**Половін С. М.**

**ДВНЗ «Донецький національний технічний університет»**

**Italki IS ONE OF THE BEST ONLINE TUTORING PLATFORMS FOR UKRAINE’S SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES**

Learning foreign languages is getting more and more important for Ukraine’s scientific and cultural communities. But how can those interested, being perpetually busy, facilitate and speed up this process?

One of the easiest ways is to make the most of the mobile devices they use in their everyday life.

I am going to show you how you can master a foreign language using just your phone and italki.

italki is one of the best English speaking practice apps on the market [1].

The first thing you have to do is download the italki app and if you already have it, you might want to update it because recently it has been relaunched and it is full of many new and exciting features.

italki is well known as a platform where you can find affordable teachers to help you with any language, but there are a handful of free features which many of you probably don’t know about and that’s exactly where I am going to start [2].

Opening up the app, you are going to find this optimized navigation bar at the bottom. Go ahead and click on the Discover tab. This is basically the community tab that you will find on the main website.

Here you will discover some great resources to support your learning. The Articles tab can benefit you in two ways: firstly, by reading great articles about language learning written by teachers, which provide lots of useful information and motivation to all language learners and secondly, you could practice reading in your target language. Don’t forget to make a list of all the words that you don’t know. The next feature is Notebook. It is a fantastic place to improve your writing skills. You can write about anything you want in the language you are learning, then someone who is proficient, probably a native speaker, will read what you have written and they will offer corrections. The Answers allows you to post a question about your target language simply by asking the community in the answers tab and while you are there, why not give back to the community and answer some questions about your native language. Finally, the Discussions. This is like a forum and a chance for you to start or get involved in conversations [3].

Now, one of the best things that italki offers to its community is the opportunity to find a language partner and this is absolutely fantastic. So click on the Language partner button and set your filter to find the students who are either native speakers of your target language or just like you, they are learning your target language. When you click on someone in the list, you can see how active they are on the site. It will be better to reach out to users who are accessing the site regularly, and I’d also recommend reaching out to a handful of users. When you find someone, simply introduce yourself and see if they are interested in connecting [4].

A quick word of warning – connecting to strangers on the Internet can pose a risk, so just be sensible and keep your wits about you.

I highly recommend taking regular language classes. That way you can put into practice what you have learnt in class with your language partner and you will maximize your learning efforts.

The italki app makes it really easy to find a language teacher to suit your schedule and budget. On the navigation bar click “Learn”, select the language you want to learn, and a list of teachers will appear. If you hit this little funnel icon at the top, you can see further filters; you may want to be taught by a native speaker. Set your budget parameters and I recommend applying your availability just to save time. Personally I would leave this open and see what comes up.

Finally, take a look at lesson categories. Here you can set some very specific parameters for the type of lessons you are looking for. Perhaps you want to learn business English. Prepare for a test or find a teacher to teach your children [5].

Once you set all your filters, click “Show teachers” to reveal your list. From this list you can see your teachers’ rates, both their regular rate and their trial rate.

Each user has 3 trial lessons which you can use to try out italki. You can use one trial lesson per teacher and you can use them whenever you like. They don’t expire. When you spot a teacher that you like, you can click on them and discover more information and, in many cases, see an introductory video. You can check out their availability and maybe read a couple of the reviews about their teaching. You can send the teacher a message. You might need more information or you can go ahead and book a lesson. Users no longer have to book lessons in bulk, they can book one lesson at a time, which I think is a fantastic update and you can take the lessons via the app.

With so many useful web apps out there, italki does stand out as one of the best apps to help people learn foreign languages. Members of the scientific and cultural communities of Ukraine could benefit immensely by using italki in their efforts to master foreign languages.

**References**

1. Italki review – The Good, the Bad, & the Just Alright. Retrieved from: <https://www.alllanguageresources.com/italki-review/>
2. The Most Epic italki Review Ever Written: Praises and Criticism. Retrieved from: <https://www.mezzoguild.com/italki-review/>
3. Working at italki: Employee Reviews. Retrieved from: <https://www.indeed.com/cmp/Italki/reviews>
4. Italki Review: English Classes Online. Retrieved from: <https://oneminuteenglish.org/en/italki-review-english-classes-online/>
5. Italki Review: A Great Online Language Tutoring Platform. Retrieved from: <https://latinamericanspanishcafe.com/italki-review/>