

<https://doi.org/10.28925/2617-5266.2023.812>

INTEGRATING ‘UNDERLINE’ TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING ESP REMOTELY

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the problem of integrating digital tool Underline into the remote classes in the framework of English for specific purposes course (ESP). Underline is a Google Chrome extension that is regarded as a reading tool. It enables students to develop their vocabulary while browsing foreign language content (article, forum etc). The aim of the article is to describe, Underline and assess its effectiveness in ESP remote class. To achieve this goal, we examined the options of Underline precisely and singled out its advantages. When studying the effectiveness of Underline, we conducted a survey based on an anonymous questionnaire created in Google Forms. The research was carried out among the students of 4th year of study of the Institute of Physical Education and Sports during the first semester, the 2023-2024 academic year at LNU Taras Shevchenko National University. The results of the study revealed that Underline facilitates students to process English language content on the Internet greatly. Thus, it has made reading online more enjoyable and attractive. Moreover, it has improved students' motivation in dealing with reading professionally-oriented texts and contributed to autonomous learning of new words using Underline mobile application.

Keywords: digital tool; ESP; reading online; remote teaching; Underline

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic impact on education systems was diverse. “The Coronavirus divided the world’s higher education map into more prepared and experienced and unprepared and inexperienced educational systems in digitally-based distance learning” (Mospan, 2023a, p. 50). Besides, international students required key attention and care (Bogusz, 2021).

Ukrainian teachers and learners began experiencing remote classes since the COVID-19 pandemic. As far as it appeared so suddenly, online education has become a severe trial during the pandemic period. Mospan et al. (2022) evidence that “the COVID-19 pandemic caused shock and flurry of criticism of online learning among national educators. The universities were not ready for that external stimulus facing technical and financial challenges as well” (p. 94). Teachers were unprepared for teaching online, so that “working remotely was a new experience for them without theoretical preparation and technical provision and support” (Stepanenko, 2022, p.1). However, that it was not actually “online teaching” that was more likely to “emergency remote teaching” defining as a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated (Hodges et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic experience helped teachers to finish the academic year from the beginning of the war. It was made possible due to various digital tools that were used in emergency remote teaching. Considering positive sides of digital technologies, there is a rapid growth of learning and teaching digital tools that leads to the following problems: 1) teachers face difficulties in finding the appropriate teaching resource; 2) teachers aren't familiar with teaching tools to meet students' needs; 3) teachers are not aware of how to use this or that technology properly. The mentioned issues relate to teaching various subject and to teaching English for Specific purposes as well.

BACKGROUND

Recent publications discuss the issues of digitalisation of teaching and learning, particularly digitalisation of writing in higher education (Mospan, 2023b) that might affect developing receptive skills (Boltiziar & Munkova, 2023; Maximova, 2020; Simkova & Bondarenko, 2021; Zenotz, 2015) and productive skills during emergency remote teaching (Dubin, 2021; Kusuma, 2022; Negrivoda & Trubitsyna, 2023). In addition, emergency transition of higher education to online format facilitated increasing of various digital tools (e.g., Flipgrid, Quizlet, Wordwall, Kahoot, Bamboozle, and Jamboard) in ELT.

Therefore, this study focuses on a Google Chrome extension *Underline* — a reading tool that can help develop students' vocabulary. We decided to focus our attention particularly on teaching reading for several reasons: 1) online reading is becoming increasingly common

and, as a consequence, online literacy more and more necessary (Zenotz, 2015); 2) reading comprehension skills of professionally-oriented texts is one of the most important educational task in terms of English for specific purposes (ESP) course (Maximova, 2020). Consequently, the research aims at answering the following questions: 1) Is *Underline* an effective digital tool for students

of ESP? 2) Can *Underline* enhance students' motivation in reading online? 3) Can *Underline* affect students autonomous reading?

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

When studying the effectiveness of *Underline* we conducted a survey based on an anonymous questionnaire created in Google Forms. The survey consisted of 9 questions, connected with 1) frequency of using *Underline* at ESP classes and as a part of self study; 2) students' feedback and 3) methodology feedback, if this extension has enhanced students' motivation in reading online and has made it more engaging; whether *Underline* has affected students autonomous reading. The questionnaire included closed questions — multiple choice and yes-no questions. The questions were investigating how often the students use *Underline* and students' feedback. The respondents' answers were anonymous.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research was carried out among the students of 4th year of study of the Institute of Physical Education and Sports during the first semester, the 2023-2024 academic year at LNU Taras Shevchenko National University. As far as ESP syllabus of LNU Taras Shevchenko University is concerned, we can mention the following modules:

Module 1 Socialising in Academic and Professional Environments

Module 2 Searching for and Processing Information

Module 3 Presenting Information

Module 4 Application Procedure

And in each of the module learners deal with reading authentic text depending on its topic and field of study of the students. The texts for the students of the Institute of Physical Education and Sports are professionally oriented articles, sports comments, sports blogs, formal and informal letters, and CVs. Thus, reading is an obligatory component of any ESP course module. Though, reading online is different from reading offline (Son, 2013). Reading texts in PDF format line by line is likely to be time-consuming and not engaging activity for students and for teachers as well. There are a lot of different activities we can choose from, but the most valuable thing for our research is got to know how to cope with online texts that are full of unfamiliar vocabulary. One of the options that teachers and learners can benefit from is the use of a Google Chrome extension *Underline*. It enables students to develop their vocabulary while reading online. Its objective is to translate the unknown words while students browse the Internet. *Underline* is a really simple application since student can use it in just 3 steps:

1. Browse foreign language content (article and forum).
2. Select a word he or she does not understand and click the 'U' button.

3. *Underline* will display the translation, allow he or she to listen to the word pronunciation and save it as a flashcard in the mobile application (see Fig. 1).

Paralympic athletes compete in different disability groups, depending on their type of **impairment**. Many of the athletes have a disability that affects the strength, flexibility, or coordination. Some athletes have spinal cord injuries that cause paralysis, such as quadriplegia or paraplegia. Some have muscular dystrophy, or other conditions that affect muscle function. Some athletes are missing limbs. Paraplegics use prosthetic limbs, called prostheses (artificial limbs) to help them move. Some athletes have short stature, or height, because of a genetic disorder or medical condition. Other athletes

Figure 1. The use of Underline while reading the article online

Source of the article <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Paralympic-Games/599807#>

It is worth mentioning, that *Underline* has the following benefits:

- Easy and convenient translation of words directly in the foreign language content.
- Translation from English to Ukrainian.
- The use of contextual translation.
- The ability to listen to the pronunciation.
- Option to save translations as study cards in the mobile application.
- Access to suggested words on the basis of previously saved flashcards.
- Option to drill the mentioned flashcards by viewing flashcards, answering multiple choice questions, writing vocabulary translation, typing the word you hear and a mixed mode (*Underline Review*).

This research was carried out among 43 undergraduate students enrolled in English for Specific Purposes subject during the first semester, the 2023—2024 academic year at LNU Taras Shevchenko National University. Regarding the learners' level of English, it is worth mentioning, that each of the group is mixed-ability, meaning some learners have A2 and some B1, but the course is aiming at achieving B2.

Does it help you understand professionally oriented text better?

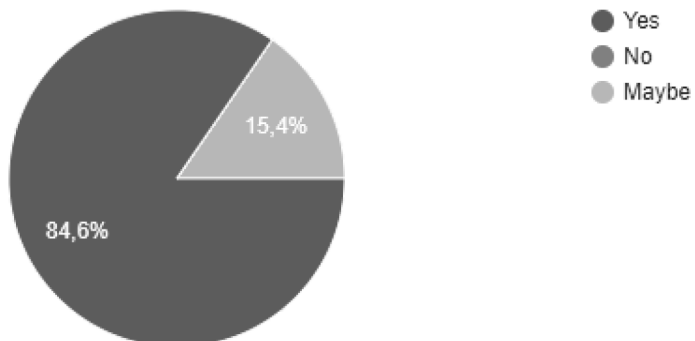


Figure 2. Reading and comprehension online via Underline

It should be noted that 53.8% of the participants were men, while 46.2% were women. The majority of the respondents were between twenty and twenty-four years old. When analysing the frequency of using Underline at ESP classes, 69.2% of students state that they use it often and 61.5% of the respondents use *Underline* for work. Such results can be the evidence that *Underline* is convenient not only for classroom work but for self work as well.

Most of the respondents believe that *Underline* help them comprehend the professionally oriented text. We relate this result with the fact that in our research there were students of a mixed ability group. Furthermore, 84.6% of students assume that this extension helps them learn new vocabulary using underline mobile application.

Do you find Underline useful?

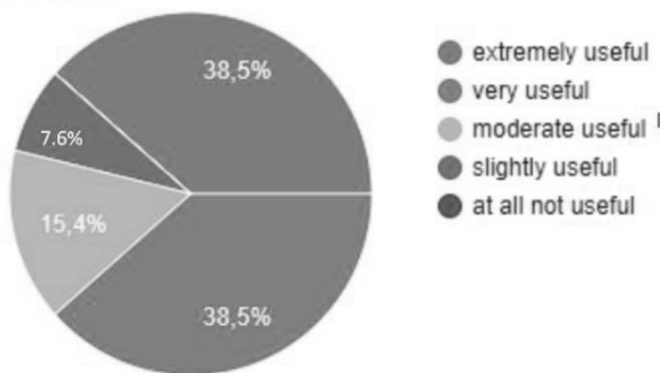


Figure 3. Students' feedback on Underline

The students' feedback in relation to the effects that *Underline* has on reading online, 38.5% of respondents believe that this extension is extremely useful and 38.5% assume it is very useful to their learning of the specific contents of the subject. There was one question connected with finding out the methodology of feedback. The research findings show that 76.9% of respondents think that underline makes reading more engaging, and only 7.7% of students don't find it engaging at all. Hence, this data can imply that *Underline* enhances students' motivation in reading online. We believe that these results are achieved thanks to simplicity and interactivity of looking up unfamiliar vocabulary while reading.

CONCLUSION

Describing Underline, we should mention the following advantages: it is simple; it translates words directly in the foreign language content; it has translation from English to Ukrainian; it uses contextual translation; it has an option of pronunciation of words; it saves translations as study cards in the mobile application; it has access to suggested words on the basis of previously saved flashcards; it has an option of drilling the flashcards

in different modes. The results obtained from the questionnaire with 43 respondents prove the fact that *Underline* is regarded as an effective digital tool for students of ESP. As it has assisted in making the reading online more enjoyable and attractive. Therefore, it has improved students' motivation in dealing with reading professionally-based texts and contributed to autonomous learning of new words using *Underline* mobile application.

Nevertheless, several limitations may be found in this study. First, *Underline* is accessible only for Chrome, Opera and Microsoft Edge. Second, as far as it is an extension, it can be used only while reading on computer but not on mobile phone. And second limitation is a real problem since a lot of students join a class on their phones. Despite the suggested limitations, *Underline* is recommended to be used in ESP teaching at tertiary level.

The perspective of further research we see in implementing new digital tools while teaching speaking and writing in the framework of ESP course taking into account synchronous and asynchronous modes.

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ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ UNDERLINE У ДИСТАНЦІЙНОМУ НАВЧАННІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ (ESP)

Анастасія Петрушкова, аспірантка, викладач англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням, Луганський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка, Україна. shchablevanastya@gmail.com

Стаття присвячена проблемі інтеграції цифрового інструменту Underline під час онлайн заняття в рамках курсу англійської мови

за професійним спрямуванням. Підкреслення *Underline* — це розширення *Google Chrome*, яке вважається інструментом читання. Це дозволяє студентам покращувати свій словниковий запас під час перегляду іноземного контенту (статті, форум тощо). Метою статті є опис *Underline* та оцінка його ефективності під час онлайн заняття з англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням. Для досягнення цієї мети ми детально розглянули можливості *Underline* і виділили його переваги. Вивчаючи ефективність *Underline*, ми провели опитування на основі анонімної анкети, створеної в *Google Forms*. Дослідження проводилось серед студентів 4 курсу Інституту фізичного виховання і спорту протягом I семестру 2023—24 навчального року в Луганському національному університеті імені Тараса Шевченка. Результати дослідження показали, що *Underline* значно полегшує студентам розуміння англійського контенту в Інтернеті. Таким чином, *Underline* зробило читання онлайн більш приємним і привабливим. Крім того, це розширення збільшило мотивацію студентів до читання професійно-орієнтованих текстів та сприяло самостійному вивченню нових слів за допомогою мобільного додатку *Underline*.

Ключові слова: цифровий інструмент; англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням; онлайн-читання; онлайн-навчання; *Underline*.

Received: 21.10.2023

Accepted: 28.12.2023