

How Ukrainian EFL students stay motivated through technology

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Abstract. *This study examines how Ukrainian students learning English as a foreign language (EFL students) maintain their motivation through technology under unprecedented educational challenges. The article explores the impact of the full-scale Russian war, which began in February 2022 and continues to this day, on the learning process. Technology has transformed into a vital tool for ensuring educational continuity in remote regions, despite constant attacks on infrastructure. The research investigates mobile applications, communication platforms, video content, and AI tools as key factors supporting the motivation of Ukrainian EFL students.*

Keywords: *educational technology, Ukrainian education, distance learning, mobile-assisted language learning, wartime education.*

The digital transformation of education has become a defining feature of 21st-century learning, fundamentally reshaping how students acquire language skills. In Ukraine, this transformation has gained unprecedented momentum over the past several years, driven by both global educational trends and unique domestic circumstances. The integration of technology into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction is no longer merely an optional enhancement but has evolved into an essential component of the educational landscape [1, c. 69]. Ukrainian EFL learners increasingly rely on digital tools, mobile applications, and online platforms to supplement traditional classroom instruction, creating new opportunities for autonomous learning and personalised language acquisition.

The relevance of technology-enhanced language learning is particularly pronounced in the Ukrainian context, where students demonstrate high levels of digital literacy and widespread access to smartphones and internet connectivity. This technological infrastructure has facilitated the adoption of various learning tools, ranging from gamified mobile applications like Duolingo to AI-powered conversation partners and immersive virtual reality environments [1, c. 69-70]. These technologies offer Ukrainian learners unprecedented access to authentic English language resources, native speaker interactions, and immediate feedback mechanisms that were previously unavailable in traditional educational settings.

Ukrainian education has faced unprecedented disruptions in recent years, first with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently with the full-scale Russian invasion

in February 2022. The pandemic forced a rapid transition from face-to-face classroom interaction to online learning, resulting in numerous challenges for EFL students [2, c. 70]. Students faced psychological barriers caused by lack of face-to-face interaction, pandemic-related stress, anxiety, and difficulties adapting to the online learning environment [2, c. 71-72]. Technical problems, unfavourable study conditions at home, and poor internet connection further complicated the learning process [2, c. 74-75]. The war has dramatically intensified these challenges, disrupting education for more than five million children in Ukraine, with schools coming under attack and massive displacement of both students and teachers [1, c. 70]. Frequent air raid alerts, widespread destruction of educational infrastructure, and the devastation of entire villages, towns, and cities have fundamentally disrupted the educational landscape. The migration of over four million people, including two million children, combined with the destruction of communities and the ongoing threat to civilian safety, have made conventional classroom-based education increasingly challenging, if not impossible, in many regions [1, c. 70].

In this context, technology has proven indispensable for maintaining educational access and supporting student motivation. In this context, technology has proven indispensable for maintaining educational access and supporting student motivation. However, it is crucial to note that these technological solutions are primarily available in relatively safer, rear regions where internet connectivity and electricity supply remain operational. Even in these areas, massive Russian attacks on critical infrastructure pose a constant threat, transforming what should be stable educational conditions into temporary and unpredictable opportunities for learning. Frequent power outages and internet disruptions force students and educators to adapt continuously, making the already challenging process of distance learning even more precarious.

Ukrainian EFL learners have turned to digital platforms not only out of necessity but also as a means of maintaining normalcy, pursuing their educational goals, and preparing for future opportunities abroad. The war has heightened many Ukrainians' motivation to learn English, as the language is perceived as essential for potential emigration, international employment, and communication with the global community that has supported Ukraine during this crisis. Distance education, once viewed as a temporary emergency measure during the pandemic [2, c. 70-71], has become an integral part of the Ukrainian educational system, with technology serving as the primary medium through which students engage with English language learning.

This unique convergence of circumstances — the existing trend toward digitalisation, the forced transition to remote learning, and heightened motivation for English proficiency — creates a compelling case for examining how Ukrainian EFL students utilise technology to sustain and enhance their language learning motivation under extraordinary circumstances. This unique convergence of circumstances — the

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The landscape of technology-enhanced language learning offers Ukrainian EFL students a diverse array of tools that cater to different learning styles, preferences, and educational needs. These digital resources have become particularly vital in the current circumstances, providing accessible and flexible learning opportunities that help students maintain motivation and continuity in their language acquisition journey.

Among the most accessible and widely adopted technological solutions are mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) applications such as Duolingo, Memrise, and Quizlet. These applications have gained significant popularity due to their user-friendly interfaces, gamified learning experiences, and ability to function offline — a crucial feature given the intermittent internet connectivity in many Ukrainian regions [1, c. 73-75].

Duolingo, with its systematic approach to vocabulary and grammar instruction through short, game-like lessons, appeals to learners seeking structured, incremental progress. The application's streak system and achievement badges create a sense of continuity and accomplishment, which proves particularly valuable for maintaining motivation during uncertain times. Memrise employs spaced repetition techniques and mnemonic devices to enhance vocabulary retention, while its user-generated content allows learners to access specialised vocabulary sets relevant to their specific needs or interests. Quizlet offers versatile study modes, including flashcards, matching games, and practice tests, enabling students to customise their learning experience according to their preferences and learning objectives.

The portability of these applications allows Ukrainian students to utilise otherwise unproductive time — such as waiting during air raid alerts, intervals between online classes, time spent in shelters, or while travelling by public transport — for language practice. This flexibility has proven essential in maintaining learning continuity despite the unpredictable nature of daily life during wartime. Language exchange platforms such as Tandem and HelloTalk facilitate authentic communication with native English speakers and other learners worldwide, addressing one of the most significant challenges in the Ukrainian EFL context: limited opportunities for genuine conversational practice. These platforms connect users based on their native languages and target languages, creating partnerships where each participant serves alternately as teacher and learner.

For Ukrainian students, these platforms offer multiple benefits beyond simple language practice. They provide cultural exchange opportunities, expose learners to various English accents and dialects, and create meaningful connections with international peers. The text and voice messaging features allow learners to practice written and spoken communication at their own pace, reducing the anxiety often

associated with real-time conversation. Additionally, built-in correction tools enable partners to provide feedback on each other's language use, facilitating peer learning.

Discord communities dedicated to English language learning have emerged as vibrant spaces where Ukrainian students can participate in group discussions, voice channels, and structured learning sessions. These communities often organise conversation clubs, book discussions, and collaborative projects, creating a sense of belonging and shared purpose that counteracts the isolation of individual study.

Video content has become an invaluable resource for Ukrainian EFL learners, offering exposure to authentic language use, diverse accents, and cultural contexts. YouTube channels dedicated to English language instruction provide structured lessons on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and conversation skills, often presented in engaging and entertaining formats that maintain learner interest.

TED Talks serve a dual purpose: they offer exposure to academic and professional English while presenting thought-provoking content on diverse topics. The availability of transcripts and subtitles in multiple languages makes these talks accessible to learners at various proficiency levels, allowing students to gradually transition from relying on Ukrainian subtitles to using English subtitles and eventually watching without any textual support.

Streaming platforms like Netflix have revolutionised entertainment-based language learning. Ukrainian students can watch series and films with English audio and subtitles, creating an immersive learning experience that combines entertainment with education. This approach, often termed “informal digital learning of English,” has been shown to significantly enhance listening comprehension, expand vocabulary, and improve familiarity with colloquial expressions and cultural references. The ability to pause, rewind, and replay content allows learners to work at their own pace and focus on challenging segments.

The emergence of AI-powered language learning tools has introduced new possibilities for personalised, interactive practice. ChatGPT and similar conversational AI systems enable Ukrainian students to engage in dialogue practice without the pressure or anxiety that may accompany conversations with native speakers. Students can practice specific conversation scenarios — such as job interviews, academic presentations, or casual social interactions — receiving immediate responses that help them develop conversational fluency and confidence. These AI tools offer several advantages: they are available 24/7, patient with repetition, and can adjust their language complexity to match the learner's proficiency level. Students can experiment with different expressions, make mistakes without embarrassment, and receive explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary or grammar structures. For Ukrainian learners preparing for international employment or emigration, the ability to practice professional and academic English in realistic scenarios proves particularly valuable.

The integration of these diverse technological tools creates a comprehensive ecosystem for English language learning that addresses multiple skill areas — reading, writing, listening, and speaking — while accommodating the varied circumstances and constraints that Ukrainian students currently face.

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Hybrid artificial intelligence for philology research amid instability or crisis

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Abstract. This article examines the importance of hybrid artificial intelligence (HAI) in philological research during periods of crisis and instability. Hybrid AI, which integrates neural networks, machine-learning methods, expert rules and linguistic models, provides advanced tools for large-scale text analysis, linguistic modelling and automated interpretation of complex language structures. HAI enhances computational linguistics, lexicography, literary studies and intelligent translation by improving semantic detection, stylistic analysis, authorship attribution and culturally sensitive translation. It also supports digital humanities through text reconstruction, corpus studies and manuscript deciphering. Overall, hybrid AI expands analytical possibilities, increases research accuracy and ensures continuity and adaptability of philological studies under crisis conditions, strengthening the resilience and innovation potential of the humanities.

Keywords: philology, research and development, artificial intelligence, hybrid AI.

Introduction.

In times of large-scale social, political and economic upheaval, when the scientific and educational infrastructure is destabilized, research processes face numerous limitations. Access to information resources is reduced, communication between