

УДК 81'343:378

DOI: 10.35619/iiu.v1i23.725

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AUTHENTIC MATERIALS AS MEANS OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE WITH NON-LINGUISTIC SPECIALTIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract. The article presents a methodological and practice-oriented study on the peculiarities of using authentic materials in the process of teaching English for professional communication in higher education institutions. The concept of “authentic material” is defined. Classification of such materials is provided. The study summarizes the results of recent research proving the positive impact of authentic materials on the development of professional foreign language communicative competence, critical thinking, analytical skills, professional lexical competence, intercultural competence, motivation, and learner autonomy. The work identifies didactic principles for selecting materials according to students’ language proficiency levels and the specifics of their professional activities. The paper introduces modern pedagogical approaches, the creative implementation of which allows for the organization of engaging and productive learning activities during practical classes. Practical examples of using authentic materials in the English for professional communication classroom are provided. It is proven that the systematic and methodologically grounded application of authentic materials contributes to the formation of competitive specialists capable of effective professional communication in a globalized environment.

Keywords: authentic materials, English for professional communication, higher education, communicative competence, professional competence.

Problem setting. With the advancement of globalization and the internationalization of educational systems and professional activities, there is a growing demand for specialists with a high level of foreign language proficiency. The modern paradigm of higher education in Ukraine is aimed at preparing

competitive specialists across various fields that are capable of intercultural communication in a professional environment. Proficiency in a foreign language is becoming not only a measure of academic training but also a key prerequisite for professional success. Achieving this goal requires new, more efficient and effective approaches to foreign language learning.

The use of authentic materials – created for real communication and not adapted for educational purposes – is a valuable means of developing professional foreign language competence, as they reflect real linguistic practices, professional vocabulary, and the genre and discourse patterns encountered in professional contexts.

Analysis of basic research and publications. The issue of using authentic texts in foreign language teaching is a subject of active scientific inquiry in both domestic and foreign pedagogical science. The traditional interpretation of authenticity is based on the works of H. Widdowson, who viewed it as the result of interaction between the text and the recipient, as well as A. Gilmore, who emphasized the natural origin of the text as a key criterion for authenticity (Widdowson, 1998; Gilmore, 2007).

Recently, increasing attention has been paid to the methodological aspects of using authentic materials in the process of learning English for Specific Purposes and English for professional communication. Among domestic scholars and methodologists, significant contributions have been made by H. Milrud, O. Zahorodnyi, M. Kashchuk, I. Kolomiichuk, and others. It is worth noting that in foreign methodology, this issue is examined in greater detail, as evidenced by the works of T. Adams, L. Miller, J. Richards, J. Sherman, and others.

The purpose of the article is to study the specific features of using authentic materials in the process of teaching English for professional communication for non-language major students in higher education institutions and to identify ways to optimize this process.

The basic research material. The use of authentic materials in English for professional communication classes is a key factor in the successful development of future specialists' foreign language communicative competence.

In classical methodological literature, authenticity was viewed as a characteristic of the source reflecting the naturalness of the linguistic material: texts created by native speakers for real communication rather than specifically for educational purposes (Gilmore, 2007).

Modern methodological approaches treat authentic texts as a resource that ensures the integration of linguistic, professional, and intercultural aspects of learning. Authentic materials are not limited to written texts. They can be divided into the following categories (Adam et al, 2011; Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024):

print materials (books, newspapers, magazines, poems, postcards, advertisements, articles, reports, technical instructions, etc.);

audio materials (podcasts, interviews, lectures, audio recordings, songs, etc.);

video materials (TV programs, videos, webinars);

Internet resources.

All these tools can bring the linguistic environment closer to professional practice. This aligns with the communicative approach to teaching, according to which foreign language learning is not reduced to memorizing a large volume of instructional material. Instead, it should be oriented toward mastering living language skills, language used in situations of everyday or professional communication, rather than being merely an abstract system of grammar and vocabulary (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Lytvynko et al, 2025).

English for Specific Purposes, Professional English, and other areas of academic language education emphasize that language teaching must align with the specific needs of professional communication. This means that students should acquire competence by working with real documents, business letters, technical documentation, and scientific articles. In short, all the genres they will encounter in their professional careers (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Zvarych et al, 2024).

In English for professional communication classes, authentic texts serve as a resource that builds key components of students' professional competence, such as terminological competence, functional-discourse competence, and strategic skills (including planning linguistic behavior, choosing appropriate structures, and quickly responding to communicative situations). This is supported by contemporary research, which demonstrates a link between working with authentic texts and improving the quality of professional language skills, including the ability to analyze and interpret specialized materials (Zvarych et al, 2024; Bondar, 2024).

Modern digital technologies significantly expand the possibilities for working with authentic texts. Online platforms, digital libraries, professional websites, podcasts, video lectures, and interactive webinars allow students to engage in various types of language activities: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The use of multimodal resources promotes the development of information literacy, the ability to work with different text formats, and fosters critical analysis skills (Fauziyah & Sumarni, 2024; Soltani & Brakni, 2024).

The application of digital resources also opens up opportunities for individualized learning: students can choose texts according to their own professional interests, proficiency levels, and learning styles, which increases motivation and the effectiveness of material acquisition (Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024).

The practical use of authentic texts in teaching English for professional communication begins with the competent selection of materials. In modern linguodidactics, there are several principles for the effective selection of authentic materials: relevance, functionality, complexity corresponding to the students' level, as well as the genre and thematic specifics of their professional activities (Fauziyah & Sumarni, 2024).

Relevance implies that the text corresponds to the students' current professional needs. This may include articles from scientific journals, technical manuals, business letters, reports, presentations, webinars, and multimedia resources. It is also crucial to consider the students' language proficiency level. The initial level requires adapted authentic materials, while the advanced one can work with completely unedited texts (Soltani & Brakni, 2024).

The functionality of the material lies in the fact that it not only contains lexical and grammatical units but also demonstrates specific communicative strategies applied in professional situations. In the context of teaching English for professional communication, special attention should be paid to selecting materials according to the students' major. For instance, for students of economic specialties, these could be corporate reports, financial news, and business interviews; for future IT specialists – technical specifications, manuals, and professional podcasts; for future historians, political scientists, and international relations specialists – articles from professional journals, interviews with experts, and materials that may include phrasing for persuasion, clarifying a position, argumentation, and data presentation, which are essential for professional communication.

Adaptation of authentic materials ensures their accessibility for students of various proficiency levels. It may include simplifying complex syntactic structures, highlighting key terminology, adding explanatory comments, creating glossaries of terms, and designing interactive exercises (Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024).

In our pedagogical practice in English for professional communication classes, we widely employ the communicative approach. The emphasis is placed on discussions, debates, and role-plays using authentic sources. Let us provide an example of a role-play for speech therapy (logopaedics) students, where the focus is on the ability to explain complex concepts in simple terms and demonstrate empathy.

Role Play: The First Consultation (Initial Assessment)

Topic: Explaining a speech delay to a concerned parent.

Objective: To practice using professional vocabulary in a simplified way and giving advice.

Card A: The Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

Your Task: You have just finished observing 4-year-old Kolia. He has a speech delay (he speaks like a 2-year-old). You need to explain the situation to his mother/father.

Key Points to Mention:

1. ***Observation:*** Kolia is good at non-verbal communication (gestures), but his vocabulary is small (only 20 words).

2. ***Diagnosis:*** Use the term ***Expressive Language Delay*** but explain it simply.

3. ***Advice:*** Recommend ***parallel talk*** (narrating what the child is doing) and reducing screen time.

4. ***Next Steps:*** Suggest two therapy sessions per week.

Useful Phrases:

Based on my observation...

In simple terms, it means...

I recommend focusing on...

Don't worry, with regular practice...

Card B: The Parent (Mother/Father)

Your Task: You are Kolia's parent. You are very worried because Kolia's cousin is the same age and speaks in full sentences, but Kolia only says single words.

Key Points to Ask:

1. **The Cause:** *Is it because we speak two languages at home? Is it because of too much YouTube?*

2. **The School:** *Will he be able to go to a normal kindergarten/school?*

3. **The Process:** *How long will the therapy take?*

4. **Emotions:** *Show that you are stressed and need support.*

Useful Phrases:

Is it my fault?

Will he catch up with other children?

How can I help him at home?

I'm afraid that...

Vocabulary Support (Glossary)

Speech delay – затримка мовлення.

Milestones – етапи розвитку (те, що дитина має вміти в певному віці).

To catch up – наздогнати (однолітків).

Non-verbal cues – невербальні сигнали (жести, міміка).

To encourage – заохочувати.

Consistency – системність/послідовність.

Step-by-Step Instructions for the Teacher:

1. **Warm-up (5 min):** *Ask students: What is the hardest part of being an SLP? Is it treating the child or talking to the parents?*

2. **Preparation (10 min):** *Give students the cards to look up words or plan their arguments.*

3. **Role Play (10-15 min):** *Students perform in pairs. The SLP must try to be calm and professional, while the Parent should be emotional.*

4. **Feedback (5 min):** *Focus on how the SLP simplified professional terms (e.g., instead of **phonological disorder**, saying **difficulty pronouncing sounds**).*

Conversation structure diagram:

Technique: The Feedback Sandwich

Positive start: *Kolia is very engaged and has a great imagination.*

The Issue (The Task): *However, he struggles to use full sentences to express his needs.*

Positive outcome/Action: *If we start therapy now, we can help him catch up before school starts.*

Cheat Sheet: Professional vs. Simple English for SLPs *(It will help to translate medical language into a form understandable for parents, which is crucial for a successful consultation)*

Expressive Language Delay – *Children understand more than they can say. They have trouble putting thoughts into words.*

Receptive Language Disorder – *Your child has difficulty understanding what other people are saying or following instructions.*

Articulation / Phonological Disorder – *Your child has trouble making specific sounds (like **r** or **s**), which makes their speech hard to understand.*

Non-verbal communication – *How the child communicates without words: using eye contact, pointing, or gestures.*

Stuttering / Disfluency – When the flow of speech is broken by repetitions or long pauses.

Auditory Processing – How the brain recognizes and interprets the sounds it hears.

Fine Motor Skills – Small movements, like using muscles in the tongue and lips to produce clear sounds.

Useful Phrases for Softening the Diagnosis (Hedging)

Instead of *Your child has a problem*:

I've noticed some challenges with...

There is a small gap between Tommy's skills and the expected milestones.

Instead of *You must do this*:

It would be very helpful if you could...

I suggest trying a technique called 'modeling' at home.

Parental support:

It's a common situation, and the fact that you're here is a great first step.

Every child develops at their own pace, but some need a little extra push.

Based on the project method, students create their own research papers, presentations, interviews, or analytical reports using authentic materials. The Task-based Learning (TBL) method is also employed. It is an excellent approach for students as it simulates real-world professional challenges. Instead of simply learning grammar, students solve a specific professional task, using language as a tool. Let us provide an example of a TBL task for future marketing specialists.

Product Launch: Launching a New Eco-Friendly Product.

Goal: *To teach how to present a product and argue its benefits (USP – Unique Selling Proposition)*

Task: *Imagine that your company is launching a reusable coffee cup made from recycled ocean plastic.*

Stages of implementation:

- *Identify the target audience (Target Audience).*

Formulate 3 key benefits of the product.

*Prepare a 2-minute **Elevator Pitch** for a potential investor or distributor.*

Key vocabulary: *Sustainable, durability, carbon footprint, unique selling point, eco-conscious consumers.*

These methodological strategies allow for the integration of authentic materials into the educational process in such a way that they serve not only as carriers of lexical and grammatical information but also shape the strategic, discursive, and intercultural competences of students.

The practical application of authentic materials in English for professional communication classes for non-language majors allows for the achievement of the following key outcomes:

development of professional vocabulary and discourse: students master terminology within context, which enhances its functional effectiveness (Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024);

formation of critical thinking: working with real professional materials stimulates analytical processes, comparison, evaluation, and the substantiation of decisions (Lytvynko et al, 2025);

motivational effect: understanding the practical value of the material increases interest in learning (Fauziyah & Sumarni, 2024);

intercultural competence: students become familiar with the norms, values, and communicative practices of native speakers (Bondar, 2024).

Conclusions and prospects for further research. In the current context of developing new educational technologies, authentic materials serve as one of the most effective means of developing the professional foreign language communicative competence of students in higher education. Their use immerses students in an atmosphere of a real linguistic environment, significantly increasing their interest and motivation, as well as their proficiency in lexical, linguistic, and communicative skills. Furthermore, it develops listening skills, critical thinking, analytical abilities, and intercultural awareness, thereby contributing to the intensification of the learning process.

Regarding the prospects for further research, we propose developing a comprehensive set of tasks for different stages of working with authentic materials in English for professional communication classes.

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АВТЕНТИЧНІ МАТЕРІАЛИ ЯК ЗАСІБ ВИВЧЕННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ У ЗАКЛАДАХ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ НЕМОВНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ

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Анотація. У статті здійснено методологічне та практико-орієнтоване дослідження особливостей використання автентичних матеріалів в процесі навчання іноземної мови професійної комунікації у закладах вищої освіти. Визначено поняття «автентичний матеріал». Сучасні методичні підходи розглядають автентичні тексти як ресурс, що забезпечує інтеграцію мовних, професійних і міжкультурних аспектів навчання. Наведено класифікацію автентичних матеріалів. На заняттях іноземної мови професійної комунікації автентичні тексти виступають як ресурс, що формує такі складові професійної компетентності здобувачів як термінологічна компетентність, функціонально-дискурсивна компетентність і стратегічні уміння (що включають планування мовної поведінки, вибір відповідних структур, швидке реагування на комунікативні ситуації). У роботі узагальнено результати новітніх досліджень, які доводять позитивний вплив автентичних матеріалів на формування професійної іншомовної комунікативної компетентності, розвиток критичного мислення, аналітичних умінь, професійної лексичної компетентності, міжкультурної компетентності, мотивації і навчальної автономії здобувачів. Визначено дидактичні принципи добору дидактичних матеріалів відповідно до рівня мовної підготовки здобувачів та специфіки їхньої професійної діяльності. У статті представлено новітні методичні підходи, творче осмислення та застосування яких дозволить організувати цікаву й продуктивну навчальну діяльність здобувачів закладів вищої освіти на практичному занятті. Надано приклади практичного застосування автентичних матеріалів в процесі вивчення англійської мови професійної комунікації. Доведено, що систематичне, методично обґрунтоване застосування автентичних матеріалів сприяє формуванню конкурентоспроможних фахівців, здатних ефективно здійснювати професійну комунікацію в умовах глобалізованого середовища.

Ключові слова: автентичні матеріали, іноземна мова професійної комунікації, вища освіта, комунікативна компетентність, професійна компетентність.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 04.03.2026 р.

Стаття прийнята до друку після рецензування 20.03.2026 р.

Стаття опублікована 15.06.2026 р.