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LEARNING ENGLISH UNDER THE SOUNDS OF AIR RAID SIRENS: ANALYSING UNDERGRADUATE EFL STUDENTS' SUSTAINABLE LEARING PRACTICES

Annotation. The article presents a mixed-methods study that examines how undergraduate students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) sustain their practices of learning English during the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022–2023. In total, 33 undergraduate EFL students (henceforth – participants) took part in the study. In order to gain insight into their sustainable learning practices, the participants were requested to write a short reflective essay titled "My Thoughts on How I Learn English during the War". The participants were instructed to write their essays in English within a one-week timeframe. Seeking to identify and classify a range of sustainable practices related to the ways the participants learnt English during the Russo-Ukrainian war, their reflective essays were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. The analysis of the participants' essays revealed the following learning practices that, according to the participants, helped them to sustain their EFL learning trajectory in the wartime EFL contexts: (i) participation in online EFL courses, (ii) communication with the native speakers of English on social networking sites (e.g., Instagram), and (iii) the combination of EFL learning activities offered at the participants' university. The findings are discussed in detail further in the article through the lens of sustainable multilingualism development. Specifically, we argue that the development of multilingualism in the time of crises is feasible and sustainable, especially if it is coupled with an EFL learner's inner psychological factors that are further facilitated by the external support offered by the digital learning environments that are (i) institutionalised and systematic, and (ii) extra-mural and unstructured (in other words, digitally wild).

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL); EFL teaching and learning; reflective essays; sustainable EFL learning.

Introduction

Amidst the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Ukraine keep providing sustainable teaching and learning processes on the tertiary level (Anishchenko et al., 2023; Banyoi et al., 2023; Kostikova et al., 2023; Lavrysh et al., 2022; Suchikova et al., 2023), inclusive of the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Concurrently with the shocking new reality that settled in in the heart of Europe after

24 February 2022, however, one should bear in mind that Ukrainian HEIs continue to function and offer tertiary education either online or on campus (Banyoi et al. 2023, p. 75). A remarkable resilience of Ukrainian HEIs during the war showcases sustainability on the part of the faculty (Anishchenko et al., 2023) and the student body alike (Kostikova et al., 2023). To-date, however, little is known about how undergraduate students at Ukrainian HEIs sustain their learning trajectories in the wartime Ukraine of today (Lavrysh et al., 2022). Moreover, there are no published studies that look into undergraduate EFL students' practices that help them to sustain their efforts of learning English in the context of the full-scale war. It should be specified that sustainable learning practices are seen as an iterative on-going process that is based upon support and cooperation between the student and the teacher, and among the students themselves (Sterling, 2009).

The present article introduces a mixed-methods study that aims at taking stock of sustainable EFL learning practices by a group of undergraduate EFL students (henceforth – participants). In the study, the participants are asked to reflect upon their EFL learning experiences and how they sustain them during the Russo-Ukrainian war. Specifically, the participants are requested to write a reflective essay on the topic "My Thoughts on How I Learn English during the War". Anchored in the wartime EFL settings in Ukraine, the study addresses the following research question (RQ):

RQ: What are the participants' EFL learning practices that help them to sustain their learning trajectory during the Russo-Ukrainian war?

Prior to proceeding to answering the RQ, we provide an extensive review of the literature. Guided by the RQ and the aim of the study, we divide the review into two sections. First, we summarise the recent studies on the teaching and learning at Ukrainian HEIs during the Russo-Ukrainian war. Second, we review the concept of sustainable teaching and learning in EFL, since it provides the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Thereafter, the article proceeds to the present study, its corpus, methodology, results, and their discussion. Finally, we conclude the article with a series of generalisations that are of relevance to sustainable EFL learning practices.

Teaching and Learning Processes at Ukrainian HEIs during the Russo-Ukrainian War: Literature Review

There are several state-of-the-art studies that address the issue of teaching and learning processes at Ukrainian HEIs during the current Russo-Ukrainian war (Anishchenko et al., 2023; Banyoi et al., 2023; Bohomaz et al., 2022; Chaikovska et al., 2023; Kostikova et al., 2023; Kostikova & Miasoiedova, 2022; Kvyetnyy et al., 2023; Lavrysh et al., 2022; Lokshyna et al., 2023; Lopatina et al., 2023; Nenko et al., 2023; Suchikova et al., 2023; Spivakovsky et al., 2023; Tverdokhliebova & Yevtushenko, 2023; Voloshyna, 2023). Arguably, the studies share a common contention that the educational process at Ukrainian HEIs is a challenge to the students and teachers, "who have to learn to work in new realities – in the conditions of war" (Banyoi et al., 2023, p. 75). Apart from the common denominator of the ongoing war, however, the studies appear to focus on a cornucopia of didactic, organisational, and pedagogical challenges that Ukrainian HEIs face today, namely digitalisation, social transformation, and psychological health and trauma. Let us synopsise the foci in more detail.

In an effort to cope with the pressing demands of the wartime educational settings, Ukrainian HEIs strive to rely on digitalisation and online distance courses (Banyoi et al., 2023). Reportedly, e-learning and digitalisation of the teaching and learning process and the extensive use of online settings seem to be the most effective means of establishing an optimal interaction between the teacher and the student during the war (Kostikova et al., 2023; Kostikova & Miasoiedova, 2022; Voloshyna, 2023). Furthermore, the system of education in Ukraine could be characterised by an increased use of digital and distance learning technologies (Kapranov, 2023; Tverdokhliebova & Yevtushenko, 2023). The state of digitalisation of Ukrainian HEIs is seen in the literature as a mandatory means of facilitating the sustainability of Ukraine's tertiary education system during the war (Bohomaz et al., 2022, p. 11). As far as digitalisation of Ukrainian HEIs is concerned, it is contended that the tertiary education landscape has benefitted substantially from the course of action on digitalisation during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bohomaz et al., 2022; Voloshyna, 2021). Now, in the wartime settings, there seems to be no need to

develop new protocols on digitalisation, since the system can take advantage of the existing measures that have been in place since the pandemic (ibid.). In particular, it is observed that Ukrainian HEIs avail themselves of the experiences gained during and after the pandemic that have been successfully transferred to sustaining the teaching and learning processes during the war (Kostikova et al., 2023, p. 123).

Whilst the new realities call for an extensive use of online teaching and learning, the literature highlights an increased importance of social transformation of HEIs during the full-scale military invasion (Anishchenko et al., 2023; Lavrysh et al., 2022; Suchikova et al., 2023). The literature points out to the need to pay attention to the transformation of relations among the stakeholders in the educational process (Anishchenko et al., 2023). A notable transformative aspect involves sustainability and resilience of Ukrainian HEIs (Anishchenko et al., 2023; Banyoi et al., 2023; Kostikova et al., 2023; Lavrysh et al., 2022; Suchikova et al., 2023) that have "hardened in overcoming the psychological and organizational crisis" (Anishchenko et al., 2023, p. 287).

It is argued in the literature that other transformative aspects that are associated with the current challenges to Ukrainian HEIs consist in enhancing students' agency in the learning process, providing flexible online and face-to-face schedules, and prioritising the students' psychological well-being (Lavrysh et al., 2023, p. 7). In addition to facilitating the student body's agency, it is posited that Ukrainian HEIs should create learning activities that impact positively on the students' psychological health and general well-being, given that the majority of undergraduate students exhibit signs of moderate depression (Chaikovska et al., 2023, p. 286). In this regard, there seems to be an urgent need to put a range of relevant measures in place that specify how to (i) encourage students to study despite war-related anxiety and depression, (ii) work with the students who have experienced significant trauma, (iii) design crisis-sensitive curricula, and (iv) establish a stimulating and secure environment despite resource constraints (Nenko et al., 2023, p. 16).

The literature demonstrates that Ukrainian HEIs should "ensure assistance to traumatized students by providing not only high-quality educational services but also psychological assistance" (Chaikovska et al.,

2023, p. 287). This observation should be equally applicable to the faculty as well, given that a substantial number of teachers and researchers who fled from the Russian occupation note a decrease in the effectiveness of their scientific activities (Suchikova et al., 2023), whilst approximately one-third of them have suspended research and research supervision (Lopatina et al., 2023). Hence, the system of higher education in Ukraine has experienced substantial educational losses in terms of both teaching and research potential (Lokshyna et al., 2023). In particular, the decrease in scientific activities is associated with "financial instability, lack of access to equipment, loss of relevance of previously started research, inability to concentrate on science", to name just a few (Suchikova et al., 2023, p. 408).

Attempting to mitigate the adverse psychological condition and war trauma, Ukrainian HEIs prioritise digitalisation and online tools that have become the primary port of call for the management of educational activities (Spivakovsky et al., 2023). It is posited in the literature that a reliable digital and technological environment can help with the improvement of the psychological confidence of students and teachers during the war (Kvyetnyy et al., 2023). In other words, we can observe that the topic of digitalisation resurfaces again after the COVID-19 pandemic (Voloshyna, 2021), now in conjunction with the issues of psychological health and well-being of the students and the faculty during the war. Additionally, it is inferred from the literature (Anishchenko et al., 2023; Kvyetnyy et al., 2023; Lopatina et al., 2023; Spivakovsky et al., 2023) that digitalisation of the Ukrainian HEIs appears to be a cornerstone of sustainable teaching and learning practices. Further in the article, we provide an outline of the concept of sustainability in relation to EFL learning practices.

The Concept of Sustainable Learning in EFL

The present study is anchored in the concept of sustainable learning in EFL contexts. Whilst there are multiple and divergent definitions of sustainability in the teaching and learning processes, our study, which is further presented in the article, is informed by Sterling's (2009) contention that sustainable learning is typically a bottom-up process that often involves

a horizontal network, where everyone may be an expert in pursuing an open-ended inquiry. Following Sterling (2009), we assume that sustainable learning is an iterative on-going process that is based upon external support and cooperation between the student and the teacher, as well as among the students in a horizontal study network. Importantly, the concept of sustainable learning factors in a paramount role of the immediate and global learning contexts (Sterling, 2009). It should be noted that the concept of sustainable learning has found its place in applied linguistics, EFL studies and English Medium Instruction (Han et al., 2021; Kapranov, 2022b, 2021; Kirsner et al., 2007; Peng & Xie, 2021).

Given that there is a wealth of publications on sustainable learning practices in a variety of EFL contexts, we focus our literature review on the most recent studies. Judging from the literature, sustainable EFL learning practices rely increasingly on online learning environments, which, to a substantial extent, determine EFL learners' engagement, satisfaction, and self-efficacy (Han et al., 2021; Kapranov, 2022a). In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, online EFL learning has provided an EFL learner with such sustainable activities as flexible access to learning resources and self-paced learning opportunities (Han et al., 2021; Peng & Xie, 2021). It is argued in the literature that online EFL learning is considered a sustainable and effective means of maintaining the basic EFL skills and facilitating the acquisition of more complex language skills that are often coupled with the development of new cognitive skills by an EFL learner (Han et al., 2021).

Furthermore, online EFL learning is deemed to offer "a favorable language learning environment that is interactive, supportive, and attractive in order to motivate and engage language learners" (Han et al., 2021, p. 11655). For instance, the use of Facebook is a relevant example of EFL students' development and maintenance of written communication skills that take place in a supportive and interactive learning environment (Lin et al., 2022). Likewise, the use of e-writing is conducive to the development and maintenance of syntactic complexity in EFL (Pourdana, 2022; Zenouzagh, 2020). In terms of interactive learning environments, virtual reality is reported to be a relevant technological solution for sustainable EFL learning (Wang et al., 2021). For instance, the use of virtual reality exhibits

positive effects on the EFL learners' reading comprehension concurrently with increasing motivation and decreasing anxiety (ibid.).

Whilst the literature demonstrates that digital mobile devices are utilised extensively as a linguo-didactic tool that sustains and promotes vocabulary learning (Mortazavi et al., 2021; Tanaka et al., 2015), other studies point to the sustainable development of EFL vocabulary acquisition that involves off-line contexts (Zeng et al., 2022). Put differently, the literature suggests that in order to learn vocabulary efficiently and sustainably, EFL learners may engage themselves in the so-called traditional, i.e., off-line activities that are aimed at the acquisition of cognates, polysemy, and word frequency (ibid.). An off-line perspective is also present in the studies that indicate that sustainable EFL learning involves the knowledge and maintenance of pragma-communicative skills, which an EFL learning should master and maintain in a face-to-face classroom environment (Bardis et al., 2021).

It appears that the major bulk of the recent literature in EFL studies elucidates the use of technology as far as sustainable EFL learning is concerned. We cannot help but notice that the field of contemporaneous EFL studies quite often equates the use of digital technology and online course delivery with sustainability. It is beyond our brief review to argue in favour or against such developments. However, we should add that whilst the benefits of digital technology in sustainable EFL learning are unquestionable, one should bear in mind that undergraduate EFL students may experience digital fatigue from online courses and the overuse of technology (Kapranov, 2020a).

The Present Study

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the present study aims at identifying and classifying the participants' EFL learning practices, which they think help them to sustain their level of English mastery in the wartime period. In line with the aim of the study, the RQ was formulated (see introduction). It should be emphasised that the investigation and subsequent discussion of the RQ are embedded into the theoretical premises of the concept of sustainable learning (Sterling, 2009), which is outlined in the preceding section of the article. Further, we present the procedure that is used in the study, its

methodology, the participants' demographic and linguistic background, and the descriptive statistics of the corpus that consists of the participants' essays written on the topic "My Thoughts on How I Learn English during the War".

Participants, Procedure, Corpus, and Methods

The participants in the study were undergraduate university students enrolled in the bachelor's programme in agricultural engineering. As a part of their programme, they had to attend obligatory courses in English for two years, that is the first and the second years of study. At the time of the data collection in spring 2023, the participants were enrolled in the second year of their EFL programme. In total, 33 participants (male 57.6%, female 42.4%, mean age 19.4, standard deviation 0.6) took part in the study. The participants' first language (L1) was Ukrainian and English was a foreign language (FL) to all of them. Judging from the tests that the participants took during their first year at university, their English proficiency would be described as intermediate B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (The Council of Europe, 2001). The participants provided their consent that allowed the authors of the article to use their reflective essays in the present investigation. The participants' real names and other socio-linguistic data were coded and anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

As far as the procedure in the study was concerned, the following should be specified. The participants were contacted about the study and its purpose in spring 2023 that is one year after the full-scale Russian invasion. The participants were requested to write a reflective essay on the topic "My Thoughts on How I Learn English during the War" at home within one week and send the essays to the authors via e-mail. The participants were asked to write approximately 300 words or half an A4 page in English. It should be specified that no strict parameters were set for the essay writing. In particular, the participants were not limited as far as the number of words were concerned. Importantly, however, we instructed the participants to focus their reflective essays on their own experiences of learning English during the war and we kindly asked them to abstain from general and too vague statements that had little or nothing to do with the topic. Otherwise, the participants were

free to write as much as they deemed necessary and structure their reflective essays in the way they wanted.

All the participants wrote their reflective essays in English and sent them electronically to the authors. The participants' essays were downloaded and analysed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, or SPSS version 20.0 (IBM, 2011). The descriptive statistics of the corpus were given in Table 1 below.

Table 1

The Descriptive Statistics of the Corpus

#	Descriptive Statistics	Value
1	Total number of words	9 464
2	Mean words	286.8
3	Standard deviation words	125.4
4	Minimum words	123
5	Maximum words	591

In terms of the methodology, the corpus of the participants' essays was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative part involved the reading of the participants' essays several times by both authors in order to identify those instances in the essays where the participants explicitly refer to the EFL learning practices that, according to them, sustained their EFL skills. In our qualitative analysis we relied on the prior literature in EFL studies, which showed that EFL students' reflections on their EFL learning could provide a wealth of data related to their identity, perceptions of English, digital practices associated with the learning of English, and problems in their EFL learning (Kapranov, 2018, 2020b, 2015). Following the literature (Wale & Bishaw, 2020), we regarded the participants' reflective essays as a robust source of data. However, we were aware that an EFL student's reflections upon their EFL learning would be subjective and, at times, biased. We acknowledged that in our analysis and the interpretation of the results.

Following the qualitative part of the analysis, we examined the participants' essays quantitatively by means of calculating the percentage of the participants who referred to a particular EFL practice that helped them to sustain their EFL skills during the war. The percentage was calculated in SPSS version 20.0 (IBM, 2011). Thereafter, we extended the quantitative analysis by means of carrying out the frequency analysis of the key words in

context (KWIC) in the computer programme AntConc version 4.0.11 (Antony, 2022). We used the KWIC function of AntConc in order to have a closer look at how the participants referred linguistically to the learning of English (i.e., what frequent phrases they used in conjunction with the description of their EFL learning activities). To that end, we merged the participants' reflective essays into one file and processed it in AntConc by applying the KWIC function. The results of the investigation and their discussion are presented in the following section of the article.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the participants' essays has revealed that they refer to several types of EFL learning activities that, according to them, help to sustain their EFL skills during the war. These activities are summarised in Table 2 per group.

Table 2

The Participants' Sustainable EFL Practices

#	The Participants' Sustainable EFL Practices	Percentage of Participants
1	Learning English at online EFL courses	21.2%
2	Learning what is given at the university	21.2%
3	Chatting with English-speaking friends on social media	15.2%
4	Watching TV news in English	12.1%
5	Using online apps	9.1%
6	Watching TV series in English on Netflix	6.1%
7	Listening to audiobooks in English	6.1%
8	Listening to podcasts in English	3.0%
9	Reading scientific articles in English	3.0%
10	Learning English face-to-face with a private tutor	3.0%

It is evident from Table 2 that the participants seem to prefer the following types of EFL learning practices that help them to sustain their EFL learning trajectory during the Russo-Ukrainian war: (i) free online EFL courses, (ii) deep learning of what is offered at the university, and (iii) chatting with their English-speaking friends on social networking sites. Let us discuss these findings in more detail. As mentioned above, 21.2% of the participants indicate that learning English at free online EFL courses facilitates the maintenance of

their EFL skills during the war. Importantly, we have observed that those participants who mention online EFL courses as a means of sustaining their English point out to such factors as motivation and an increased desire to learn during the war. Arguably, the combination of motivational variables with the participation in online EFL courses, obviously in addition to being enrolled in their regular undergraduate programmes at the university, may be accounted by the stressful reality the participants are situated in. Judging from the data, however, the participants seem to draw their motivation from the adversities of the war, as emblematised by Excerpt 1 taken from the participant's reflective essay.

> (1) Learning English now during the war is not easy. The biggest problem for me is to study online with power outages. I must say that when there is no electricity and the Internet does not work it is impossible to study in the online course. But […] I think about the soldiers at the front who are fighting in the east and I get focused and happy with the things I have and it makes me studying harder and use my time productively. (Female participant, 19 y.o.)

The participants' enrolment in online EFL courses as a means of sustaining and, most likely, improving their EFL skills resonates with the previous studies, which indicate that digitalisation and online distance courses are embraced by the HEIs in Ukraine as a necessary measure of ensuring the sustainability of Ukraine's tertiary education during the war (Banyoi et al., 2023; Bohomaz et al., 2022; Kostikova et al., 2023; Kostikova & Miasoiedova, 2022; Tverdokhliebova & Yevtushenko, 2023). It should be noted, however, that the participants' enrolment in online EFL courses is not compulsory. This learning activity is suggested by the lecturers at their ordinary EFL course at the university. However, the lecturers do not mandate it, thus leaving it to an individual student to decide whether or not online EFL courses that are not affiliated with the university would be a viable option to be explored by the student.

In addition to those participants (21.2%) who refer to online EFL courses as a means of sustaining their EFL learning practices, another subgroup

of participants (also 21.2%, just like the previously mentioned one) posit that they are focused on what is provided within their ordinary EFL course at the university. The participants in this subgroup do not seem to report being involved in such extra-mural learning activities as, for instance, online EFL courses or engaging with the native speakers of English online. Instead, they appear to prioritise the learning tasks that are routinely offered to them by the university lecturers as a part of their undergraduate EFL course. It should be specified that when we were analysing the participants' reflective essays, we found out that five out of seven participants in this subgroup (21.2% in total) refer to depression and difficulties with concentration. Presumably, a high level of anxiety and war trauma are not conducive to the participants' extra-mural activities, for instance, studying online at a distance EFL course or chatting online with an English-speaking friend. Conceivably, the stress and anxiety that are experienced by these participants consume a substantial deal of cognitive and mental resources that are just enough for deep learning of what is provided at the university. This observation is illustrated by Excerpt 2 below.

> (2) I can't sleep because there are air sirens almost every night. Our city is like 1000 km from the front but we have the sirens for more than one year now. I can't focus on anything other than the present. My answer to all that is to live one day at a time. That's why my strategy to learn English is to simply do what our teacher asks us to do. I try to focus on grammar exercises and on vocabulary and do it properly. (Male participant, 20 y.o.)

Excerpt (2) above epitomises negativity, stress, and anxiety associated with the war that the participants experience. This finding lends support to the literature, which posits that an additional amount of attention should be paid to the current student body in Ukraine that experiences psychological problems, in particular, moderate depression (Chaikovska et al., 2023; Lavrysh et al., 2023), frustration and trauma (Nenko et al., 2023; Suchikova et al., 2023), and inability to concentrate (Lokshyna et al., 2023; Lopatina et al., 2023). In case of the participants in our study, we can argue that they deal

with their depression and war-induced trauma by means of concentrating on their everyday routines, inclusive of learning English the way it is taught at their regular EFL course. Obviously, the participants' traumatic war-related experiences merit a separate study and, at least, a post-hoc interview concerning the relationship between their war trauma and EFL studies. Whilst we acknowledge that such post-hoc interviews would provide a deeper insight in the issue at hand, we would like to emphasise that it has not been our intention to delve into the issue of the participants' anxiety and their EFL studies due to a host of ethical considerations. For instance, via the informal communication with the participants, we have learnt that the majority of them have family members on the frontline. Therefore, upon careful consideration, we decided not to cause even more trauma and anxiety to the participants by requesting them to talk about their negative war-related experiences. We acknowledge that the absence of the post-hoc interview would constitute a limitation of the present study; however, we hope that it would be possible to conduct such interviews after the war.

It is seen in Table 2 that the third most frequent EFL practice that helps to sustain the participants' EFL skills involves communication with their English-speaking friends on social media, specifically on social networking sites. The participants write that they typically chat on messenger on Facebook and/or use the message function on Instagram in order to exchange short messages with their English-speaking friends. Notably, three participants specify that their English-speaking friends hail from the USA and Great Britain, whereas the rest of them do not disclose any additional information concerning their friends' nationality apart from generic references that they are native speakers (L1) of English. Critically, the participants (15.2%) indicate that chatting with English L1 speakers facilitates the maintenance and acquisition of vocabulary in English, whilst none of them report positive gains in grammar that eventuate from online chatting. This finding is further illustrated by Excerpt (3):

> (3) I am on Insta very often. I upload loads of pix there mainly about my city and less so about me. I hate selfies. What I like about Insta though is that I stay connected with a lot of people who comment on

my pix. I have followers all over the globe. I chat with two friends from London. They write to me in English and I write back in English too. They taught me a lot of useful words like pix and Insta instead of Instagram. (Male participant, 19 y.o.)

A facilitative role of using social networking sites and the digital wilds of unstructured out-of-classroom exposure to authentic English online is in concord with the literature which reports that Facebook, Instagram, and other social networking sites can ensure the maintenance of EFL students' written skills (Kapranov, 2022b; Lin et al., 2022) and the expansion of their vocabulary (Pourdana, 2022; Wang et al., 2021). The present findings are also in line with the literature in the field of EFL studies that report the cross-fertilisation effect of writing skills on sustaining an EFL learner's vocabulary (Karataş & Tuncer, 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2022).

In terms of the participants' EFL-related activities, we have noticed from the data that they could be divided into several clusters, namely i) the combination of learning activities offered at online courses, the university course, and/or private tutoring; ii) writing; iii) listening and watching that is combined with listening; and iv) reading and reading that is combined with listening on apps. These findings are graphically represented by Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

The Participants' EFL-related Activities
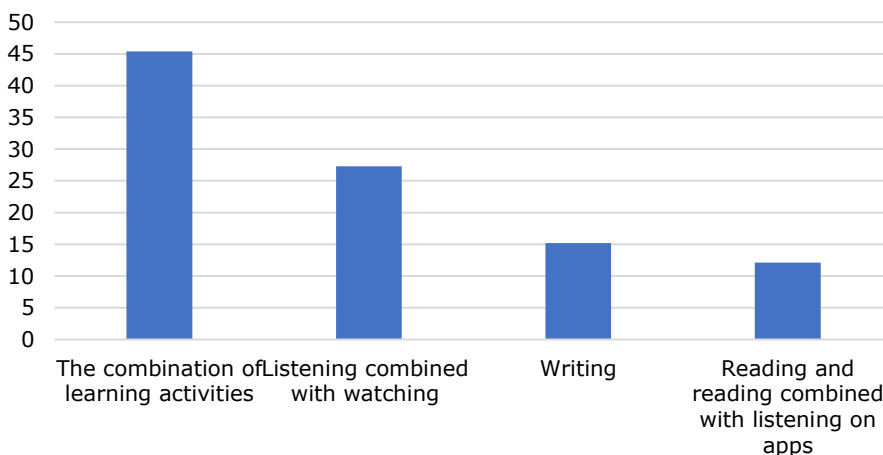
It is evident from the findings summarised in Figure 1 that the participants are engaged in a combination of EFL-related activities that are offered at their university EFL course and/or online EFL courses. Often, the participants do not disentangle the activities and state that their strategy of learning English involves doing "what our teacher asks us to do" (Male participant, 20 y.o.). The combination of EFL-related activities is followed by listening, inclusive of listening that is combined with watching news and/or TV series in English. However, it appears that writing and reading are less popular EFL-related activities (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

In order to gain a deeper insight into the participants' EFL-related learning activities, we have applied AntConc's (Antony, 2022) function "key words in context" or KWIC to the verb *learn* and its forms (i.e., *learns, learning*, *learnt/learned, will/shall learn*). The application of AntConc to the data has yielded no hits with *learnt/learns/learned/will learn/shall learn*, but provided ample data concerning *learn, to learn* and *learning*. These findings are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3

10 Most Frequent KWICs Learn, to Learn and Learning

#	KWIC	Examples
1	Learn	To learn English during the war is a difficult
2	Learn	To learn English during the war can be
3	Learn	To learn English during the war means to study online
4	Learn	To learn English for me is to listen to audiobooks
5	Learn	To learn English during the war I need a laptop
6	Learn	To learn English properly
7	Learn	To learn English I visit sites that offer grammar and pronunciation
8	Learn	I learn English online
9	Learn	I learn English because it is important
10	Learn	I learn English because it is very important for my future career
11	Learning	English during the war is not easy
12	Learning	English during the war is a challenge
13	Learning	English during the war is important
14	Learning	English by different methods
15	Learning	English can be a difficult task
16	Learning	English during the war can be a challenge
17	Learning	Can help me connect with foreigners
18	Learning	English can help me communicate with my friends
19	Learning	English helps me understand the news
20	Learning	English online

It follows from Table 3 that *learn, to learn,* and *learning* are used by the participants in the contextual environment that seems to be associated

with evaluative lexica, e.g. "To learn English during the war is difficult". In addition, the evaluative lexica involve an emotive component, e.g. "I learn English because it is very important for my future career". These findings open an avenue to explore the participants' attitudinal and motivational variables in relation to their EFL studies. We, however, leave these aspects to be explored in future studies. Currently, we restrict our discussion to the participants' EFL learning activities. So far, it seems possible to summarise the discussion by positing that the participants contextualise their learning by referring rather frequently to studying online and listening to audiobooks, whilst other frequently occurring EFL activities involve listening and watching either TV series on Netflix or news on, for instance, BBC.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research

The article involves a mixed-methods investigation of the participants' reflective essays that are written on the topic "My Thoughts on How I Learn English during the War". Following the analysis of the corpus of the participants' essays, we can conclude that the participants avail themselves of the learning opportunities afforded by online EFL courses. In equal measure, the participants seem to make the uttermost use of their EFL university course by means of concentrating on the everyday EFL learning routines. In addition, we have established that the participants appear to be actively engaged in chatting with their English L1 friends on social networking sites (primarily, on Instagram).

We argue that the study can be summarised as having three overarching conclusions. First, digitalisation and online technology offer positive affordances to undergraduate EFL students. Specifically, we posit that during the war, online apps, free online EFL courses, online podcasts and online streaming services such as, for instance Netflix, and social networking sites facilitate the maintenance and sustainability of EFL skills. In equal measure, we suggest that the routinely used quotidian EFL activities associated with the traditional mode of EFL learning sustain EFL learners' skills that involve, first of all, vocabulary.

Second, we contend that in the context of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian

war one should bear in mind the old parable that wisely points that there is nothing new under the Sun. Just like the participants in the study who continue studying English during the war, there are and there were countless EFL students, as well as teachers, who tried to stay on the path of learning and education even during the darkest of modern times, for instance during the Balkan wars in the 1990s (Bal, 2012). Hence, we argue that whilst the present study is contextualised in the EFL settings in Ukraine, its relevance may extend beyond Ukraine's borders and may be of interest to a wide circle of readers and EFL professionals, who are engaged in the EFL teaching and learning amidst the current conflict zones globally. Third, we argue that our findings may contribute to the sustainable multilingualism development by means of the following. It is evident from the findings that the participants who are currently situated in the wartime EFL contexts do not appear to revert to strict monolingualism (i.e., using their L1 only), but seem to sustain their efforts to foster EFL acquisition in a variety of ways (online EFL courses, deep learning strategies, etc.). Judging from the data, the participants' sustainable EFL learning practices are combined with a host of psycholinguistic and psychological variables, such as their motivation to speak English as a means of finding a job, learning English as a way to cope with anxiety and war-related stress by means of diverting their thoughts from the war and, instead, focusing on the EFL studies as a sort of escapism. Hence, we contend that multilingualism development in the time of crises is feasible, possible, and sustainable, provided that an EFL learner's inner psychological factors are expedited by the external support offered by the digital learning environments, which can be (i) institutionalised and systematic, and (ii) ad-hoc and unstructured (in other words, digitally wild).

Obviously, there are several limitations of our study that we would like to summarise. The first limitation involves the absence of post-hoc interviews with the participants. We have indicated the reasons in the discussion section of the article why we consider such interviews not possible at the moment. However, we believe that the structured interviews with the participants could provide a wealth of data associated with their sustainable EFL practices. We hope that such interviews will be employed in our future studies. The second major limitation of the study involves the absence of the participants'

reflections on how they used to study English before the war. The contrasting points between the pre-war and wartime EFL contexts would be a promising direction of the future research.

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АНГЛІЙСЬКА ПІД ЗВУКИ СИРЕН: АНАЛІЗ ПРАКТИКИ СТАЛОГО НАВЧАННЯ EFL СТУДЕНТАМИ БАКАЛАВРАТУ

Резюме. У статті представлено емпіричне дослідження, яке вивчає, як студенти бакалаврату англійської мови як іноземної (EFL) підтримують практику вивчення англійської мови під час російсько-української війни, що триває у 2022–2023 роках. У дослідженні взяли участь 33 студенти бакалаврату EFL (далі – учасники). Для того, щоб отримати уявлення про їхні практики сталого навчання, учасникам було запропоновано написати короткий твір-роздум під назвою «Мої думки про те, як я вивчаю англійську мову під час війни». Учасникам було запропоновано написати твори англійською мовою протягом одного тижня. Прагнучи визначити та класифікувати низку стійких практик, пов'язаних із тим, як учасники вивчали англійську мову під час російсько-української війни, твори були проаналізовані якісно та кількісно. Аналіз творів учасників виявив такі практики навчання, які, на думку учасників, допомогли їм підтримувати траєкторію навчання EFL під час війни: (i) участь в EFL онлайн-курсах, (ii) спілкування з носіями англійської мови на сайтах соціальних мереж (наприклад, Instagram) і (iii) навчальні заходи з EFL, які пропонуються в університеті. Отримані результати детально обговорюються далі в статті через призму сталого розвитку багатомовності. Зокрема, ми стверджуємо, що розвиток багатомовності під час кризи є здійсненним і стійким, особливо якщо він поєднується з внутрішніми психологічними факторами учня, якому додатково сприяє зовнішня підтримка, запропонована як (i) інституціоналізованим та систематичним, так і (ii) позааудиторним і неструктурованим середовищем.

Ключові слова: англійська як іноземна мова (EFL); викладання та навчання EFL; твір-роздум; стійке навчання EFL.

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ANGLŲ KALBOS MOKYMASIS SKAMBANT ORO PAVOJAUS SIRENOMS: BAKALAURO STUDIJŲ STUDENTŲ TVARAUS MOKYMOSI VEIKLŲ ANALIZĖ

Anotacija. Straipsnyje pristatomas mišrių metodų tyrimas, kuriame nagrinėjamos anglų kalbos studijų programos bakalauro studentų tvaraus mokymosi patirtys studijuojant anglų kaip užsienio kalbą vykstant Rusijos ir Ukrainos karui 2022–2023 metais. Iš viso tyrime dalyvavo 33 bakalauro studijų anglų kaip užsienio kalbos studentai (toliau – dalyviai). Siekiant išsiaiškinti dalyvių tvaraus mokymosi patirtis, jų buvo paprašyta parašyti anglų kalba trumpą refleksijos esė „Mano mintys apie tai, kaip aš mokausi anglų kalbos karo metu"; esė rašymo terminas – viena savaitė. Siekiant nustatyti ir suklasifikuoti įvairias tvaraus mokymosi patirtis, susijusias su dalyvių anglų kalbos mokymosi būdais per Rusijos ir Ukrainos karą, jų refleksijos esė buvo analizuojamos taikant kokybinius ir kiekybinius tyrimo metodus. Esė analizė atskleidė šias tvaraus mokymosi veiklas, kurios, pasak dalyvių, padėjo jiems išlaikyti anglų kaip užsienio kalbos mokymosi trajektoriją karo metu: (i) dalyvavimas internetiniuose anglų kaip užsienio kalbos kursuose, (ii) bendravimas su gimtakalbiais anglų kalbos vartotojais socialiniuose tinkluose (pvz., „Instagram") ir (iii) dalyvių universitete siūlomų anglų kaip užsienio kalbos mokymosi veiklų derinys. Gauti rezultatai išsamiai aptarti straipsnyje. Taip pat išsamiai aptartos išvados per tvarios daugiakalbystės plėtros prizmę. Tiksliau, mes teigiame, kad daugiakalbystės ugdymas krizės metu yra įmanomas ir gali būti tvarus, ypač jei jis susijęs su besimokančiojo anglų kaip užsienio kalbos vidiniais psichologiniais veiksniais, kuriuos dar labiau palengvina išorinė skaitmeninių mokymosi aplinkų teikiama parama, jeigu ji (i) institucionalizuota ir sisteminga, ir (ii) vykstanti už švietimo institucijos ribų ir yra nestruktūrizuota (kitaip tariant, autentiška skaitmeninė).

Pagrindinės sąvokos: anglų kaip užsienio kalba; anglų kaip užsienio kalbos mokymas ir mokymasis; refleksijos esė; tvarus anglų kaip užsienio kalbos mokymasis.