



## **LINGUOCULTURAL STUDY OF REALIAS IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the concept of realia in the French language from a linguocultural perspective. Realias are culture-specific lexical units that reflect the unique social, historical, and cultural features of a particular nation. The study focuses on the classification, semantic characteristics, translation challenges, and cultural significance of French realias. Special attention is given to how these linguistic elements embody French identity, traditions, and worldview. The research also highlights the importance of realias in intercultural communication and language teaching.

**Keywords:** realia, linguoculture, French language, translation, culture, semantics, intercultural communication

### **Introduction**

Language and culture are deeply interconnected, and one of the most vivid manifestations of this relationship is the presence of realia. Realias are words and expressions that denote objects, phenomena, or concepts specific to a particular culture and often lack direct equivalents in other languages.

The French language, with its rich cultural heritage, offers numerous examples of realia that reflect its history, traditions, and social life. From culinary terms such as croissant and baguette to socio-political concepts like laïcité, these units provide insight into the French way of life.

This article aims to analyze French realias from a linguocultural perspective, focusing on their classification, functions, and translation issues.

#### **1. The Concept of Realias in Linguocultural Studies**

The term "realias" originates from Latin, meaning "real things." In linguistics, it refers to words that denote culturally specific objects or phenomena. According to scholars



such as Vlahov and Florin, realia are lexical items that carry national and historical color. From a linguocultural standpoint, realia serve as carriers of cultural information. They reflect:

- 1) National traditions
- 2) Social structures
- 3) Historical events
- 4) Everyday life

For example, the French word *terroir* does not simply mean "land" but encompasses cultural, geographical, and historical aspects related to agriculture and identity.

## 2. Classification of French Realia

French realias can be classified into several categories:

### 2.1. Geographic and Environmental Realia

These include terms related to landscapes, regions, and natural features:

Provence

Mont Blanc

### 2.2. Socio-Political Realia

These reflect political and institutional structures:

Assemblée nationale

laïcité

### 2.3. Cultural and Everyday Life Realia

This is the most extensive group:

bistro

haute couture

apéritif

### 2.4. Historical Realia

These refer to historical events or periods:

Ancien Régime

Bastille

Each category reveals different aspects of French culture and identity.

## 3. Linguocultural Features of French Realia

French realias are characterized by several key features:

### 3.1. Cultural Specificity

They represent concepts unique to French culture. For instance, *haute couture* is not just "high fashion" but a regulated French fashion system.



### 3.2. Semantic Complexity

Many realias have layered meanings. The term banlieue, for example, refers not only to suburbs but also carries social and cultural connotations.

### 3.3. Emotional and Connotative Value

Realia often evoke emotions or cultural associations. Words like café symbolize not just a drink but a social institution in France.

## 4. Translation Challenges of French Realia

One of the most important issues in studying realia is their translation.

### 4.1. Lack of Equivalents

Many realias have no direct translation:

terroir

joie de vivre

### 4.2. Translation Strategies

Translators use several approaches:

Transliteration: baguette → baguette

Descriptive translation: terroir → “a region’s unique agricultural environment”

Functional equivalents: bistro → “small café”

### 4.3. Cultural Adaptation

In some cases, translators adapt realias to the target culture, though this may result in loss of meaning.

## 5. Role of Realia in Intercultural Communication

Realia play a crucial role in intercultural communication. They:

Help preserve cultural identity

Promote cultural awareness

Facilitate deeper understanding between cultures

For language learners, mastering realia is essential for achieving communicative competence. Without understanding cultural references, communication may remain superficial.

## 6. Realia in Language Teaching

Teaching realia enhances:

Vocabulary acquisition

Cultural competence

Critical thinking



Teachers can use authentic materials such as films, literature, and media to introduce students to realia.

For example, French films often portray everyday realias like boulangerie or marché, helping learners understand their practical and cultural significance.

French realias are an essential component of the linguocultural system of the language. They reflect the unique cultural, historical, and social characteristics of French society. Their study provides valuable insights into the relationship between language and culture.

Understanding and properly translating realia remains a challenge but also an opportunity to enrich intercultural communication. Therefore, realias should be given special attention in linguistic research and language teaching.

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