Освітні, педагогічні науки / Educational, Pedagogical Sciences

Olga Ameridze
English Language Instructor
National Technical University of Ukraine
"Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute
Kyiv, Ukraine
ORCID ID 0000-0002-6111-7996
ameridze.olga@lll.kpi.ua

Larysa Svyrydova
English Language Instructor
National Technical University of Ukraine
"Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute
Kyiv, Ukraine
ORCID ID 0000-0002-9762-4092
kpi.sviridova@gmail.com

Natalia Yamshynska
English Language Instructor
National Technical University of Ukraine
"Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute
Kyiv, Ukraine
ORCID ID 0000-0002-0518-3657
nyamshinska@ukr.net

CHALLENGES OF ESP CLASSES IN WARTIME CONDITIONS

The realities that Ukraine faces today, namely, the full-scale war with the imposition of martial law on the territoy of the whole country, led to a number of discussions arising around the effective but safe conducting of the education process at universities and other educational establishments and concerned the organization and proper management of the students' learning process. Despite the previous experience of distance and blended learning modes implemented during the Covid 19 period, it should be noted that some aspects of the organization of the educational process require reconsidering, taking into account the new experience of studying in wartime and the need to regard the emotional tension of students, especially those caught up in the temporarily occupied territories. A survey was conducted among the students of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" with the aim to reveal and analyze the level of technical students' adaptation to learning a foreign language in extreme conditions and the relevance of tools and methods the teachers have been applying on their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes. A mixed-method research design was utilized in the study to collect, analyze, compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings obtained from the survey. Among the outcomes, it's worth mentioning the non-fading motivation of students to learn foreign language, increased cross-cultural communication, and mostly high-level accommodation to distance learning mode. It was interesting to find out that students expressed unwillingness to discuss war and relevant news in the ESP lessons and are having issues with managing their academic study time. All the results obtained provide the ground for further reconsidering of the curricula to better meet the students'educational needs.

Keywords*: education in wartime; ESL classes; distance learning; open online courses; synchronous learning; asynchronous learning; teacher's empathy; cross-cultural communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

On February 24, 2022, there was an armed invasion of Russia into the territory of Ukraine, accompanied by massive explosions throughout the country. Since then, martial law was imposed with all the further relevant regulations and changes in all spheres of our lives and in the education system, particularly. It was recommended by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MES) to pause the education process in education institutions forcing the students to suspend their studies. Nevertheless, from the end of March the educational process was continued, becoming an important mission for most teachers as the importance of providing the youth with education is indisputable even in terms of emergencies (*Higher Education in Emergencies,*2021).

Following the 2019 scenario of shifting to the distance learning model, and armed with the skills and experience obtained during the COVID-19 outbreak, educators succeed to resume the delivery of the lessons (Kolomiiets, Antonenko, Guryeyeva, Fedorenko & Tsepkalo, 2021). Otherwise, certain transformations in curricula have been made, considering the students` anxiety and stress caused by the current situation in Ukraine (Mutisya & Makokha, 2016). Particularly, students were proposed to choose the further learning mode to follow, namely, to continue their regular ESP courses online (e.g., using Zoom or Google Meet platforms) or asynchronously (e.g., Google Classroom service), or follow one of the massive open online courses (e.g., Coursera or Prometheus platforms) corresponding to their academic discipline. These MOOCs offered free access to some courses to support the educational process in Ukraine in emergency times. For those students who have the possibility to continue mastering their university ESP courses, the assessing standards and the academic load have been reconsidered. Understanding students' feelings of anxiety about the present situation and total uncertainty in the future and other negative emotions in connection with it, some teachers demonstrate empathy, for example, triggering students to speak about the latest news they can share, comfort them and support as there is proven evidence for a certain relationship between teachers' empathy and students' outcomes or classroom management (Nazarenko, Kogut & Zheriobkina, 2022; Schneider & Preckel, 2017). Many teachers make time to communicate with their students about current events, integrating the war vocabulary for a regular warming-up practice, making small talk about current events in Ukraine either with peers in the lesson or with representatives of other countries and cultures and thus improve their cross-cultural skills.

The aim of this study is two-fold: to gain insight into university students' adaptation to emergency distant learning with reference to the realities of war and to estimate the appropriateness and feasibility of learning modes and curricula, redesigned to meet ESP students` learning needs. To reach these aims, the following tasks are to be completed:

1.To establish ESP students' feedback on new emergency conditions and realia in which the education process takes place in Ukraine with the help of a survey;

2. To develop recommendations to provide English teachers with more productive and effective approaches to increase ESP students' engagement and motivation to ensure getting appropriate education focused on the improvement of students' language skills under new circumstances.

2. METHODS, INSTRUMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

A mixed-method research design was utilized in the study to collect, analyze, compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings obtained from the survey. The participants were 176 ESP students from the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" who were able to give their responses to 12 questions of the survey. The participants gave their voluntary informed consent for their participation in the study.

Three types of prompts were used in a survey: multiple choice (prompts 5, 6. 8. 10, 11), ranging (prompts 3,9) and a Likert scale (prompts 1, 2, 4, 7, 12) with its varied set of responses to find out responders' attitude, indicate the level of the agreement and likelihood.

The survey was conducted with the help of Google forms service. The responders were proposed to choose from the suggested variants or range values from the smallest (minimum) to the

largest (maximum) ones. To display the distribution of responses on the Likert scale we used a bar chart and calculated the median (Mdn) and the Interquartile Range (IQR) with the aim to measure a central tendency.

The questions of the survey were developed with the aim get an in-depth understanding of ESL students' viewpoints on the impact of wartime on their ability and motivation to study English and their positions concerning the relevance of teaching methods and the students' adaptability to the terms of delivering education and issues they struggle with.

3. RESULTS

1. The results of the survey showed that most responders (61.4% or 108 students who expressed strong agreement or agreement) acknowledged the importance of education which is considered to be an important aspect that plays a crucial role in the modern world. The calculation of the median (Mdn) and the Interquartile range (IQR) shows that most students agreed with the necessity to obtain education even during martial law (Mdn=2, IQR=2) because it can guarantee their wellbeing, future prospects, as well as country's stability (See table 1).

Table 1. Studens' opinions on ESL classes delivery in crisis conditions

Survey Prompts	SA	A	N	D	SD	Median	IQR
Prompt 1. Education is important for your wellbeing, future prospects, as well as for a country's stability and economic development and should never be interrupted even during martial law	61	47	60	5	3	2	2
Prompt 2. Cross-cultural communication has increased dramatically nowadays due to the language's role	64	50	30	25	7	2	2
	Definitely	Very Probably	Probably	Possibly	Definitely Not		
Prompt 4. Discussing the current news in the ESL classroom, even in terms of drilling war vocabulary is appropriate under war conditions in Ukraine	20	37	22	21	77	4	3
Prompt 12. Have you become more involved in learning a foreign language since martial law in Ukraine was announced?	48	43	29	16	40	2	3
	Very satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied		
Prompt 7. How satisfied are you with your choice of a learning mode?	30	54	50	24	18	3	1

Education has to be treated as the priority for every community in the world, especially if the community faces emergency situations. It is in line with the recommendations identified during the 15th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in 2003 that claim "Governments in affected countries, donors, and international humanitarian agencies should view education in emergencies as an opportunity to strengthen their own Ministries of Education and should actively support education for those affected by crisis/post-crisis…" (Winthrop & Mendenhall, 2006).

2. According to the results of the survey, most of the responders (64.8%, those who indicated *definitely* and *very probably*) are definitely sure that due to the knowledge of the language the pace of global integration and the ability to communicate across cultural boundaries have dramatically increased recently during the time when Ukraine is involved in the war and a huge amount of people had to leave their houses and refuge abroad. The index of the median (Mdn=2) approved this conclusion. However, a third expressed their uncertainty about the noticeable speed growth of the role of language in communication among nations. It allows us to suggest that the awareness of ESP students about the importance of language for communication aims will continue to grow (Figure 1). Hu Song (2014) in his research noticed that cross-cultural communication and foreign language teaching are inseparable. This is because foreign language teaching aims to not just impart language knowledge, but also to cultivate students' communicative competence and cross-cultural communication skills (Hu, 2014).
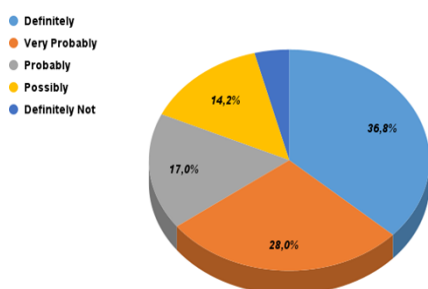

Fig. 1. The responders' opinions about the role of language in cross-cultural communication

3. The results of the study confirmed that in the difficult times that our country is going through the level of teachers' concern and empathy for students as well as cooperative behaviors play a crucial role in order to form effective and productive interaction between students and teachers. A majority of responders (75%) measured aspects of emotional support as very high (4 and 5 on a scale) (Figure 2).
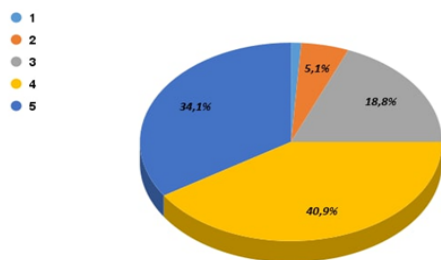

Fig. 2. The responders' opinions about the level of teachers' concern and empathy for students and cooperative behaviors in current learning conditions

Karen Aldrup (2022) in his study mentioned that teachers' social-emotional competence has received increasing attention in educational psychology for about a decade and has been suggested to be an important prerequisite for the quality of teacher-student interactions and student outcomes. Undoubtedly, the emotional component appears to be a particularly promising determinant for establishing comfortable teacher-student interactions, especially if it comes to emotional support for students in a state of anxiety and is appreciated by them.

4. Nowadays all people not only in Ukraine but abroad as well are focused on news about the

war in Ukraine. Thus, ESP students often revolve around the process of their discussion. Prompt 4 aimed to define the opinion of students on the relevance and necessity of discussing current news in the virtual ESP classrooms. The results of the survey showed that a third of ESP students (43.8%) expressed their unwillingness to discuss the current news if they are related to active war actions and relevant topics (Figure 3). It is proved by the indexes of a median that is 4 and IRq=3. The other third of responders (44.7%) claim that a lesson plan can include a discussion that focuses on how students feel about the news they read or watch every day about the situation in Ukraine. Only 11.4 % chose the option definitely and correspondently agreed to discuss such type of information. The significant difference in the number of students who are ready to talk about disturbing news from the war and those who don't find it comfortable can be explained by the students' excessive anxiety concerning the situation they have been forced to face and the absence of previous experience in being in the situation of war.
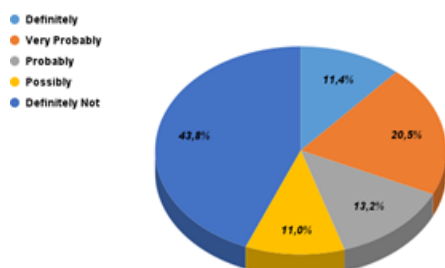
Fig. 3. Responders' opinion on the necessity to discuss the current news in the ESL classroom, even in terms of drilling war vocabulary is appropriate under war conditions in Ukraine

5. The figures showed that most of the responders (61.4%) noticed that during the war conflict teaching and studying approaches in comparison with those applied during distance learning caused by Covid 2019 pandemic have changed slightly. It can be explained by the fact that education delivery approaches should be chosen to meet primarily the new communicative needs of ESL students, especially those who appeared in unfamiliar language environments. In addition, it should be taken into consideration that a huge amount of ESL students even doesn't have an opportunity to attend ESP lessons on a regular basis because of the war actions on the territory where they live. As a result, ESP teachers adopt different methods to teach students a foreign language under current conditions. The same percent of responders (19.3% and 19.3 correspondently) were divided among those who think the changes in teaching approaches are dramatic and those who mention that the approaches to teaching a foreign language have remained the same.
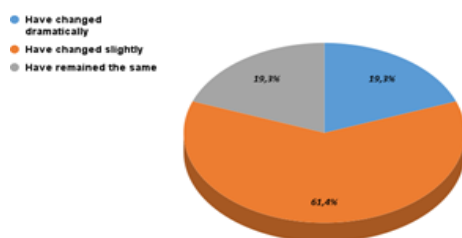
Fig. 4. Responders' opinions on how conflict teaching and studying approaches have changed during the war

6. The findings of the survey showed that students' responses were divided approximately equally (53.4% and 46.6% correspondently) between those who indicated their preference for online learning (online (synchronous) learning mode) and those who chose self-study (asynchronous mode), where they were offered to choose to complete an online course related to their level of English and their professional interests. It is worth mentioning that among students who opt for an asynchronous mode of studying were students of the 3rd, the 4th, and the 5th years

of study, who have adapted to high-level autonomy in studying.
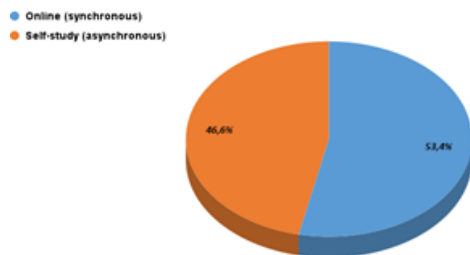

Fig. 5. Responders' preferences towards (online (synchronous) learning mode) and self-study (asynchronous mode)

In this context, the findings of Felicitas Biwer, Wisnu Wiradhany's work (2021) are very useful and helpful in understanding the division of students into equal groups more deeply.

In the study, researchers investigated how students adapted to emergency remote learning during the Covid 19 pandemic and determined two groups of students depending on their ability to adapt to new learning conditions. They divided students into overwhelmed or surrenders and adapters. Such division was explained by students' level of engagement in the learning process which had a new format. According to the findings of the research, it was concluded that both the overwhelmed and surrenders appeared to be less able to regulate their effort, attention, and time and reported to be less motivated to study than before the crisis. In contrast, the adapters appreciated the increased level of autonomy and were better able to self-regulate their learning (Biwer et al., 2021).

The division of students into such categories can help us understand the main criteria, which should be taken into account when ESP teachers are trying to find by far the most suitable approaches to teach students in the emergency situations Ukraine is going through now.

7. The figures show that only 17% percent are very satisfied with their choice of learning mode and 30.7% of students are slightly satisfied. A third of students (28.4%) indicated their neutral attitude towards the course. The rest 23% expressed their slight or strong dissatisfaction with the course. To measure a central tendency for this question, we calculated the median (Mdn=3) and IQR=1 (See table 1). These figures show that most students are positive or neutral about the mode, in which they chose to study a foreign language during the period of war in Ukraine.
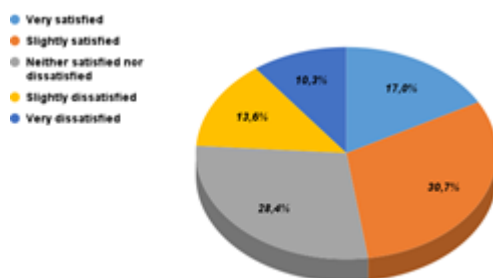
Fig. 6. The level of satisfaction of responders with the learning mode

However, it is a signal for ESP teachers that they should increase efforts to raise the motivation level of students, especially those, who belong to a group of overwhelmed and surrenders. One more suggestion concerns the overall uncertainty and disorientation, enhanced by the unprecedented and sometimes severe changes in their lives.

8. According to the results of the survey, students, who chose an asynchronous learning mode, mostly think that Quizzes (38.6%), regular assignments from the coursebooks, set in Google classrooms (33.5%) and open online courses (44.3%) are the most useful tools for them to expand their language skills in terms of wartime (Figure 7). If to assume, that only 26.6% of respondents opted for MOOCs types of assignments, one can resume that prefer a more familiar tasks format, like quizzes and Google classroom assignments. What is notable, only 16% of students chose

creative tasks, which shows that students are not willing to perform tasks that require some sort of creativity.
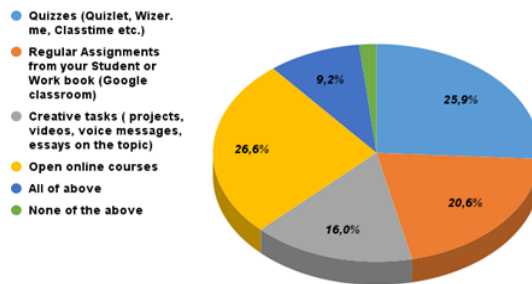

Fig. 7. The most useful activities in the opinion of students who chose an asynchronous mode

9. The results of the survey showed that students mostly reported a high level of adaptation to a new form of study. In figure 8 we can see the high percentage of responders who defined their level in the range from 3 to 5 (23.9%, 41.3%, and 22.7% correspondently) (Figure 8). Covid pandemic and currently a war in Ukraine have created such conditions which don't allow both teachers and students to attend lessons in the classroom. Therefore, ESL teachers are thinking about the ways modern digital technologies can be implemented to meet new challenges and educational requirements.
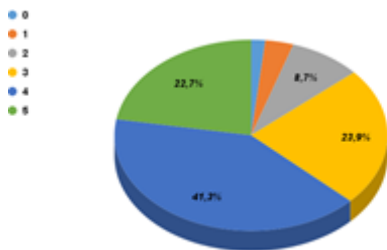

Fig. 8. Ranging adaptation levels to digital learning provided during Covid 2019 pandemic and the martial law in Ukraine

Prompt 10 was focused on gathering opinions about the challenges ESL students find the most complicated to cope with during online learning. The results of the survey showed that ineffective time management (30.70% of students' responses) and deadlines, as well as lack of instant communication (23.50 % of students' responses), were identified as factors that pose the most serious problems to students and prevent them from successful completion of the course (Figure 9).
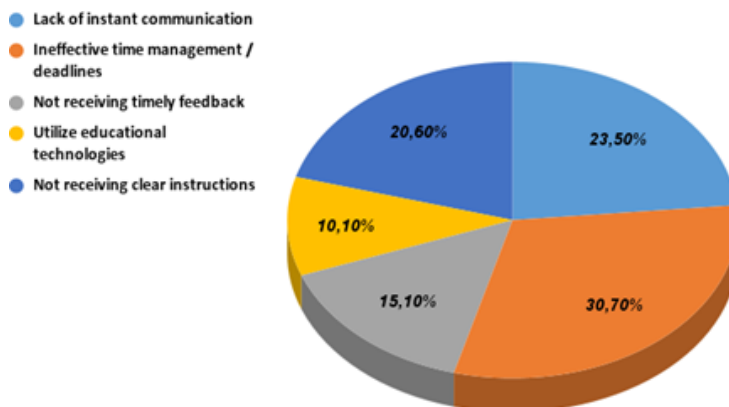

Fig.9. Ranging an adaptation level to digital learning by responder

The findings of the survey are in accordance with those presented by Dorothy N. Mutisya and George L. Makokha (2016), who investigated challenges affecting the adoption of e-learning in public universities of Kenya. In their study, 72% of responders indicated inadequate time to interact online as one of the main problems among a range of others related to e-learning.

In the survey carried out by Mohammed Mohammed Nasser Hassan Ja'ashan (2020), among other aspects of the effect the implementing e-learning it was mentioned the lack of time required to complete online exams/assignments (4.16), inaccessibility of a course, notes/materials (mean=4.00) and lack of interaction between students and teaching staff (mean=3.93).

Having analyzed these results, we can conclude that ESL students around the world face the same problems and challenges when it comes to online learning. It is obvious that these factors must be taken into account while designing the lesson plan and curriculum of the course.

The results of the study found that students mostly agreed that their involvement in learning a foreign language has slightly shifted since martial law in Ukraine was announced (Mdn=2, Iqr=3) (See Table 1). It can be explained by the fact they have intensified reading and listening to information not only from Ukrainian news sources but also from international news sources around the world. As a result, it caused an increase in ESL students' interest in learning English. It is understandable, that expanded opportunities to learn and practice a foreign language due to reading, listening, and communicating with people around the world who are concerned with the war in Ukraine have encouraged positive ESL students' engagement and motivation in further mastering.
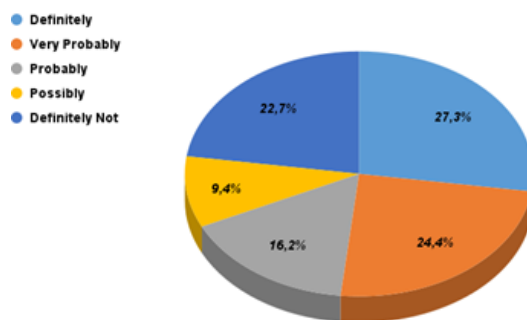

Fig. 10. Students' opinions on changes in their involvement in learning of English during a state of military emergency in Ukraine

4. DISCUSSIONS

The revealing of ESP students' feedback on new emergency conditions and realia, in which the education process takes place in Ukraine, indicates the desire and need for students to learn and improve a foreign language studying in martial law. The educational process shouldn't be interrupted, becoming a challenge for most teachers as the importance of providing the youth with education is indisputable even in terms of emergencies. It is stimulated by the growth of cross-cultural communication and the necessity to be easier engaged in international global communication for sharing important information.

As for the organization of the educational process, due to the previous pandemic situation with the Covid 19, the basic model of teaching ESP students has already been created. Thus, educators were ready to implement their skills and abilities to organize the educational process during martial law in Ukraine.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SCOPE FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

It was confirmed that in current situations of emergency in Ukraine the level of teachers' concern and empathy for students matters significantly and facilitates the effective and productive interaction between students and teachers. Students clearly state that the awareness of ESP about the importance of language for communication aims will continue to rise and education is still a priority for every community in the world, especially if the community faces emergency situations.

Understanding this, not only the ESP teachers who want to contribute to students' uninterrupted learning but also MOOCs demonstrating their cooperation provide the students with the opportunity to improve their knowledge in areas relevant to their professional activities with a receiving the certificate, which could be used for their future careers. Emergency times have significantly affected the regular proceeding of the learning process in our country, but it gives both teachers and students confidence that the education is definitely should be obtained because it can guarantee our wellbeing, future prospects, as well as our country's stability.

We see the scope of further research in studing of the peculiarities in organizing the educational process of ESP classes in the conditions of war.

REFERENCES

Aldrup, K., Carstensen, B., & Klusmann, U. (2022). Is empathy the key to effective teaching? A systematic review of its association with teacher-student interactions and student outcomes. *Educational Psycholy Review. Advance online publication.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-021-09649-y

Biwer, F., Wiradhany, W., Egbrink, M. O., Hospers, H., Wasenitz, S., Jansen, W., & de Bruin, A. (2021). Changes and Adaptations: How University Students Self-Regulate Their Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.642593

Cahill, K. M. (2010). *Even in chaos: Education in times of emergency.* NY: Fordham University Press.

Davies, L. (2004). *Education and conflict: Complexity and chaos.* London: Routledge.

Higher Education in Emergencies. (2021). Retrieved from https://www.globalplatformforsyrianstudents.org/index.php/higher-education-in-emergencies

Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., & Bond, A. (2020). The Difference between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning. *Educause Review, 27.* Retrieved from https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning

Hu, S. (2014). Cross-cultural Communication and Foreign Language Teaching. *Proceedings of the 2014 International Conference on Education Technology and Social Science. Series: Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research.* https://dx.doi.org/10.2991/icetss-14.2014.54

Ja'ashan, M. M. N. H. (2020). The Challenges and Prospects of Using E-learning among EFL Students in Bisha University. *Arab World English Journal, 11*(1), 124–137. https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no1.11

Kolomiiets, S., Antonenko, I., Guryeyeva, L.,Fedorenko, S., & Tsepkalo, O. (2021). COVID-19 Impact on Media Education in Technical University. *Amazonia Investiga, 10*(47), 152–160. https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2021.47.11.15

Mutisya, D. N., & Makokha, G. L. (2016). Challenges affecting adoption of e-learning in public Universitiesin Kenya. *E-Learning and DigitalMedia,13*(3-4), 140–157.

Nazarenko, Yu., Kogut, I., Zheriobkina, T. (2022). Education and War in Ukraine. *Education (February 24–April 1, 2022).* Retrieved from https://cedos.org.ua/researches/osvita-i-vijna-v-ukrayini-24-lyutogo-1-kvitnya-2022/

O'Connor, K. E. (2008). "You choose to care": Teachers, emotions and professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(1), 117–126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.11.008

O'Malley, B. (2007). *Education under attack, 2007: a global study on targeted political and military violence against education staff, students, teachers, union and government officials, and institutions.* UNESCO. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001863/186303e.pdf

Østby, G., & Urdal, H. (2010). Education and conflict: A review of quantitative, empirical literature *Background Paper Prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011.* Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190777e.pdf

Schneider, M., & Preckel, F. (2017). Variables associated with achievement in higher education: A systematic review of meta-analyses. *Psychological Bulletin, 143*(6), 565–600. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000098

Watt, H. M. G., Butler, R., & Richardson, P. W. (2021). Antecedents and consequences of teachers' goal profiles in Australia and Israel. *Learning and Instruction, 80*(5). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2021.101491

Winthrop, R., Ndaruhutse, S., Dolan, J., & Adams, A. (2010). *Education's hardest test: Scaling up aid in fragile and conflict-affected states.* Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2010/2/education-aid-winthrop/02_education_aid_winthrop.pdf

Zembylas, M., & Berkman, Z. (2015). Rethinking the theoretical grounding of integrated education in conflicted societies. In Gross, Z., Davies, L. (Eds.), *The contested role of education in conflict and fragility* (pp. 29–44). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense. https://books.google.ee/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0OnyCQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&ots=BfWSSvOTEL&sig=8YpF1oqOLAsL0BqyEHGj0_k_cpM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false

Winthrop, R., & Mendenhall, M. (2006). Education in Emergencies: A Critical Factor to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals. *The Commonwealth Ministers Reference Book, 2–5.*

Ольга Амерідзе, Лариса Свиридова, Наталія Ямшинська. Виклики навчання ESP в умовах війни. Зазначено, що реалії, з якими сьогодні стикається Україна, а саме повномасштабна війна із введенням воєнного стану на території всієї країни, призвели до низки питань щодо ефективного, але безпечного проведення освітнього процесу та його належного управління в університетах та інших закладах освіти. Незважаючи на попередній досвід запровадження дистанційного та змішаного режимів навчання в період пандемії Covid 19, наголошено, що деякі аспекти організації освітнього процесу потребують перегляду з урахуванням нового досвіду навчання у воєнний час та необхідності врахування емоційного напруження студентів, особливо тих, які опинилися на тимчасово окупованих територіях. У статті подано результати опитування студентів Національного технічного університету України «Київський політехнічний інститут імені Ігоря Сікорського», проведеного з метою виявлення й аналізу рівня адаптованості студентів технічних факультетів до вивчення іноземної мови в екстремальних умовах, а також актуальності засобів і методів, застосованих викладачами на заняттях з англійської мови для спеціальних цілей. Серед результатів відзначено високу мотивацію студентів до вивчення іанглійської мови, посилення міжкультурної комунікації та здебільшого високу адаптацію до дистанційного режиму навчання. Встановлено, що студенти висловили небажання обговорювати війну та відповідні новини на заняттях з англійської мови для спеціальних цілей і мають проблеми з управлінням своїм навчальним часом. Усі отримані результати дають підстави для подальшого перегляду навчальних програм з метою більш повного задоволення освітніх потреб студентів.

Ключові слова: освіта у воєнний час; заняття з англійської мови для спеціальних цілей; дистанційне навчання; відкриті онлайн-курси; синхронне навчання; асинхронне навчання; емпатія викладача; міжкультурне спілкування.