Subtitling in the Classroom: Combining Language Mediation, ICT and Audiovisual Material

Authors : Rossella Resi

Abstract : This paper describes a project carried out in an Italian school with English learning pupils combining three didactic tools which are attested to be relevant for the success of young learner's language curriculum: the use of technology, the intralingual and interlingual mediation (according to CEFR) and the cultural dimension. Aim of this project was to test a technological hands-on translation activity like subtitling in a formal teaching context and to exploit its potential as motivational tool for developing listening and writing, translation and cross-cultural skills among language learners. The activities proposed involved the use of professional subtitling software called Aegisub and culture-specific films. The workshop was optional so motivation was entirely based on the pleasure of engaging in the use of a realistic subtitling program and on the challenge of meeting the constraints that a real life/work situation might involve. Twelve pupils in the age between 16 and 18 have attended the afternoon workshop. The workshop was organized in three parts: (i) An introduction where the learners were opened up to the concept and constraints of subtitling and provided with few basic rules on spotting and segmentation. During this session learners had also the time to familiarize with the main software features. (ii) The second part involved three subtitling activities in plenum or in groups. In the first activity the learners experienced the technical dimensions of subtitling. They were provided with a short video segment together with its transcription to be segmented and time-spotted. The second activity involved also oral comprehension. Learners had to understand and transcribe a video segment before subtitling it. The third activity embedded a translation activity of a provided transcription including segmentation and spotting of subtitles. (iii) The workshop ended with a small final project. At this point learners were able to master a short subtitling assignment (transcription, translation, segmenting and spotting) on their own with a similar video interview. The results of these assignments were above expectations since the learners were highly motivated by the authentic and original nature of the assignment. The subtitled videos were evaluated and watched in the regular classroom together with other students who did not take part to the workshop.
Keywords : ICT, L2, language learning, language mediation, subtitling
Conference Title : ICLL 2015 : International Conference on Language Learning
Conference Location : Istanbul, Türkiye
Conference Dates : August 17-18, 2015