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AUTHENTIC MEDIA IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION DURING CRISIS: PERSPECTIVES FROM UKRAINE, THE USA, AND EUROPE

The article offers an in-depth and comparative examination of the integration of authentic media materials into foreign language instruction within higher education institutions operating under conditions of martial law or acute societal crisis. Focusing on Ukraine, the United States, and selected European countries, the study analyzes how real-world media content – international news broadcasts, digital journalism, and social media platforms – has been pedagogically incorporated into advanced foreign language curricula during periods of profound disruption. The research is grounded in a critical review of contemporary scholarly literature and employs a comparative case study methodology to evaluate institutional responses, instructional strategies, and learning outcomes across diverse geopolitical and educational contexts.

Particular attention is devoted to the Ukrainian experience following the declaration of martial law in February 2022, where higher education institutions were compelled to rapidly adapt teaching practices amidst security threats, displacement, and infrastructural instability. This context is examined alongside responses in the United States and Europe during analogous crisis situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and periods of intensified political polarization, allowing for a nuanced cross-contextual comparison. The analysis explores curriculum redesign, classroom practices, assessment approaches, and educator perceptions related to the use of authentic media, highlighting both shared pedagogical trends and context-specific adaptations.

The findings demonstrate that authentic media materials can significantly enhance linguistic competence, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness when implemented strategically, even under crisis conditions.

Key words: *authentic materials, foreign language education, martial law, social media discourse, television news, higher education, wartime communication, critical media literacy, comparative analysis.*

(статтю подано мовою оригіналу)

The incorporation of authentic media materials – encompassing texts, video and audio recordings, social media content, and news broadcasts originally produced for native-speaking audiences – has become a cornerstone of contemporary foreign language pedagogy. Rooted in the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based language learning (TBLL), and media literacy education, the use of such materials is widely recognized for providing learners with contextualized, purposeful linguistic input that effectively bridges the gap between classroom instruction and real-world language use [2, 102; 4, 56]. Authentic media not only exposes students to current sociocultural realities and discourse practices but also cultivates critical interpretative skills necessary for navigating complex media environments [3, 47].

The imposition of martial law in Ukraine in early 2022 precipitated profound transformations within the country's higher education landscape, compelling educators and institutions to devise innovative curricular and pedagogical strategies responsive to the exigencies of wartime conditions. Although the impact of martial law on language education remains an underexplored area within applied linguistics, Ukraine's experience provides a salient case for examining how acute crisis situations can reshape the selection, adaptation, and deployment of instructional materials in tertiary-level language programs.

The study examines the integration of authentic media into tertiary foreign language instruction under conditions of societal crisis, focusing on Ukraine and comparatively analyzing practices in the United States and Europe.

The objectives are to analyze theoretical foundations supporting authentic media integration (CLT, TBLL, media literacy); investigate Ukrainian adaptations under martial law; examine American and European practices during pandemic and sociopolitical disruption; compare pedagogical rationales and implementation strategies; formulate best practices for crisis-responsive language instruction.

Before investigating the practical implementation of authentic media materials in foreign language instruction, it is imperative to articulate the robust theoretical and pedagogical frameworks that justify and guide their integration. Establishing this conceptual foundation is not merely informative; it is crucial for understanding the rationale behind material selection, the design of pedagogical tasks, and the articulation of targeted learning outcomes. A nuanced engagement with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT), task-based language learning (TBLL), and media literacy is essential, as these frameworks collectively underscore the transformative impact of authentic materials on language acquisition – both in times of stability and during periods of crisis [3, 102; 6, 19].

Authentic materials are defined as resources created for native speakers rather than for pedagogical purposes. Their educational value lies in four interrelated dimensions:

1. Exposure to natural language – learners encounter authentic lexical variation, discourse markers, pragmatic conventions, and accents [3, 102].
2. Cultural competence – materials embed sociocultural values and worldviews [5, 47].
3. Motivation and relevance – real-world content increases engagement [4, 56].

4. Critical media literacy – learners analyze framing, bias, and rhetorical construction [7, 5–12].

Within CLT, authentic materials support meaningful interaction and communicative competence. TBLL further emphasizes purposeful tasks based on real-world discourse. Media literacy education extends this framework by cultivating critical engagement with information sources.

In crisis contexts, authentic media gains heightened relevance. It allows learners to process current realities, develop adaptive communicative skills, and articulate personal and collective experiences in the target language [6, 19].

In the aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Ukrainian government instituted martial law, precipitating widespread disruption across all sectors of society, including higher education. Universities were compelled to rapidly reconfigure instructional delivery amid campus closures, large-scale internal displacement, and the persistent threat of air raids. Educational processes shifted almost entirely to remote and hybrid formats, with digital platforms becoming indispensable for continuity of teaching and learning [5, 47; 4, 56].

Within this challenging environment, language instructors faced the dual imperatives of maintaining academic standards and supporting students' psychological well-being. Many reported a pronounced increase in the use of online authentic media materials, including live-streamed news broadcasts, government press briefings, presidential addresses, and real-time updates from official social media channels, to foster learner engagement and provide timely, relevant content [5, 19]. For instance, faculty at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and Lviv Polytechnic integrated video statements by Ukrainian leadership, Twitter threads from governmental agencies, and international news reports into their curricula. These resources enabled students not only to practice advanced language skills but also to critically analyze the rhetoric and discourse of wartime communication, thereby enhancing both linguistic competence and media literacy under extraordinary circumstances [7, 5–12].

Pedagogical adaptations: In response to the exigencies of martial law, Ukrainian language instructors strategically leveraged authentic media materials to address both linguistic and psychosocial needs of their students. This pedagogical shift served multiple purposes: enhancing resilience: Instructors facilitated discussions of current events in target languages, such as English, German, and French, providing students with a safe space to process unfolding realities while maintaining language practice [3, 108]; fostering critical media literacy: Lessons were designed to cultivate a nuanced understanding of international news coverage and propaganda, enabling learners to distinguish between factual reporting and disinformation, and to engage critically with diverse media narratives [6, 47]; supporting bilingual and professional communication skills: Authentic media tasks were frequently contextualized within humanitarian or professional scenarios, equipping students with the terminology and pragmatic skills necessary for participation in international organizations, NGO work, or cross-border collaboration [4, 56].

A concrete example can be observed at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, where English language instructors integrated BBC Ukraine news clips as listening comprehension exercises. These were followed by guided discussions that explicitly linked linguistic structures and vocabulary to the geopolitical content of the reports [6, 19]. Classroom activities included summarizing news segments, conducting critical analyses of rhetorical strategies, and participating in role-plays that simulated press briefings or diplomatic exchanges. Such practices not only reinforced advanced language competencies but also enabled students to contextualize their learning within the broader socio-political landscape shaped by ongoing conflict.

Example Module: "Media and Conflict". This module exemplifies how authentic media materials can be systematically integrated into language instruction to address both linguistic and critical thinking objectives in the context of conflict.

Objectives are to enhance advanced listening and reading comprehension skills using real-world media; analyze the specific language features and rhetorical strategies employed in media reporting; engage in informed discussions on ethical journalism, reporting standards, and media bias.

Materials: audio segments from BBC World Service coverage of Ukraine; written news articles and transcripts from Voice of America (VOA) in English [7, 5–12]; official Ukrainian governmental press releases issued in English.

Tasks: *pre-listening prediction:* Students examine headlines and images to anticipate main themes and vocabulary, activating prior knowledge and setting a purpose for listening; *selective listening:* Learners identify and extract key vocabulary, discourse markers, and factual details while listening to authentic news reports; *critical discussion:* Guided discussions focus on evaluating different reporting frames, identifying potential bias, and contrasting international and domestic perspectives; *production activity:* Students synthesize their learning by composing a press release in the target language, reporting on a local civic event, thereby practicing genre-specific conventions and audience awareness.

Despite the pedagogical benefits of integrating authentic media, Ukrainian instructors and students encountered several significant challenges: emotional stress: exposure to ongoing and often distressing wartime news content had the potential to heighten anxiety and emotional fatigue among students. Instructors needed to exercise heightened sensitivity, providing support and, when necessary, adapting materials to protect student well-being [3, 108]; access and infrastructure: Frequent power outages and unstable internet connectivity, especially in regions affected by conflict, posed substantial obstacles to the synchronous use of multimedia resources and limited equitable participation [6, 47]; assessment Alignment: Ensuring that learning tasks based on authentic media corresponded

with standardized assessment frameworks, such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), required the development of nuanced rubrics that balanced communicative competence, critical analysis, and genre conventions [5, 47].

These challenges underscore the complexity of teaching under crisis conditions, while also highlighting the adaptability and resourcefulness of Ukrainian educators in leveraging media for meaningful language learning.

Although not under martial law, U.S. higher education experienced major disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside racial unrest and political polarization. These conditions accelerated digital transformation and reinforced the need for culturally responsive pedagogy [3, 108; 6, 19].

Pedagogical Approaches. Common strategies included: news comparison projects analyzing different media representations; social media discourse analysis exploring rhetorical strategies; podcasts and vlogs for exposure to authentic speech and diverse registers.

Assignments often required summarization, comparative analysis, critical reflection, and seminar discussions.

Challenges: diverse proficiency levels necessitated differentiated scaffolding; political polarization required careful source selection; digital inequality limited equal access to high-bandwidth media.

Overall, American institutions emphasized media literacy and pluralistic perspective-taking [5, 47].

European higher education reflects linguistic and institutional heterogeneity. Crisis responses varied but shared a commitment to contextualized instruction.

Western Europe. Countries such as Germany and France incorporated national broadcaster content, documentaries, and podcasts to foster critical engagement with sociopolitical discourse.

Northern Europe. In Sweden and the Netherlands, media literacy is strongly institutionalized. Language courses systematically integrate news analysis and framing critique to cultivate informed citizenship.

Southern Europe. In Italy and Spain, authentic media often connects to tourism and service-sector communication, linking language learning with professional preparation.

Eastern Europe (outside Ukraine). In Poland and the Czech Republic, digital modules utilizing online news and podcasts expanded during remote instruction, reinforcing digital literacy and autonomous learning.

Comparative analysis. Across contexts, authentic media supports: real-world relevance; communicative competence; critical thinking; cultural awareness

Context-specific emphases. *Ukraine:* resilience, geopolitical literacy, trauma-sensitive pedagogy; *United States:* media bias analysis, pluralism, social discourse; *Europe:* cultural competence, professional skills, institutionalized media literacy.

Ukraine and parts of Europe frequently employ higher-order analytical tasks centered on news discourse. The United States integrates social media analysis more prominently.

European institutions often possess established media literacy frameworks. Ukrainian educators adopted crisis-responsive strategies rapidly under pressure. The U.S. presents institutional variability.

Based on comparative findings, effective integration requires: scaffolded instruction – pre-, during-, and post-task stages enhance comprehension and critical analysis; professional development – training in media literacy, digital tools, and trauma-informed pedagogy is essential; ethical sensitivity – content selection must consider emotional impact and inclusivity. Alternatives and reflective options should be available.

Transparent rubrics should evaluate: linguistic proficiency; critical analysis; cultural awareness; genre conventions.

Alignment with CEFR or comparable frameworks ensures measurable outcomes.

Conclusions. The integration of authentic media materials into foreign language instruction signifies a substantive evolution in pedagogical paradigms, emphasizing communicative competence, critical media literacy, and intercultural awareness as core educational objectives. The Ukrainian experience under martial law has foregrounded the dual potential and complexity of leveraging authentic media in crisis-impacted educational environments, illustrating both the resilience of instructors and the heightened need for trauma-sensitive, contextually relevant approaches. Comparative analyses with the United States and Europe further elucidate that, despite significant variation in sociopolitical conditions and institutional structures, there exists a convergence around pedagogical aims: namely, to foster learner engagement, real-world communicative ability, and critical analytical skills.

However, the effective realization of these aims is contingent upon several interrelated factors. Successful integration necessitates intentional curriculum design that scaffolds comprehension and analysis, sustained investment in teacher professional development – particularly in media literacy and digital pedagogy – and the establishment of robust ethical frameworks to guide content selection and student support. Furthermore, alignment of authentic media-based tasks with established proficiency benchmarks ensures that instructional innovation remains anchored to transparent, measurable learning outcomes.

Ultimately, the strategic incorporation of authentic media in foreign language education not only advances linguistic proficiency but also cultivates the adaptive, critically literate, and culturally informed competencies required for active participation in contemporary, media-saturated societies. Future research and practice should continue to refine these approaches, attending to the evolving demands of both local and global educational contexts.

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Н. Мироненко, С.Панчишин М.Опир. Автентичні медіа у викладанні іноземних мов під час кризи: досвід України, США та Європи

Ця стаття пропонує всебічний, порівняльний аналіз інтеграції автентичних медіаматеріалів у викладання іноземних мов у закладах вищої освіти за умов воєнного стану або гострої суспільної кризи. Зосереджуючись на Україні, Сполучених Штатах Америки та окремих країнах Європи, дослідження розглядає, як міжнародні новинні трансляції, цифрову журналістику і соціальні медіаплатформи – інтегрується в освітній процес у межах курсів з іноземної мови просунутого рівня в періоди значних суспільних потрясінь.

Дослідження ґрунтується на критичному аналізі сучасних наукових праць та використовує методологію порівняльного кейс-стаді для оцінювання інституційних реакцій, педагогічних стратегій і результатів навчання в різних геополітичних та освітніх контекстах.

Особливу увагу приділено українському досвіду після запровадження воєнного стану у лютому 2022 року, коли заклади вищої освіти були змушені оперативнo адаптувати освітній процес в умовах безпекових загроз, вимушеного переміщення населення та інфраструктурної нестабільності. Цей контекст аналізується у зіставленні з реакціями освітніх систем у США та країнах Європи під час аналогічних кризових ситуацій, зокрема пандемії COVID-19 та періодів посиленої політичної поляризації, що дозволяє здійснити ґрунтовне міжконтекстуальне порівняння.

У дослідженні проаналізовано оновлення програм, практику занять, оцінювання та сприйняття викладачами використання автентичних медіаматеріалів. Виявлено спільні педагогічні тенденції й контекстуальні особливості адаптації, зумовлені інституційними можливостями, технологічною інфраструктурою та соціально-політичними умовами.

Результати свідчать, що впроваджені автентичні медіаматеріали суттєво сприяють розвитку мовної компетентності, критичного мислення та міжкультурної обізнаності навіть в умовах кризи.

Ключові слова: автентичні матеріали, іноземна освіта, воєнний стан, дискурс соціальних мереж, телевізійні новини, вища освіта, комунікація в умовах війни, критична медіаграмотність, порівняльний аналіз.

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