

## ABSTRACT

**Pujianti, Dewi 2024. Utilizing Realia as Contextual Learning Media to Develop Young Learners' English Vocabulary in the Context of Differentiated Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*): A Pre-experimental Study at Primary Level.**

Developing English vocabulary in young learners is a critical component of language acquisition, particularly in Differentiated Curriculum that caters to diverse learning needs. Realia offers a hands-on approach that aligns with the principles of contextual learning, making abstract concepts more concrete and relatable.

This research investigates the effectiveness of using realia as contextual learning media to develop young learners' vocabulary mastery. It compares students' vocabulary mastery before and after using realia as contextual learning media and identifies any significant difference before and after using realia. Utilizing a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, data were collected through pre-tests and post-tests. The population of this research is fourth-grade students from SDN Cikawung. This research used purposive sampling consisting of 20 fourth-grade students from SDN Cikawung.

Based on the findings of this research, there were significant improvements in the student's vocabulary mastery after treatment using realia as contextual learning media. After collecting the data, the pre-test results show a mean score of 49.50; the post-test results show a mean of 84.50. It indicates that students' vocabulary has increased. In addition, the t-test showed  $t_{\text{count}} 10.345 > t_{\text{table}} 2.093$ , indicating that the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted, and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. It shows that the average between the pre-test and post-test results indicated significant improvement in using realia as contextual learning media in developing students' vocabulary mastery.

This research concludes that using realia as contextual learning media significantly enhances young learners' English vocabulary mastery. The substantial improvement in students' test scores after the treatment indicates that realia effectively makes abstract concepts more concrete and understandable. Therefore, English teachers should consider incorporating realia as a media for teaching vocabulary to young learners. Future researchers should explore the long-term impact of realia on vocabulary mastery and its effectiveness across different grade levels and subject areas.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary Mastery, Realia, Contextual Learning, Differentiated Curriculum, EYL students.