

AUTHENTIC MATERIALS AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS’ PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Annotation. *This thesis examines authentic materials as a pedagogical means for developing productive skills in foreign language teaching, focusing on speaking and writing as outcomes of meaningful communication. The aim is to justify criteria for selection and classroom integration of authentic texts and media. The methodology synthesizes theory, comparative analysis, and a model of task design. Scientific novelty lies in linking authenticity levels to measurable productive performance.*

Аннотация. *В тезисе рассматриваются аутентичные материалы как средство развития продуктивных навыков в обучении иностранному языку, с акцентом на говорение и письмо как результаты смысловой коммуникации. Цель работы — обосновать критерии отбора и методику внедрения аутентичных текстов и медиа. Методология включает теоретический анализ, сопоставление подходов и моделирование заданий. Новизна заключается в соотношении уровней аутентичности с измеряемыми показателями продуктивности.*

Abstract. *The thesis investigates authentic materials as a tool for developing learners’ productive skills in foreign language teaching, with speaking and writing treated as outcomes of purposeful communication. The study aims to substantiate selection criteria and an integration model for authentic texts and media. The methodology combines theoretical synthesis, comparative analysis, and task-design modelling. Novelty is achieved by relating degrees of authenticity to measurable indicators of productive performance and classroom feasibility.*

Keywords: *autentik materiallar; produktiv ko‘nikmalar; og‘zaki nutq; yozma nutq; vazifa dizayni; baholash mezonlari; kommunikativ yondashuv.*

Ключевые слова: *аутентичные материалы; продуктивные навыки; устная речь; письменная речь; дизайн заданий; критерии оценивания; коммуникативный подход.*

Keywords: *authentic materials; productive skills; speaking; writing; task-based learning; assessment criteria; communicative competence.*

The present thesis addresses authentic materials as a means of developing students' productive skills in foreign language teaching, where productive competence is defined as the ability to generate coherent spoken and written output appropriate to purpose, audience, and context. The mechanism through which authenticity influences production is grounded in exposure to real lexical bundles, discourse markers, genre conventions, and pragmatic norms that textbooks often simplify. A typical example is using a real service email, a customer review, or a short interview clip to trigger learners' responses in the same genre rather than practicing isolated sentences. Empirically, classroom-based studies commonly report moderate gains in fluency and lexical diversity when instruction uses authentic input alongside guided output, with effect sizes often ranging around the small-to-medium band in applied linguistics syntheses, and teachers frequently observing noticeable improvements within 6–10 weeks of systematic task cycles. Scientifically, this supports the psycholinguistic view that production benefits from rich input and interactional feedback because learners can map form to function under communicative pressure, which aligns with communicative competence frameworks and usage-based accounts of language learning [1; 2].

A central concept in the argument is authenticity itself, which can be defined not as a binary property but as a continuum comprising text authenticity, task authenticity, and situational authenticity. The mechanism here is that authentic texts provide naturally occurring language, but productive development occurs only when learners are required to act on the text with a communicative goal, such as persuading, requesting, summarizing, or narrating. For example, a newspaper article can remain merely informative unless students must write a response letter, deliver a short briefing, or debate a position using evidence from the text. In practical terms, course analytics in many university language programs show that when output tasks require genre-appropriate constraints, such as word limits, rhetorical moves, and audience specification, the proportion of students reaching higher rubric bands can increase by roughly 10–20 percentage points over a semester, even when overall contact hours remain constant. From a scientific perspective, this demonstrates that authenticity interacts with task design and scaffolding, because cognitive load must be managed so that attention can be allocated to message formulation and linguistic encoding rather than comprehension alone [3].

Selection of authentic materials requires explicit criteria because “real” does not automatically mean “pedagogically useful,” and productive skills can be hindered by excessive difficulty or cultural opacity. The mechanism of effective selection operates through balancing linguistic complexity, topical relevance, genre representativeness, and the possibility of transformation into output-oriented tasks. A concrete example is choosing a short podcast transcript with clear turn-taking and frequent stance markers to support speaking, or selecting a product description with predictable rhetorical structure to support

writing. Quantitatively, readability indices, lexical frequency profiling, and coverage thresholds can guide selection; for instance, many applied studies suggest that learners need high lexical coverage to comprehend comfortably, and teachers often aim to keep unknown word density low enough to maintain task engagement while still providing learning value. Scientifically, such criteria reflect the interaction between input comprehensibility and noticing, because productive gains depend on learners noticing forms, rehearsing them, and retrieving them under communicative conditions, which is consistent with form-focused instruction integrated into meaning-focused activities [2; 4].

Authentic materials also function as a bridge between receptive and productive skills, since speaking and writing can be conceptualized as recontextualized comprehension. The mechanism is that learners first build a mental representation of meaning from authentic input, then restructure it through summarizing, evaluating, or re-creating messages, which requires syntactic and lexical choices. An example is a “read-listen-speak” sequence: students read a short announcement, listen to a related voicemail, and then record a spoken reply that meets constraints such as politeness, clarity, and concision. In numeric terms, teachers can track development through speech rate, mean length of utterance, number of self-repairs, and writing measures such as type-token ratio and error density, with many classrooms reporting gradual improvements across repeated cycles even when topics change. Scientifically, the improvement is explained by repeated retrieval and proceduralization, where learners convert declarative knowledge about language into more automatic production through practice that is contextualized and feedback-rich [1; 5].

To operationalize authenticity for productive development, this thesis proposes a model of task design in which each authentic item is mapped to a target genre, a communicative purpose, and a measurable output product. The mechanism is a staged progression: pre-task activation, guided noticing, constrained production, and reflective revision, which jointly reduce anxiety while maintaining real-world relevance. For instance, an authentic restaurant review can lead to a speaking task where students role-play a complaint call, followed by a writing task producing a formal email, both evaluated with the same pragmatic criteria. In performance tracking, a rubric-based approach commonly yields more stable inter-rater agreement when descriptors align with genre moves, and programs often report reliability improvements when they use analytic rubrics with 4–6 criteria rather than holistic impressions. Scientifically, this supports validity arguments in language assessment: productive skill measures are more interpretable when tasks resemble real communicative situations and when rating criteria reflect construct-relevant features such as coherence, appropriateness, and interactional management [6].

Assessment of productive skills in authenticity-based instruction should combine criterion-referenced rubrics with evidence of growth across cycles. The mechanism is that analytic rubrics make expectations explicit and allow targeted feedback on fluency, coherence, lexical choice, grammatical control, and pragmatic appropriateness, while portfolio elements document revision and transfer. A classroom example is using a two-draft writing procedure where the first draft is produced under time constraints and the second draft is revised after feedback referencing authentic models, such as real emails or editorials. Numerically, growth can be expressed as reductions in error rates per 100 words, increases in cohesive devices, and higher rubric scores; many departments observe that the most consistent gains occur in discourse organization and lexical appropriateness when learners repeatedly compare their output to authentic exemplars. Scientifically, this triangulates product and process data and aligns with formative assessment theory, because learning is enhanced when feedback is specific, timely, and connected to authentic performance standards rather than abstract grammatical lists [4; 6].

A comparative analysis of authentic versus adapted materials clarifies when each is pedagogically optimal for productive skill development. The definition of adapted materials is that they are modified for instructional simplicity, often reducing lexical diversity and cultural references, while authentic materials preserve natural discourse features. The mechanism behind the comparison is that adapted texts can lower comprehension barriers and support initial controlled practice, whereas authentic materials stimulate richer production by providing realistic rhetorical patterns and pragmatic constraints. For example, beginners may benefit from adapted dialogues to practice core speech acts, but intermediate learners often produce more varied output when responding to authentic social media posts, announcements, or interviews. Statistically, many teaching contexts report that the gap between adapted and authentic conditions narrows when scaffolding is strong, and the authentic advantage appears most clearly in pragmatic appropriateness and lexical sophistication rather than in raw grammatical accuracy. Scientifically, this indicates that authenticity should be treated as an instructional variable that interacts with proficiency, task complexity, and support strategies, consistent with complexity-accuracy-fluency trade-off perspectives [1; 3].

Within the Uzbekistan higher education context, authentic materials are particularly relevant due to expanding academic mobility, professional communication needs, and the requirement to align outcomes with competence-based education. The mechanism of relevance is that students encounter real professional genres such as CVs, research abstracts, emails, and presentations, and authentic samples help them internalize conventions necessary for academic and workplace participation. A concrete example is using authentic conference call-for-papers announcements and published abstracts to train students to write their own

abstracts, then deliver a short oral pitch. Numerically, many universities allocate limited classroom hours, so integrating authenticity can raise efficiency by enabling one material to support multiple skills, and teachers often report better student engagement and attendance when tasks mirror real goals such as internships or international certification. Scientifically, this supports the pedagogical claim that motivation and perceived utility mediate learning outcomes: authenticity increases task value, which in turn can increase persistence and practice time, both strongly associated with productive improvement [5].

Because authentic materials may introduce linguistic and cultural complexity, scaffolding strategies are necessary to prevent overload and superficial imitation. The mechanism of scaffolding includes pre-teaching key lexis, using glossaries, providing genre templates, modelling discourse moves, and employing collaborative planning before individual production. For instance, before a debate based on an authentic editorial, students can complete a “claim-evidence-counterargument” chart, rehearse stance expressions, and then conduct the debate with assigned roles. In measurable terms, scaffolding tends to reduce off-task time and increases the proportion of students who meet minimal performance thresholds, and many instructors observe fewer breakdowns in interaction when students have planning time and functional phrases. Scientifically, this corresponds to sociocultural theory and interactionist views where mediation, peer collaboration, and structured rehearsal facilitate internalization and improve the quality of output by making complex tasks manageable without removing their authentic communicative purpose [2; 5].

A concise illustration of how authenticity can be systematized is provided through a small set of genre-linked tasks and performance indicators, showing how a single authentic source can yield multiple productive outcomes. The mechanism is the alignment of input genre with output genre and assessment, ensuring that practice targets transferable communicative actions. For example, an authentic job advertisement can lead to speaking tasks such as a mock interview answer and writing tasks such as a cover letter paragraph, both assessed for appropriateness and coherence. The numeric indicators can include time-to-completion, word count, speech duration, number of content points covered, and rubric band distribution, which together create a transparent monitoring system. Scientifically, this operationalization strengthens the research-based rationale for classroom decisions by connecting authenticity to observable learning evidence, improving methodological clarity and enabling replication across groups.

Table 1. Example mapping of authentic materials to productive outcomes and indicators.

Material type: Job advertisement; Target output: cover letter paragraph; Indicator: rhetorical moves present (3–5), error rate per 100 words, lexical specificity score.

Material type: Podcast interview segment; Target output: spoken summary; Indicator: speech rate, pauses per minute, content coverage percentage.

Material type: Customer complaint email; Target output: spoken role-play response and written reply; Indicator: politeness strategies count, coherence rating, resolution completeness.

Material type: Infographic; Target output: oral briefing; Indicator: accuracy of figures, use of linking devices, time control.

Material type: Short news report; Target output: opinion paragraph; Indicator: claim-evidence link quality, stance markers frequency, cohesion index.

To demonstrate disciplinary precision, even when language teaching is the focus, it is useful to represent linguistic “formulas” that learners can appropriate as constructional templates, analogous to formulas in other sciences. The mechanism is that formulaic sequences reduce cognitive load in production and improve fluency and coherence, especially in academic and professional genres. For example, common writing templates include “The aim of this report is to...,” “The findings indicate that...,” and “It is recommended that...,” while speaking templates include “From my perspective...,” “The key point is...,” and “Could you clarify...”. In numeric terms, corpus-informed teaching often shows that a limited set of high-frequency academic bundles accounts for a substantial share of fluent academic discourse, and instruction that highlights these bundles can increase their appropriate use in student output across repeated assignments. Scientifically, this aligns with corpus linguistics and usage-based learning: repeated exposure and guided practice enable learners to store and retrieve multiword units, leading to more native-like production and stronger genre control [4].

Conclusion. Authentic materials develop productive skills most effectively when authenticity is conceptualized as a continuum and implemented through genre-aligned tasks that require meaningful output. The thesis shows that the pedagogical mechanism depends on careful selection, scaffolding, and assessment criteria that make communicative success measurable. A task-design model linking authentic input to constrained production and revision supports speaking fluency, writing coherence, and pragmatic appropriateness within limited instructional time. The synthesized findings indicate that authenticity is not a decorative element but a functional instrument for competence-based foreign language teaching.

Foydalanilgan adabiyotlar

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