**LECTURE FIVE**

**CALL Benefits and Limitations**

1. **CALL Benefits**

The main benefits that can be discussed in relation to CALL are responding to variant learning styles, fostering deep learning/critical thinking, increasing motivation, fostering learner-centered pedagogy, and fostering learner autonomy.

**a/ Responding to Variant Learning Styles**

Learning styles are specific ways that learners use to accomplish different tasks (Dörnyei, 2005), they determine how and to what extent learners can learn a new language and they are consistent across tasks. Learners have different learning styles; they can be for example global, analytic, auditory or visual (Oxford, 2005). CALL respond to those different needs and styles with the use of different types of materials and varied resources.

**b/ Fostering Deep Learning/ Critical Thinking**

Deep learning/ high order learning refers to an educational model that aims at developing learners’ experiences and competences. Deep learners’ characteristics involve linking new acquired concepts and knowledge with prior knowledge and experience instead of considering them separately; developing personal understanding using content examination, argumentation and logic; reflecting on their own learning showing awareness of their progression. In other words, deep learners exclude rote learning, and they are critical thinkers.

Critical thinking or deep learning could be fostered through CALL technologies since they “are very good at storing, manipulating and retrieving large amounts of information” (Warschauer & Healy, 1998 cited in Le Baron-Earle, 2013. p. 63). Besides, the presentation of large amounts of information allows for the establishment of a more rounded thinking that helps learners reflect and develop their own personal understanding instead of following blindly one point of view or perspective. In addition, the communities of practice provided by CALL are fertile environment where meaning negotiation can take place, and through which metacognition and critical thinking could be promoted.

**c/ Increasing Motivation**

Various researchers reported that online discussions increase learners’ participation, and proved to be more balanced than face-to-face discussions; shy and silent students participate more in online discussions, they gain confidence since they do not have to reveal their real identity. The collaborative nature of the online discussions motivates the learners to work with their peers in an equal manner and with a shadowy presence of the teacher. (Le Baron-Earle, 2013).

**d/ Fostering Learner Centred Pedagogy**

CALL applications foster student- centred pedagogy. The latter necessitate the engagement of learners in setting their learning objectives, the methods, the content, and evaluation. Learners are active participants in the process of language learning not passive recipients. Learners who can ca appropriately use multimedia links to explore explanations and peripheral information can somewhat lower the teacher-centredness of the classroom. Besides, a well-formed multimedia database of materials can also assist those young and second language learners who lack dictionary and library search skills.

**e/ Fostering Learner Autonomy**

Motivation and autonomy are closely related, as it is not clear which results or leads to the other. “autonomous language learners are by definition motivated learners” (Ushioda, 1996 cited in Le Baron-Earle 2013. p.84). Furthermore, autonomy is the logical result of learner-centred pedagogy. Autonomy in EFT/L is “the ability to take charge of one’s learning” (Holec, 1981 cited in Le Baron-Earle 2013. p.84). Nowadays, autonomy can be applied in different instructional contexts:

* Self-access centres
* CALL technologies
* Distance learning
* Tandem learning
* Study abroad
* Self-instruction

Three main aspects of CALL have been identified to foster autonomous learning:

**1/ Physical Flexibility;** CALL applications enable learners to study in multiple environments; in class, at home, in the library…

**2/ Adjustable pace of learning;** learners are given the opportunity to study at their own pace and proficiency.

**3/ Learner control over interaction and content;** integrative CALL gave learners the opportunity to gain control over the selection of the materials, the access, the learning content and interaction.

1. **Limitations of CALL**

Despite all the advantages that can be gained from CALL, possible drawbacks can be noticed. Holmberg (2005) summarised some of them as follows:

* The risk of falling behind for learners with low motivation or bad study habits,
* The possibility of getting lost or confused about course activities in the absence of the traditional class,
* The absence of the instructor when learners need help,
* The access to course materials may be frustrating because of slow internet connection or old computers,
* The complexity of managing computer files and online learning software for students with beginner-level computer skills,
* The difficulty to stimulate hands-on or lab work in a virtual classroom,
* The feeling of being isolated from instructors and classmates.

In addition to these drawbacks, some multimedia distract the learner from the task, they provide inappropriate and unnecessary interruptions, such as flashing screens and senseless noises.

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