

UDC 811.111(07):378.147

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64076/iedc260123.12>

## Strategies for Foreign Language Teaching During Blackouts in Ukraine: Adapting to Energy Constraints

Nataliya Prokopchuk

Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6609-8109>

**Abstract.** *The article addresses the organization of foreign language teaching in Ukraine under conditions of blackouts and prolonged energy constraints caused by the full-scale war. It analyzes key challenges in the energy and education sectors and highlights the role of the teacher as a facilitator and source of psychological support. A set of adaptive strategies is proposed to ensure learning continuity, foster learner autonomy, and maintain the quality of language education despite unstable electricity supply.*

**Keywords:** *adaptive strategies, blackouts, energy constraints, EGL teaching, learner autonomy, challenges.*

The full-scale war in Ukraine has radically transformed the functioning of the educational system. Frequent and prolonged power outages caused by damage to energy infrastructure have become one of the most serious challenges for general secondary and higher education institutions [1]. For foreign language teachers, this situation requires not only rapid methodological adaptation but also a profound rethinking of the role of education as a space of support, stability, and humanity.

Foreign language teaching traditionally relies on regular communication, audiovisual materials, and interactive digital resources. Blackout conditions disrupt

these established mechanisms while simultaneously creating new opportunities for developing learner autonomy, creativity, and responsibility for one's own learning.

Energy instability in Ukraine directly affects the organization of the educational process: class schedules are constantly adjusted, synchronous online instruction becomes difficult, and the workload of teachers and learners increases. Educational institutions are forced to combine face-to-face, distance, and asynchronous learning formats, often within a single week or even a single day.

*The main challenges of EFL teaching during blackouts include:*

- fragmentation and irregularity of the learning process;
- limited access to digital platforms and multimedia resources;
- decreased learning motivation due to fatigue, stress, and anxiety;
- unequal access to technical resources;
- the risk of superficial learning without sufficient communicative practice.

In this situation, education goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and increasingly fulfills a socially stabilizing function. For pupils and students, a foreign language lesson can become a space for emotional relief, safe communication, and a sense of normality amid uncertainty [3].

Under conditions of prolonged energy instability, *the role of the foreign language teacher* extends far beyond the traditional transmission of knowledge. The teacher becomes an organizer of an adaptive learning environment, a facilitator of learner autonomy, and a source of emotional stability.

Teachers are required to anticipate possible disruptions and prepare alternative learning scenarios in advance, including offline materials, flexible deadlines, and varied forms of assessment [2].

Clear communication with learners and parents regarding expectations, tasks, and feedback mechanisms is essential for maintaining trust and continuity.

Equally important is the teacher's humanistic function. In crisis conditions, empathy, emotional sensitivity, and psychological support become integral components of professional competence. By creating a safe and supportive classroom atmosphere—whether online or offline—the teacher helps learners cope with stress and uncertainty while sustaining motivation for language learning.

These factors require teachers to demonstrate flexibility, empathy, and readiness to adapt traditional teaching methodologies.

To ensure continuity and quality of foreign language education during blackouts, **a set of adaptive strategies** should be implemented. These strategies combine organizational flexibility, methodological adaptation, technological awareness, and a humanistic pedagogical approach.

**Organizational strategies** include flexible scheduling, shortened learning units, and the use of asynchronous formats that allow learners to work independently when electricity is unavailable:

*Micro-lessons and modular structure:* instead of long lessons, short autonomous units that can be completed even without electricity (e.g., printed materials, audio content on portable devices).

*Asynchronous tasks:* assignments that learners can complete at a convenient time, maintaining learning progress regardless of electricity availability

*Blended Learning* as a combination of online and offline components helps maintain learning continuity: synchronous sessions are conducted when electricity is available, while independent work follows a pre-defined plan during outages.

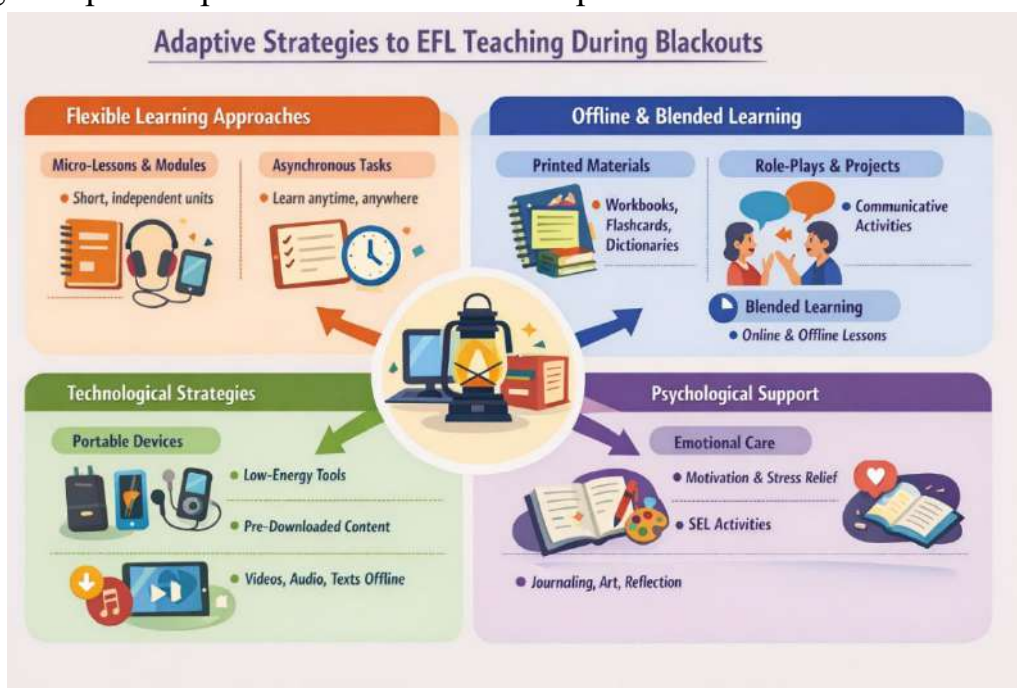
*Methodological strategies* focus on prioritizing communicative competence through offline activities such as role-plays, storytelling, dialogue practice, and project-based tasks.

*Printed materials* such as printed workbooks, flashcards, and dictionaries become critically important during prolonged power outages.

*Using audio materials on portable devices* (MP3 players/mobile phones) for listening and pronunciation practice can also be used without the need for an internet connection.

*Technological strategies* involve the rational use of low-energy devices, offline-accessible resources, and pre-downloaded materials. Mobile phones, audio recordings, and messaging platforms can support learning with minimal energy consumption.

Learners experiencing stress due to war and instability require emotional support through motivational messages, regular feedback, and group projects that foster a sense of community. Thus, incorporation of *Psychological-pedagogical strategies* emphasize emotional support, reduce academic pressure, and enhance learner-centered interaction. Reflection tasks, all the varieties of SEL activities (breathing and art techniques, journal/emotional writing, storytelling), personal narratives, and meaningful topics help sustain motivation and promote resilience.



**Fig. 1.** Adaptive Strategies to EFL Teaching During Blackouts

**Conclusions.** Blackouts caused by the destruction of energy infrastructure have become a defining feature of the educational reality in wartime Ukraine. These conditions pose significant challenges to foreign language teaching but also prompt a rethinking of pedagogical priorities and practices.

The implementation of adaptive strategies (organizational, methodological, technological, and psychological-pedagogical) allows educators to ensure the continuity and quality of foreign language education despite unstable electricity supply. A humanistic, learner-centered approach, combined with the development of autonomy and flexibility, enables foreign language learning to remain meaningful and effective even in crisis situations.

Ultimately, the teacher's professional adaptability and commitment to human values play a decisive role in transforming foreign language education into a space of resilience, support, and sustainable development under conditions of uncertainty.

### References

1. Marchenko, O., Sokolenko, V., & Gajda, O. (2025). *Coping with adversity: Mechanisms of resilience in Ukrainian universities during the Russian-Ukrainian War—A perspective from Lviv University students*. *Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-025-01506-z>.
2. Shuliakova, N. (2025). *Education 2025: How schools operate during wartime in Ukraine*. *Frontliner.ua* [https://frontliner.ua/en/school-wartime-ukraine-2025/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://frontliner.ua/en/school-wartime-ukraine-2025/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).
3. UNESCO. (2024). *Learning amid war: How UNESCO makes Ukrainian schools safer for children and teachers*. UNESCO [https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/learning-amid-war-how-unesco-makes-ukrainian-schools-safer-children-and-teachers?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/learning-amid-war-how-unesco-makes-ukrainian-schools-safer-children-and-teachers?utm_source=chatgpt.com).