Project Description

University: Cairo University
Project (Challenge/Tool/Action): **Challenge 5: To incorporate intercultural communication in the teaching of a foreign language**

1. Introduction:

E-Lengua aims at updating curriculum design in teaching of foreign languages using ICT. The leading universities in the consortium are joining efforts to develop resources and to create a catalogue of best practices for the inclusion of ICT in the teaching of foreign languages.

Seven challenges related to the use of ICT in Foreign Language Teaching are identified and each partner university would address one of these challenges by sharing with the consortium and the scientific community its approach and its innovative resources.

Despite the fact, that this type of projects addresses mainly European universities, Cairo University is the only non-European institution involved given its leading role in the Arab World and the Middle East in teaching languages. Since its establishment in 1908, Cairo University has always adopted and international approach open to the World supporting its scholars to travel and gain an international experience and welcoming international initiatives.

In E-Lengua, Cairo University is responsible for Challenge 5 focusing on incorporating intercultural communication in the teaching of a foreign language which is in this case is the Arabic Language. This challenge is indispensable for an approach fostering multilinguism and multiculturalism.

Although Arabic language is a non European language, it is a widely spoken language ranked five in the most widely spoken languages all over the World. In Europe only, Arabic speakers are estimated of a total of approximately 5 millions. Moreover, it is the official language of the Southern Mediterranean countries, i.e. considered as European Neighborhood Countries.

2. State of the art:

Foreign Language Teaching and its methodologies has been always in the core of Applied Linguistics. Along the years different approaches have been adopted in Foreign Language Teaching.

Early approaches adopted classical methods based on memorization of grammatical rules and translation of the vocabulary. These approaches mainly targeted the writing competence whether reading or writing. In the early years of the 20th century, the Berlitz Direct method succeeded to attract the scholars in the field with its rebel approach focusing only on spoken competences either listening or speaking leaving aside grammatical rules and written language skills (Marcos Marín & Lobato Sánchez, 1988).

Later, the scientific progress in media and communication technologies was reflected in the language class through the audio and video media tools. In the nineties, the communicative methodology in foreign language teaching started to gain more and more attention and succeeded in replacing previous methodologies. The communicative approach develops a methodology in which different language skills are taught based on the different communicative situations. The student skills are acquired in terms of the different situations in which he/she could face starting from the very basic situations such as presenting him/herself to more complex situations in advanced levels such as debates and critical views.

Intercultural communication is another dimension of communication which started to gain momentum in different fields since the sixties, mainly in sociolinguistics, pragmatic studies, immigration studies, international management, etc. In Foreign Language Teaching, a new notion of communicative competence is needed (Alptekin, 2002). This notion takes into account the cultural diversity in the foreign language class where at least two cultures meet: The native culture and the foreign culture of the language being taught.

The term Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) has been coined to refer to "the knowledge, motivation and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures" (Wiseman & Koester, 1993). Foreign language is an important factor in the intercultural communication. This is the reason that modern approaches in Language Teaching consider culture as an integrated and indispensable part of the teaching/learning process and, thus, of any course design in this respect.

As Cairo University team is mainly concerned with intercultural communication in teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language, the task becomes more challenging given the cultural diversity and the stereotypes related to the Arab culture. Developing teaching material and resources for students of Arabic language focusing on the cultural component is the main objective of

the team, especially many Arabic language manuals tend to offer a classical approach in language teaching.

An effective approach in introducing cultural concepts in the classroom is using movies and TV series, especially with historic content. Through the series or the movie, the student can contrast his native culture with the foreign culture. The student in this case is introduced to the foreign culture through the plot, the music, the scenery, the characters, etc. Subtitling has also been proved to be an effective technique when applied in Language Teaching/Learning process.

Based on the nature of the challenge in which intercultural communication and ICT should be addressed, Cairo University team decided to meet this challenge by developing a new resource for Arabic language learners in which cultural content is introduced through subtitling of an Egyptian TV series depicting the modern history of the Egyptian society and the main historic moments from the fifties till the Arab Spring through the life of an Egyptian middle class girl born in the early fifties and the different stages of her life. The TV series titled "Dhat" is an adaptation of a novel by the modern Egyptian writer Son' Allah Ibrahim and was produced and presented in 30 episodes in the summer of 2015.

Opting for the subtitling of this TV series gives the opportunity to introduce to the Arabic language learner a wide range of cultural references and at the same time could be used to enhance his language skills, especially at the intermediate and advanced levels given the nature of the colloquial language used.

Subtitling and cultural references has been studied from the audiovisual translation perspective and from the language teaching perspective (Werner-Diaz Navarrete, 2010). Previous European projects such as Lingua 2: Learning via subtitling, funded through Socrates programme between 2006 and 2008 in which seven institutions were involved from six European countries.

The present work is based on the hypothesis that subtitling a series with a high cultural content could contribute to the community by introducing an innovative resources that could be adapted to target different objectives at different levels:

- Linguistic content in the subtitles could be used to develop language teaching exercises for different levels.
- Subtitles could also be used to develop exercises for Audiovisual Translation.
- Subtitles could be used to develop exercises on the cultural references.
- Subtitling could be used to train the students on the different techniques and software tools used in the field.

Given this framework, the proposed subproject includes three main areas:
- Cultural references: its definition and its typology
- Subtitling: its typology and its characteristics as a kind of audiovisual translation.
- Using cultural references and subtitling in developing didactic units for the Foreign Language Teaching classroom.

Cultural References:
The term of cultural reference is widely used in the field of Translation and in Curriculum Design for Foreign Language Teaching, such as the case of the *Plan Curricular del Instituto Cervantes* which implements the guidelines established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Cultural references are considered as essential parts necessary for developing the communication skills by the foreign language learners. On the other hand, cultural references are a challenge for translators.

According to Nedergaard-Larsen (1993), cultural references are defined as "explicit or implicit references to the social, cultural or political context in which a certain text is developed". These cultural references could be classified into two major categories: intralinguistic and extralinguistic references. Intralinguistic references could be acts of speech, idiomatic expressions or grammatical categories. Extralinguistics references include "real world" references such as toponyms, institutions, music, food, etc.

Nedergaard-Larsen (1993) suggests a classification of extralinguistic references into four main subcategories: geographical, historical, social and cultural covering almost all aspects as in the following table:

Referentes culturales extralingüísticos		
Condiciones geográficas etc.	geografía meteorología biología	montañas, ríos tiempo, clima flora, fauna
	geografía cultural	regiones, ciudades, calles, avenidas, etc.
Condiciones históricas	edificios	monumentos, castillos, etc.
	eventos	guerras, revoluciones, días memorables
	gente	personajes históricos
Condiciones de sociedad	condiciones industriales (condiciones económicas)	industrias, comercios, abastecimiento de energía etc.
	organización de la sociedad	servicio militar, sistema judicial, policía, cárceles, autoridades locales y regionales
	condiciones políticas	administración del Estado, ministerios, sistema electoral, partidos políticos, políticos, organizaciones políticas
	condiciones sociales	grupos, subculturas, condiciones de vida, problemas
	vivencias sociales uso y costumbres	tipo de vivienda, transporte, alimentos, comidas, ropa, utensilios, relaciones familiares
Condiciones culturales	Religión	iglesias, rituales, moral, sacerdotes, obispos, días festivos, santos
	sistema escolar	colegios, academias formación profesional, exámenes
	medios de comunicación	televisión, radio, periódicos, revistas
	vida cultural tiempo libre	museos, obras de arte, literatura, escritores, teatros, cines, actores, músicos, ídolos, restaurantes, hoteles, discotecas, cafeterías, deporte, deportistas

(Nedergaard-Larsen 1992: 31)[60]

Subtitling:

Concerning subtitling, there are different types that could be summarized in the four following categories (Talaván-Zánon, 2006) (Díaz-Cintas,, 2009):

1. Standard Interlinguistic Subtitles
   This is the standard subtitles in which the audiovisual content is in the original language and the subtitles are in the native language of the audience.
2. Inverse interlinguistic subtitles
   This is a less common type of subtitles where the subtitles are in the original language and the audiovisual content is in the native language of the audience.
3. Intralinguistic subtitles in L1
   This is also called "captioning" in which both audiovisual content and subtitles are in L1. This is used by students or immigrants residing in a country which they are learning its language. Also it is applied for people with disabilities with hearing impairment.
4. Bilingual subtitles
   Subtitles are in both the original language and L1.

For the proposed study, subtitles of the first type are the main concern, However for

basic levels of learners and for deaf audience, the third type or captioning is also taken into consideration.

3. **Target groups:**

Target groups of the proposed project include students of Arabic as a foreign language and students of Spanish as a foreign language at the university level since the subtitles are in Spanish and the original version of the TV series is in Arabic, namely, Egyptian dialect. Levels included are mainly B2 and C1.

To broaden the benefit, CU Team has considered including basic levels from A2 and B1 by a simple transcription of the series *captioning*.

In addition, students with disabilities are taken into consideration, especially students with visual impairment as some of the series will be dubbed through voice recording of the translation.

Persons with disabilities are to be included through certain subtitling techniques and by applying special software tools.

4. **Methodology:**
   The methodology applied is the following:
   - **The corpus:** The complete set of 30 episodes of "Dhat" TV series. Each episode is of approximately 25 minutes duration. The pilot study includes the first 5 episodes, while the rest of the episodes will be subtitled in the second consolidating phase. Each member of the team is assigned a set of 6 episodes.


   - **Translation:** The translation process is done in several stages:
     - Each member first translates the assigned episode
     - Once the episode is translated, the rest of the team meet to discuss and review the translation
     - Once the translation is reviewed, the technical stage starts
   - **Technical phase:** In this phase, software tools for subtitling are used to introduce the subtitles and apply the necessary segmentation.
     - **Software** used are free open access software such as Aegysub

- **QQPlayer:** Is a video editor allowing cutting the video shots and pasting shots to prepare the exercises.
- **After Effect cc:** a software to prepare some video trailers used by the team for preparing the didactic materials.
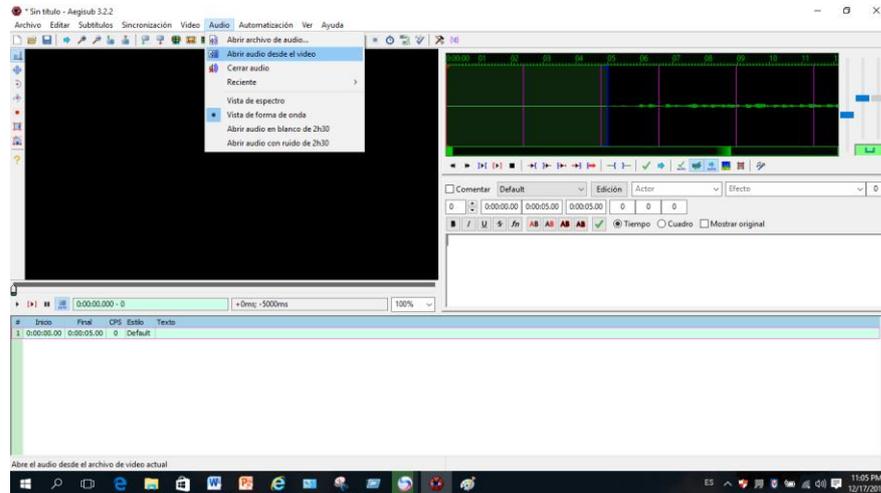
Snapshot 1. of the Tools used for Subtitling
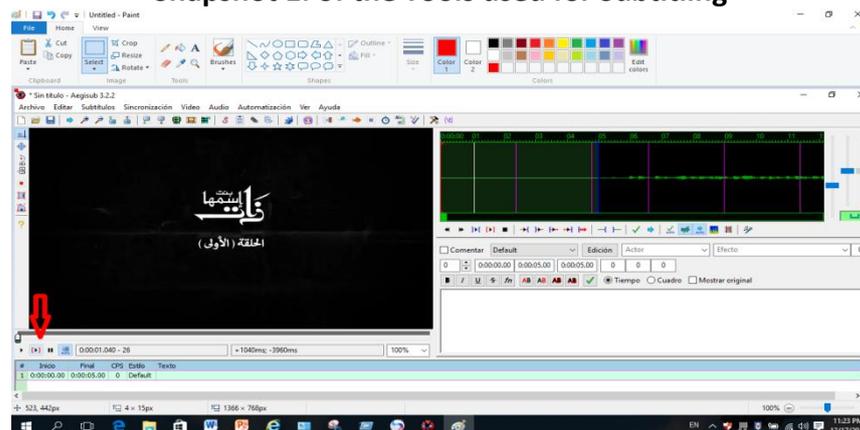
Snapshot 2. of the Tools used for Subtitling

Snapshot 3. of the Tools used for Subtitling

- **Analytical phase:** In this phase, challenges and problems encountered in the translation and technical phase are grouped to establish a categorization of challenges and difficulties faced. These difficulties are analyzed together with solutions provided as a guide of good practices.
- **Development of didactic material:** In this phase, a set of didactic material and exercises are developed to address the different challenges at the different levels.

5. **Development of the project:**

E-Lengua at Cairo University has passed through different phases some of which have been progressing in a parallel way to ensure the continuity of the activities. Work at E-Lengua in CU could be divided into different work modules according to the nature of the activities.

Management: In this module and since the submission of the proposal, activities to follow up on the signature of mandates and providing institutional information, etc. have been going on at this stage. Upon the notification of acceptance, the Principal Investigator (PI) started two main tasks: First to obtain the necessary approvals from the university to start the project and to receive the allocated budget. This mainly includes notification of acceptance to the Department Council, Faculty Council, University Postgraduate Council and Ministry of Higher Education. These steps have been already achieved and the last approval was obtained last October. The second task includes the creation and management of the Research Team. The team is formed up of five members, all young motivated females (2 seniors)+ 1 intermediate stage researcher and 2 juniors. The team is as follows:

- **Prof.** Rasha Ismail (PI)
- **Dr.** Abir Abdel Hafez
- **Dr.** Doaa Samy
- **Dr.** Maha Abdel Razek
- **Dr.** Mervat Ibrahim

Working session at Cairo University Nov 2016

On the other hand, the PI and other members have been active members in the Kick off meeting and the other management meetings held either face to face or virtually. Following up with the Coordinating team at Salamanca and the rest of the partners is essential to keep on track with the deliverables and the time plan.

Research: In this module, research activities are distributed among the team members. Regular meetings are held once or twice a week to discuss progress and work achieved. Synergy and harmony among the team members are essential. Motivation is a key driver as the idea and the discussion on subtitling becomes really interesting. Work is also distributed to survey state of the art in the field of subtitling and its challenges either from a theoretical perspective or from a technical perspective. In addition, group discussions are held to analyze the challenges of translation and subtitling or to develop the catalogue of cultural references.

Dissemination: CU team plans to hold two workshops in addition to internal dissemination through the Faculty website or the university website.

6. **Chronogram:**

CU Team divided the work on the TV series into three main phases:

1- Preparation phase: Feb 2016-Jun 2016: The main idea of the subproject was discussed among the team members.
- Preparing the corpus of the series
- Acquiring the necessary Intellectual Property Rights to use the series for research and educational purposes.
2- Jul 2016-Aug 2016: This phase included watching in detail the series and assessing the feasibility of the choice. Also episodes of the Spanish episode *Cuentame como paso* was watched and considered at the beginning, but after discussions, the team decided to opt for "Dhat".
3- Sep 2016- Dec 2016: Piloting phase: In this phase only 5 episodes are to be subtitled. The aim of this phase is to get hands-on experience on the challenges of subtitling "Dhat" and the cultural references in the series. Also this phase was essential to decide upon the software and the techniques used.
4- Consolidating phase (Jan 2017-Apr 2017): In this phase, based on the experience of piloting, the team will complete the complete set of series and will complete the annexed catalogue of cultural references with explanation as complementary material for language learners to help them better understand the cultural dimension. A workshop in Salamanca University is planned in this phase targeting Spanish students who are learning Arabic language.
5- Concluding phase (Apr 2017- Jun 2017): In this phase, didactic exercises will be developed making use of the subtitles. Exercises include translation activities and language activities for learners representing different levels from A1 till C1.

7. Dissemination:

Two Subtitling Workshops are planned to be held. One at Cairo University for students of the Spanish Language Department in February 2017 and another at Salamanca University between March and April 2017. Both workshops will present episodes of the series with a selection of topics to be discussed on subtitling and intercultural communication in Foreign Language Teaching either for Egyptians learning Spanish as a Foreign Language or Spanish students learning Arabic as a Foreign Language.

8. Bibliography:

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