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**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
TEACHING AND LEARNING: PROS AND CONS**

Bokun I. A.

Candidate of Philology, Associate Professor,
Ukrainian Academy of Banking of the NBU

Use of Information Technology in language learning and teaching has its special term 'CALL'. CALL or Computer assisted language learning embraces a

wide range of approaches from traditional drill and practice programs to a virtual learning environment and Web-based distance learning. It also extends to the use of interactive whiteboards, computer-mediated communication, corpora and concordances, language learning in virtual worlds and mobile-assisted language learning. There is much information written about the advantages of CALL. Let us mention some of them:

Wider opportunities for long-distance communication and access to people outside our immediate social and professional environment;

A strong emphasis on student-centred materials that allow learners to work on their own;

Facilitating the language learning process. It can be used to reinforce what has been already learned in the classroom or as a remedial tool to help learners who require additional support;

Developing students' ability to learn, for instance, have a higher level of reasoning and problem-solving abilities;

Developing learner autonomy;

Being more resourceful by combining text, images, sound and video in one device and integrating the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing;

Simplifying the teaching of writing in a foreign language by moving through different stages of the writing process – pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

All the mentioned benefits seem to give way to an over-trusting attitude towards IT. I had better take a more critical look at the effects of IT on language learning so that we can maximize the positive effects and minimize the negative ones. So, some pros against CALL are the following:

Breakdown in communication: our students might be less able to communicate proficiently in face-to-face encounters through lack of body language and cultural unawareness;

Changes in the way our students read and write because of their frequent use of social networking sites with short snippets of information and shortened forms of words. Additionally, the use of education technology in the classroom promotes shorter pieces of reading, which has a negative impact on students'

ability to read longer pieces of writing. There is also some evidence that the attention spans of students are steadily becoming shorter as we rely more on IT teaching materials.

To sum up, though the number of pluses far exceeds the number of minuses, these minuses may become threats for learning and teaching a foreign language. Another threat might be a lack of language advisers, who should be both heavy users of technology and language support providers. To minimize all detrimental effects, foreign language teachers must be educated and trained to understand a variety of strategies and methods to integrate technology into a foreign language classroom, must have access to the technology while planning, must have technical assistance available to them and students, and must be involved in ongoing and long-term development to support the technology in a foreign language learning.
