. The study was conducted from January 15 to March 15, 2024. The respondents' demographic data are presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Data

Sex/Age	Number of respondents	Mother Tongue	Level of Study/ Class	English Language Level	Duration of Learning English
Female 15–16 yrs old	19	Bahasa Indonesia	Grade IX	Pre-Intermediate	More than five (5) years
Male 15–16 yrs old	17	Bahasa Indonesia	Grade IX	Pre-Intermediate	More than five (5) years

The questionnaire consists of ten items, and the semi-structured interview consists of eight items. The researchers used the questionnaire to explore students' perceptions of realia and semi-structured interview was implemented to identify obstacles they encountered in their English-speaking classes.

Data collection technique and analysis

To collect the data in the present study, the researchers distributed a questionnaire to the respondents and conducted semi-structured interviews. Thirty-six students completed the questionnaires. Using purposive sampling techniques, three respondents were chosen to participate in the interview. They were selected on the basis of their questionnaire scores ensuring representation from the students with the lowest, middle, and highest scores.

Furthermore, the questionnaire data were analysed quantitatively, i.e. each statement was assessed on a 4-point Likert type scale with the following categories: 4: Strongly Agree (SA), 3: Agree (A), 2: Disagree (D), and 1: Strongly Disagree (SD). The researchers then categorized the thirty-six responses to the ten questionnaire items and interpreted them using the following formula (see Sugiyono 2018).

$P = F/n \times 100$

After calculating all the scores, the researchers classified them into five scoring classifications (see Arikunto 2005), as presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Scoring Classification

Score Range	Classification
90–100	Excellent
75–89	Good
60–74	Fair
50–59	Low
0–49	Poor

(Adopted from Arikunto, 2005)

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were analysed qualitatively using an interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), namely data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.

3. Findings and discussion

Findings

Students' Perceptions Regarding the Use of Realia in an English-Speaking Class

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perceptions of using realia in English-speaking classes and to identify the obstacles they encountered through questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The respondents' scores on the questionnaire items 1 through 10 can be seen in Table 3.;

Table 3. Respondents' Scores on the Questionnaire

No	Respondent	Score for each Statement										Total	Total Score (%)
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10		
1	SNA	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	4	4	4	33	82.5
2	FA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
3	ZPR	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	25	62.5
4	HMF	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
5	DM	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
6	FAM	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
7	PAD	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	37	92.5
8	CE	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	30	75
9	FBNH	4	3	3	4	3	3	1	3	4	3	31	77.5
10	MKRP	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	31	77.5
11	DRSA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
12	FBJ	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	28	70
13	AMF	1	1	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	23	57.5
14	NS	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	28	70
15	RA	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	28	70
16	YMFR	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	32	80
17	VAR	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
18	SAZ	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
19	ARA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
20	RSP	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	26	65
21	DEP	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	40	100
22	DAS	4	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	3	2	32	80
23	DAZ	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
24	FRA	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	29	72.5
25	APIC	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
26	KAC	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
27	AAE	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	31	77.5
28	JAA	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	25	62.5
29	ZZR	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	29	72.5
30	RDR	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	24	60
31	APMP	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	31	77.5
32	DMK	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	36	90
33	GFN	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	4	4	33	82.5
34	LO	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
35	ARD	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
36	ADF	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	32	80
High Score													100
Medium Score													75
Low Score													57.5

As we can see, the table displays the total scores for each item per respondent; the highest score (100), the medium score (75), and the lowest score (57.5) obtained by the 36 respondents. The frequency and percentage (%) score for each statement in the questionnaire were grouped into two main indicators of perception, namely *absorbing* (four items) and *understanding* (six items), as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Respondents' Frequency and Percentage Score

No	Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Indicator: Absorbing									
1	Statement 1 By using realia, I can speak or state something or tell stories more fluently	6	17%	28	78%	1	3%	1	3%
2	Statement 2 Realia is one of the interesting learning media for honing speaking skills.	10	28%	22	61%	3	8%	1	3%
3	Statement 3 Using realia can encourage me to be more confident to speak in an English-speaking class.	5	14%	29	81%	2	6%	0	0%
4	Statement 4 Using realia allows me to develop ideas when stating something or telling stories with a more varied vocabulary in an English-speaking class.	4	11%	27	75%	4	11%	1	3%
Indicator: Understanding									
5	Statement 5 With the understanding of the material that I already have, I feel more confident and fluent in speaking or stating something using realia in an English-speaking class.	4	11%	26	72%	6	17%	0	0%
6	Statement 6 I am able to speak or state something or tell something fluently when using realia in an English-speaking class.	3	8%	23	64%	10	28%	0	0%
7	Statement 7 It is easier for me to speak or state something fluently when using realia as an aid in an English-speaking class.	2	6%	29	81%	4	11%	1	3%
8	Statement 8 Using realia can improve my speaking ability in an English-speaking classes.	5	14%	28	78%	3	8%	0	0%
9	Statement 9 By using realia, I find it more helpful to express vocabulary and speak without stuttering in an English-speaking classes.	5	14%	28	78%	3	8%	0	0%
10	Statement 10 Using realia can improve my ability to communicate in an English-speaking class.	6	17%	28	78%	2	6%	0	0%

These indicators show the degree of students' preference for using realia in their speaking classes. The following text brings the detailed findings that address research questions 1 and 2.

The research, conducted with thirty-six students, reveals a strongly positive perception of using realia to enhance English-speaking skills. The findings from the ten-item survey indicate that students believe realia significantly improve their fluency, confidence, and overall communicative ability in EFL.

The results overwhelmingly support the use of realia as an effective pedagogical tool in English-speaking classes. A significant majority of students reported that realia directly improved their fluency and ability to express ideas. For instance, 95% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that using realia helped them tell stories and express themselves more fluently. This sentiment was echoed in responses indicating that realia makes speaking English easier (87% agreement) and improves overall communication skills (95% agreement). Beyond language fluency, students found realia to be an engaging and confidence-boosting medium. Over 88% of respondents considered realia an interesting tool for honing their speaking skills, and an even greater majority (95%) felt it encouraged them to speak more confidently in class.

The benefits also extended to cognitive aspects of language production. A vast majority of students (86%) agreed that realia helped them develop ideas and use more varied vocabulary. Similarly, 92% believed it improved their general speaking ability and helped them acquire vocabulary while reducing speech hesitation. The findings consistently show that students perceive realia as a valuable asset for a more dynamic, confident, and expressive speaking experience.

Obstacles in the Use of Realia in an English-Speaking Class

To further explore the obstacles students encountered when using realia in their English-speaking classes, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three selected respondents who obtained the highest score in the questionnaire; (DEP), the middle score (HMF), and the lowest score (AMF). The interviews, in which the respondents had to answer eight questions, focused on internal and external factors affecting their speaking performance (Fatma and Ernawati 2012). The following are the results of the semi-structured interview:

1. Internal factors

Several internal factors encountered by AMF, HMF, and DEP, included lack of confidence, shyness, fear of making mistakes, and feeling insecure:

a. Lack of confidence

Lack of confidence in speaking English was encountered by all three respondents. The obstacle encountered by the first respondent, namely the student with the lowest score on the questionnaire (AMF), has been described in excerpt 1, as follows:

> I'm not accustomed to using English miss, but if I only listen to English, it's still
> okay. I also feel like I'm not confident because I don't speak English very often,

> but if I use realia as an aid tool, it usually helps make me a little more confident because some of my friends focus on the realia that I bring, not those who focus too much on my speaking. (AMF)

A similar opinion was expressed by the second respondent (HMF), who stated experiencing something similar to AMF. HMF reported lack of confidence because of his somewhat lower proficiency in English, but also stated that the use of realia helped him to face this challenge, as seen in excerpt 2:

> I'm not very confident because I'm not familiar with English. I'm afraid that the words I use are wrong miss, usually, if I only listen to English, I can understand it, but if I speak English in class, I'm afraid to speak English. I'm afraid it won't be good and fluent. In my opinion, bringing realia to speaking class is quite helpful in increasing my confidence when speaking because it feels like bringing a friend to the front to speak. (HMF)

The benefits of using realia in the speaking class were also experienced by DEP - the student with the highest score, even though this student encountered a lack of confidence when speaking English. DEP's difficulty in remembering English vocabulary is reported in excerpt 3:

> I'm a person who is sometimes confident, sometimes not, but, more often not confident when speaking in class. Especially when using realia. I think it helps me remember vocabulary that I'm usually unfamiliar with, like in narrative texts, for example, the temple legends. miss. (DEP)

b. Shyness:

Shyness in speaking English was also encountered by all three respondents. AMF does not speak English regularly and consequently feels shy, as reported in excerpt 4:

> I'm quite shy and often silent for a moment and don't know what to say something. So, I usually end up being silent when I come in front of the class to speak because I don't know what to say. Using realia, it feels like it helps enough so that I don't feel quite shy, but it still feels like I can't talk. *(AMF)*

Similarly, to the first respondent (AMF), HMF, encountered shyness because he had made some grammar mistakes that made him feel ''shyness'', as described in excerpt 5:

> I'm quite shy to speak because I have made mistakes in words and grammar, which turned out to be wrong, so if I was asked to speak in English, I would be really shy. But when I'm in speaking class, I usually use realia, it usually really helps, so I don't get so shy because my brain tries to remember the words. But, it's annoying, if the teacher's regulations require students to make their realia, it's complicated, I think. (HMF)

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The third respondent (DEP), experienced problems during the English-speaking class as reported in excerpt 6:

> So far, I've been quite shy several times in speaking class. I feel happy when I speak using realia, it helps so I don't feel embarrassed, I'm even more embarrassed in singing class because my voice is bad. (DEP)

c. Fear of making mistakes:

Another factor affecting students' lower speaking skills is the fear of making mistakes. Most students reported fear of being mocked by their friends because they are making mistakes. Excerpt 7, describes AMF's thoughts:

> Yes, I'm afraid of being ridiculed, because in speaking class I often keep quiet. Using realia doesn't feel like it gives me the courage to speak. (AMF)

Similar to AMF, HMF also feels afraid of making mistakes as reported in excerpt 8:

> I'm afraid that my pronunciation will be wrong and it will look too fake. Realia does help me to speak fluently, but it can't correct my incorrect pronunciation. (HMF)

Even though DEP is the respondent with the highest score, this student also reported feelings afraid of making mistakes like the other two respondents.

> Yes, I feel afraid of making mistakes, afraid that what I say isn't related. In my opinion, using realia is also a significant way to boost myself so that I don't feel afraid of speaking in front of the class. (DEP)

d. Feeling insecure:

Feeling insecure is something that is common among some students. But this is different from AMF who does not feel insecure about his speaking skills. This situation was described in excerpt 10.

> I don't feel insecure, because I believe everyone has strengths and weaknesses. In my opinion, the ability to speak English can be improved; it's impossible for us to just keep doing this. I'm insecure about seeing my friends bring out their realia; it's better than mine. (AMF)

On the other hand, HMF feels insecure when speaking English with his friends who are better than him in the English-speaking class, as seen in excerpt 11:

> Because my ability to use English is still very poor to put into practice, I feel insecure about talking to my close friends, because my close friends are better at English, miss. (HMF)

Similarly, to HMF, DEP also feels insecure because he sees his friend as being better than him, but DEP uses this as motivation.

> Maybe sometimes I feel insecure when I see our friends who are better at speaking English, but I'm not really insecure, so I try to control myself so that I don't get jealous and feel insecure, hmm, I just take it as motivation, not as material to make myself insecure, miss. If we use realia, I think it is also an innovation so that we as students are more creative and don't feel tense in speaking class*. (DEP)*

2. External factors:

  a. Lack of preparation:

The first external factor in speaking English is the lack of preparation. Students tend to feel overwhelmed because there are so many subjects as explained by AMF:

> There are so many subjects, so there's no time to prepare for speaking class and prepare realia media. (AMF)

Meanwhile, HMF reported having very limited time to prepare due to a lack of practice in English conversation.

> Because of my lack of conversation practice, most of the time I only speak in my native language   and Indonesian. So that it doesn't take a lot of time, I usually make simple realia, like printing a poster, then folding it to make it 3D. (HMF)

The third respondent (DEP) also encountered the same thing.

> Yeah, I felt like I wasn't prepared enough, for example, if I wanted to tell a story about a legend, I didn't have time to prepare it in the d-1, so on D-day, I didn't feel like I was ready to talk. In the end, it didn't work out that well*. (DEP)*

  b. Limited vocabulary:

It cannot be denied that having adequate vocabulary is useful for students to express their thoughts more fluently. This obstacle was again experienced by all three respondents. The first respondent's explanation can be seen in excerpt 16:

> I'm too lazy to keep studying, and the lessons are more about the material than vocabulary, especially if I'm told to bring realia, I'm really too lazy to do it. (AMF)

HMF encountered obstacles related to mastering vocabulary because of limited exposure and not enough emphasis on vocabulary learning during the lessons, as described in excerpt 17:

> Because there is a lack of teaching at school that teaches you to memorize vocabulary, a lack of learning vocabulary, miss....But the good thing is that we were told to bring realia when joining the speaking class, and it is quite helpful for me. *(HMF)*

It cannot be denied that bringing realia when speaking English in class can support fluency as stated by DEP.

> Yes, I've experienced this, so when I'm in speaking class, I'm asked to bring realia, I'm really happy because it can help me remember the vocabulary. *(DEP)*

c. Friends or classmates:

Having support from friends or classmates is very helpful for students in English-speaking classes. On the contrary, AMF reported feeling sad when someone teases him:

> Yes, I often encounter teasing from my classmates when I speak English, but I try not to care about them. (AMF)

HMF also encountered a similar problem because he was asked not to speak English like a native speaker.

> Maybe because I'm often called "Native Style" because I tried to have an American accent. (HMF).

DEP also experienced mocking by his classmates when he spoke English in class, as described in excerpt 21:

> Well, this happens a lot, miss. They often laugh at me and then whisper and talk about me as if they don't like me when I speak in front of the class. I don't know why, maybe my pronunciation is wrong, or I'm just too fluent in speaking class. Maybe they're jealous, that's what annoys me. *(DEP)*

d. Embarrassment:

Being embarrassed by classmates when speaking English is certainly an unpleasant thing. Having the ability to control one's emotions and not feel upset is important as explained by AMF in excerpt 22:

> Even though I often get embarrassed, such as being laughed at by friends or teachers when I speak English, I still try to control myself so I can still express what I have in my mind. *(AMF)*

Being corrected by friends during the English-speaking class is certainly embarrassing. HMF reported encountering this problem:

> At that time, I was having a speaking class, it was a role play. It turned out that the person I was talking to knew that it was wrong, and he said to me ''Sorry, your English is still wrong, it should be...... And it's not...'' It really made me feel embarrassed at that time. (HMF)

DEP also felt embarrassed when speaking in front of the class, but his friends did not comment on his language skills directly to him; rather, they whispered to each other:

> ... I've never been embarrassed like that; it's bothering me if they start whispering to each other when I'm speaking. *(DEP)*

Discussion

Setiadi and Firman (2018) state that realia may enhance students' learning outcomes, especially in speaking skills. This has been confirmed by present research as the results revealed that most respondents agreed that realia may encourage them to speak and tell stories more fluently, and that they are interested in learning-related media used for honing speaking skills. Therefore, realia can boost their confidence in the English-speaking classes, as shown in questionnaire items 1, 2, and 3. Since realia can help them raise their attention and serve as a source of ideas in several themes and instructional materials during a speaking class, students feel more confident and fluent in expressing their ideas, thoughts, and points of view on topics of discussion, as reflected in their responses to the questionnaire items 4, 5, 6, and 7. The paper written by Kansil, Tuna, and Liando (2022); supports the present findings that self-confidence makes it possible for students to achieve their best performance in speaking. In another study, a significant correlation between self-confidence and speaking skills has been confirmed (Suwari and Wirastuti 2023).

The respondents pointed out that realia expedite their understanding of the topics discussed in the speaking class because the pictures and real objects brought into the class could stimulate and help them acquire more vocabulary. Mandasari and Aminatun (2020); confirm that realia could provide exposure to real-life situations. Moreover, claims by Andini, Sofian and Suhartono (2023), that the use of such learning media in the teaching-learning process can stimulate students' interests and desires support the present findings. Furthermore, realia could improve speaking ability, which in turn improves speaking performance during classes.

The results of the semi-structured interview with the three respondents who had the highest, middle, and lowest scores on the questionnaire uncovered some speaking obstacles encountered during their English-speaking classes. The research identified significant obstacles hindering students' English speaking performance, which can be categorized as internal (psychological) and external (environmental) factors (Fatma and Ernawati 2012).

Among the internal factors, the most pervasive issue was a lack of confidence, reported by all respondents. This was closely linked to a fear of making mistakes, shyness, and feeling self-conscious about their accent and grammar. Students expressed anxiety about being judged by their peers, which inhibited their ability

to communicate effectively. This was compounded by feelings of insecurity, with some students comparing their abilities unfavourably to their friends or feeling self-conscious about the real-world objects (realia) they used in class.

Among external factors, the students pointed to a lack of preparation and practice as a key challenge, acknowledging that insufficient opportunities to speak limited their improvement. A limited vocabulary also presented a significant barrier, making it difficult to express ideas fluently. Critically, the classroom environment itself was a source of difficulty. All respondents reported negative experiences with classmates, citing feelings of annoyance and embarrassment stemming from their peers' reactions, which discouraged them from participating in class.

Although one of the respondents (DEP) achieved a high score, he still reported problems speaking English because sometimes he felt less confident, even shy when speaking English, afraid of making mistakes when speaking English, and insecure about his realia. Meanwhile, in terms of external factors, DEP experienced obstacles such as a lack of preparation, limited vocabulary skills, and being annoyed by his classmates. These factors were even more pronounced in the interview with the students who achieved middle and low scores. According to Yánez, Morán and Guanoluisa (2024), vocabulary acquisition is crucial in language learning as it directly impacts learners' overall proficiency and communicative abilities.

4. Conclusion and recommendation

Some points to be highlighted concerning the findings of the present study are as follows: first, realia have a positive impact on students' perception of their speaking skills, especially in increasing their confidence in English-speaking classes and making them more fluent when speaking English. This can be deduced from the results of the questionnaire, which indicate that 81% or twenty-nine out of thirty-six students accept that realia make them more confident and facilitate their English-speaking classes. Second, based on the results of the semi-structured interviews with three male respondents, it may be proposed that they have problems in their speaking classes which are caused by both internal and external factors, with external factors being the more dominant.

Several recommendations are proposed for students, English teachers, and future researchers concerning the drawbacks of the present study. The researchers hope that students will use realia more effectively as a medium for learning English to improve their speaking skills. EFL teachers are recommended to use effective and interesting learning aids like realia in teaching speaking classes because realia may attract their students' attention and foster their motivation to engage more actively in class activities.

One of the limitations of the study is that it explored student perceptions and obstacles, but did not explicitly include the teachers' perspectives on the challenges of using realia in EFL speaking classes or their observations of potential challenges experienced by students. Furthermore, the study focused on students' perceptions and reported obstacles, but it did not appear to include direct assessment or observation of their actual speaking performance improvements when using realia. Researchers could conduct classroom observations to directly witness how realia

are used, how students interact with them, and what challenges arise in real-time. This would provide a more objective perspective to complement the self-reported data. Moreover, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of realia, future studies should include direct assessments of students' speaking performance (e.g., fluency, accuracy, vocabulary range, and pronunciation) before and after interventions with realia. This could involve speaking tests, rubrics, or video recordings of speaking activities. In addition, future research should involve a larger and more diverse sample of students from various schools, grade levels, and English proficiency levels. This would increase the generalizability and applicability of the findings. While a mixed-method approach was used, the qualitative data on obstacles were gathered from only three male respondents chosen because of their questionnaire scores (lowest, middle, and highest). This small number of interviewees might not capture the full range and nuances of obstacles faced by the larger student body.

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Tables

ISTRAŽIVANJE STAJALIŠTA UČENIKA SREDNJE ŠKOLE O REALIJAMA (PREDMETIMA IZ SVAKODNEVNOGA ŽIVOTA) U PODUČAVANJU GOVORNIH VJEŠTINA NA ENGLESKOME JEZIKU

Sažetak

Podučavanje govornih vještina na engleskome jeziku učenika srednjih škola predstavlja velik izazov za učitelje engleskoga kao stranoga jezika jer moraju poticati govorne vještine učenika koristeći se nastavnim pomagalima, a jedno od njih jesu predmeti iz svakodnevnoga života. Zadatak je ovoga istraživanja istražiti percepcije učenika o uporabi navedenih predmeta te uočiti prepreke koje nastaju prilikom njihove uporabe u nastavi engleskog jezika u školi Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri (SMPN) 1 Dlingo. Ispitanici su u ovome istraživanju 36 učenika koji su tijekom akademske godine 2024./2025. pohadali IX. B razred škole SMNP 1 Dlingo, a među kojima je 19 učenica i 17 učenika, čija je dob bila između 15 i 16 godina. Oni su učili engleski jezik više od pet godina i bili su na nižoj srednjoj razini znanja jezika u vrijeme prikupljanja podataka. Upotrijebljen je pristup mješovite metode prikupljanja kvantitativnih i kvalitativnih podataka. Korišten je *online* upitnik kako bi se odredila percepcija učenika o uporabi predmeta iz svakodnevnoga života u nastavi engleskoga jezika. Dobiveni rezultati analizirani su prema 4-stupanjskoj Likertovoj ljestvici. Pored toga, proveden je polustrukturirani intervju s trojicom učenika kako bi se detektirale prepreke na koje učenici nailaze kada govore engleski jezik koristeći se predmetima iz svakodnevnoga života. Rezultati su analizirani primjenom interaktivnih modela koje predlažu Miles i & Huberman (1994), odnosno prikupljanje podataka, redukcija podataka, prikaz podataka i zaključak. Prikupljeni podatci otkrivaju da je većina ispitanika imala pozitivno mišljenje o upotrebi predmeta iz svakodnevnoga života u poboljšanju govornih vještina učenika. Osim toga, rezultati polustrukturiranih intervjua s ispitanicima uputili su na prepreke povezane s unutarnjim i vanjskim čimbenicima.

Ključne riječi: engleski jezik, prepreke, percepcija, predmeti iz svakodnevnog života, govorne vještine