Проблеми забезпечення ефективності державної влади і публічного управління

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**GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND LEARNING ENGLISH**

Knowing English is getting to be a must for government employees in Ukraine. I would like to highlight some excellent web applications which can help Ukrainian government employees to improve their knowledge of English.

Let's get started with app number one. And this one is really rather special. It's incredibly unique. It is something that I think will help almost anyone who is learning a language. Now this app is free and it's called HiNative [1]. It's such an incredible tool for learners of virtually any language.

In my experience, one of the most frustrating parts of learning a new language is the constant stream of doubts and questions going round and round in my own head, especially when you're in an earlier stage, there are just so many questions. And when you get to that more advanced stage, the questions you have are so niche and you need a native speaker or a teacher to answer them. Why is this like that? Why don't you say it like that? Will I sound natural if I say it like this? I needed a teacher or a native speaker around me 24/7 to be able to ask them all of these constant doubts and questions. And obviously for 99.99% of us having a teacher around 24/7 is pretty much impossible unless you're lucky enough to be married to one, I guess. This is especially true if you're learning a really popular language like English, because there are lots of other people in the same situation who also want a lot of attention.

The HiNative app provides the solution here. On their free app, you can ask any question about language and native speakers will answer you. They support questions for over 113 languages. You can sign up and take advantage of this free app on Android, iOS, or on desktop. You enter your own native language and the language that you're learning. You can see right here how many questions have been asked. And they are receiving a lot of answers as well from native speakers. It's so valuable because you're not just learning textbook English, you're learning expressions, phrases, and slang terms that are genuinely used by native speakers every day. You enter your language and the language that you're learning, type in your email, create a username and a password, and you're ready. Now, when you go to ask a question, you choose a question template. You can use all of the templates for free It is so easy to do, even beginners can ask questions easily using these templates. So I really recommend you do that. One more feature that I really appreciate is that there is no private messaging feature. So this cannot be used as a dating site, which sadly is a big worry for a lot of people who use language exchange services. Users can only communicate with each other through question and answer. So it feels very safe. You can study the languages in comfort and safety. No one's using it for dating. If you'd like to download HiNative and try it for yourself for free, then you can get it on iOS, Android, and desktop.

Next, let's talk about one of my favourite dictionaries. As a teacher and a language learner, I can promise you this is one of the best of the best. It is Oxford Learner's Dictionary [2]. And the reason I love it so much is because they have the most fantastic IPA transcriptions. Some will offer lots of different accents, but they won't provide the transcription. Oxford Learner's Dictionary provides everything you need. You can listen to the audio and standard American English and standard British English as well as many other accents on some words as well. And the written transcription too. It is beautiful. It's a dictionary that's designed for learners in mind. So the definitions are really clear and understandable. They have the word origin on most words as well, which is really interesting as well as antonyms and synonyms. It's always really good to look at the synonyms so that you can further expand your vocabulary. And something that I think is absolutely fantastic, as a massive advocate for word diaries, you can add words to your own word list. Phrase word list doesn't sound that exciting, but it gets me going. Every time you search a word, you can add it to your word list. It only takes a click. And then at the end of the year, or before an exam, you have a list of everything that you've had to research right there for you with the pronunciation and the definition, and the synonym, and the origin. It's the perfect vocabulary acquisition tool and pronunciation tool as well. It just ticks so many boxes.

There are lots of other dictionaries out there, but this one is my favourite.

Let's move on to website number three, this is called Forvo [3]. It's a pronunciation website and you search for any word in a lot of languages. It's got a lot of languages, but obviously we're focusing on English. You search for any word and you have lots of examples of people from different parts of the world.

So basically you can compare how words are pronounced differently in different countries and in different accents. And you can also contribute audio recordings to your own language as well. This website is really great if you don't want to rely on phonetic transcriptions all the time, you want to hear how a word is actually pronounced, or you want to compare two different countries pronunciations. Whoever came up with that idea is a genius.

Let's move on to number four. It is Quizlet [4], such a good app, perfect for teachers and students. If you want to learn lots and lots of vocabulary, but you don't know where to start, this is the perfect place for you.

On this app and website, you can create flashcards. Flashcards have been used for years and years, decades, centuries to learn languages. It's a no brainer, it's a perfect tool. But wonderfully, you can also search through other flashcards sets made by other students or other teachers as well. They make them public. You can search for anything. You can search for politics vocabulary. You could search for gardening vocabulary, whatever you like.

If you're studying to be a doctor, you could study medical vocabulary. There is so much there. They also have some games too, which are really fun. I like to gamify the learning process. It's also really nice when you create a set that you're really, really proud of. You can share it with other people. Lots of teachers now use it with their students, leave them public. So you can gain access to a lesson that you maybe wouldn't have access to before.

Moving on to number five, this is different to what I've recommended before. I always used to recommend the BBC Sounds app as a really good place for audios like podcasts and radio shows. But there was one thing that I didn't like about that app. They really didn't prioritise transcripts for their audio shows. That annoys me because it's not good for accessibility. If somebody is hard of hearing and I've got quite a few people in my life that are hard of hearing they cannot access podcasts. And that's so sad because there's so much wonderful information in them. It's also not that great for English learners.

One of the most amazing tools is to listen to something whilst you're reading it because your brain makes connections. It helps you learn the pronunciation. It helps you improve your listening. It helps you expand your vocabulary. It's just so good. Well, Spotify [5] has now overtaken BBC Sounds as my favourite audio app for learning English. They have recently started adding transcripts to their shows. At the moment, it is only the original and exclusive shows. So the ones that are native to them, I guess. There aren't that many available at the moment, but those that are have the transcripts. And it's an amazing learning opportunity. I also heard that they were considering expanding this to the rest of their shows as well. So I really, really hope they do that. If you're looking for a new podcast, make sure it's one of Spotify's original or exclusive ones. And hopefully you can access their transcripts.

The last app that I have for you is Google Translate. And no, I'm not a teacher recommending that you just translate all of your essays on Google.

The reason I'm recommending Google Translate is because of the amazing Google lens feature [6], where you can use your camera to translate things in real time. And this is perfect if you're out and about, and you want to quickly see something, but you don't have time to type it all up. For example, if I'm in a foreign restaurant and their menu is in Chinese or something, I can just hover it over. This is just a fun one. It's not necessarily an English learning tool, but it's a really useful life tool, I think. And it's something I was just blown away by when I first saw it. I just couldn't believe that we're finally living in the future.

To sum up, making use of these wonderful web applications can make the process of learning English easier and more interesting for government employees who often have to juggle work commitments and family life, thus finding themselves short of time to learn English.

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