



## DEVELOPING B1 STUDENTS' LEXICAL SKILLS THROUGH AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

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### ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how authentic materials support the development of B1 students' lexical skills in foreign language learning. It argues that newspapers, podcasts, interviews, videos, and digital texts create meaningful contexts for noticing, inferring, practicing, and reusing vocabulary. The paper outlines selection criteria, staged procedures, and task types that connect reception with production. Attention is paid to contextualized repetition, learner motivation, communicative relevance, and movement from recognition to active use.

**KEYWORDS:** Authentic materials, lexical skills, B1 learners, vocabulary development, contextual learning, foreign language teaching, communicative tasks.

### INTRODUCTION

The development of lexical skills is a central aim of foreign-language education because vocabulary links comprehension and communication. For B1 students, vocabulary work should go beyond memorizing isolated words and help learners infer meaning, understand collocations, and use new items in speech and writing. The CEFR Companion Volume describes B1 learners as users with a good range of vocabulary for familiar topics and everyday situations, and as learners who can often infer unknown words from context when the topic is familiar.[1] These descriptors show why B1 is an important stage for work with authentic material: learners are no longer beginners, yet they still need guided movement from recognition to active use.

Authentic materials are texts created for real communication rather than only for teaching: news items, interviews, podcasts, videos, blogs, notices, and other everyday texts. Their value lies in presenting vocabulary in natural discourse together with collocations, discourse markers, pragmatic meanings, and genre patterns. Gilmore notes that research on authentic materials is closely connected with differences between authentic and textbook discourse, learner motivation, text difficulty, and task design.[2] Therefore, authentic material becomes effective not simply because it is real, but because it is selected and taught through appropriate tasks.

### Main Part

For B1 students, lexical work with authentic material should follow three principles: relevance, support, and repetition. Relevance means that texts should be connected to students' communicative world: study life, technology, travel, health, friendship, or cultural habits. Support means that authentic input should not be reduced to uncontrolled exposure; the teacher needs to guide attention through pre-task orientation, visual prompts, selective glossing, and focused questions. Repetition means that target items must reappear across tasks

and lessons. A recent meta-analysis shows that vocabulary can be learned incidentally through listening and viewing as well as through reading, and that spaced learning leads to better retention than massed encounters.[4] A practical classroom model can be organized in three stages. The first stage is preparation. The teacher selects a short authentic text and identifies a limited lexical set, usually eight to twelve items. These items should include both single words and lexical chunks. Before reading or listening, students predict the topic, discuss the title or image, and activate prior knowledge. This stage lowers anxiety and prepares students to notice target vocabulary in context.

The second stage is guided comprehension. Students first work for global meaning and then return to details. If the material is a podcast or video, they listen once for gist and again for specific information. If it is a written text, they skim and then scan. Feng and Webb found that incidental vocabulary learning occurred through reading, listening, and viewing, and that gains were retained one week later; in that study, no significant differences appeared among the three modes of input.[3] This suggests that teachers may choose the most accessible mode for a class, provided that tasks direct learners' attention to useful lexical items. At B1 level, effective tasks include matching words with contexts, restoring deleted items, identifying paraphrases, grouping expressions by function, and finding language that shows cause, contrast, or opinion. The third stage is lexical activation. This stage turns comprehension into use. After the text, students should complete short oral and written tasks that require them to select and reuse target vocabulary: summarizing the speaker's idea, comparing the text with personal experience, writing a short comment, or continuing a dialogue. In this way, words move from passive recognition to controlled production. Lexical activation is especially important because vocabulary becomes durable when it is connected with a learner's own communicative intention.

Authentic materials are also useful for developing inferencing skills, which are essential at B1. Learners at this level are expected to infer the probable meaning of occasional unknown words from contextual and structural clues.[1] Therefore, not every unfamiliar item should be pre-taught. A more effective approach is selective mediation: the teacher explains only those items that block overall comprehension, while leaving other words for contextual guessing. Students can be trained to use surrounding words, morphology, visuals, and text structure to infer meaning. This process increases both vocabulary growth and learner autonomy. Another important factor is frequency of encounter. One meeting with a word rarely leads to durable learning. Research on audiovisual input supports the value of repetition. In a study of academic lecture viewing, Dang, Lu, and Webb found significant learning gains for single words and collocations, and they reported that frequency of occurrence significantly contributed to the learning of single words in the lecture.[5] For classroom practice, this means that vocabulary from one authentic text should return in later tasks: first in comprehension, then in guided use, and later in freer speaking or writing. A short podcast, post, or video can therefore serve as the basis for a small cycle of lexical development rather than a one-time exercise.

At the same time, authentic materials should be adapted pedagogically, not linguistically. Full simplification may remove the natural discourse features that make the material valuable, but task adaptation can preserve authenticity while keeping the input manageable. Gilmore's discussion of text difficulty and task design is especially relevant here.[2] A teacher may shorten the text, divide it into parts, add subtitles, pause the audio, or narrow the task focus while

keeping the natural language of the source. This balanced approach is particularly important for B1 students, who benefit from challenge but can lose confidence if the text is too dense. Finally, authentic materials support motivation because students see vocabulary as a tool for understanding real media and participating in real communication. When classroom language connects with podcasts, news, and everyday digital texts, lexical learning becomes purposeful rather than mechanical.[2][4]

### Conclusion

In conclusion, authentic materials provide an effective basis for developing B1 students' lexical skills when they are used through careful selection and staged methodology. Their value lies in presenting vocabulary in realistic contexts, encouraging inferencing, showing collocations and discourse patterns, and creating opportunities for repeated use. For B1 learners, the most productive model combines preparation, guided comprehension, and lexical activation. Authentic materials should therefore be treated not as an optional supplement, but as a core resource for context-based lexical development in modern language teaching.

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