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Culture Clash:
Creating a multilingual language study site

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Action-Based Language Empowerment (ABLE)

- classroom-based approach
- develop basic communication skills
- limited time (10-12 hours; 10-14 days)
- functional focus
- testing *in situ*

- classroom > online version
- "horizontal" vs. "vertical"
- spiral > automatic recycling
- user profile > gender

"The Mesh"

- immediate access in L1
- "the mesh": each new L2   > target language
                                         > user language

Target Language(L2) → ↓ Instructional Language(L1)	English	Chinese	Turkish	Spanish	New language
English	❖	Eng>Chin	Eng>Tur	Eng>Span	Eng>NL
Chinese	Chin>Eng	❖	Chin>Tur	Chin>Span	Chin>NL
Turkish	Tur>Eng	Tur>Chin	❖	Tur>Span	Tur>NL
Spanish	Span>Eng	Span>Chin	Span>Tur	❖	Span>NL
New language	NL>Eng	NL>Chin	NL>Tur	NL>Span	❖

Consequences of "Mesh"

- ongoing need for written translation
- Translation Tool 1
  - modify items (cultural appropriateness)
  - generate script (items: words > phrases)
- Translation Tool 2
  - user interface
  - study guidelines
  - function descriptions
  - level study tips & communication strategies
  - reason to study (*Why study L2?*)
- Translation Tool 3: between *all* languages
  - cultural notes for each new course
  - "mesh" language

Tool 1: Modify Items

- What are "modify item" tables?
  - food 1: (Bulgarian, Turkish: "baklava" vs. "honey and nut pastry")
  - food 2: (German: Bavarian bias; Arabic: dessert overdose!)
  - family (Turkish: "spouse", 2 grandmothers + 1 grandfather)
  - locations (geography lesson)
  - transportation (Cambodian dilemma)
  - numbers > money (Korean)
- modify tables >

      generate Sulantra script >

              translators

Translator Directions

- simple, appropriate, NATURAL (Spanish, Arabic experiences)
- brevity > easy for learner (Bulgarian experience)
- "middle" level of formality (French, German, Japanese, etc.)
- translator + proof reader > reverse gender
  - course matches online profile gender
- *"generic"* format possible?
  One size does NOT fit all!

Cultural Conflicts
- English base = English bias (> "Sulantra language")
- input Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, Turkish >>> problems!
  - grammar (e.g. articles: a / an / the / "one" / nothing
    pronouns: he, she > s/he)
  - directions (N,S,E,W vs. "up" to Tokyo)
  - addresses (streets/ numbers/ regions) - X
  - Introducing numbers:
    - prices, shopping – X
    - *Compulsory* areas only? >>> change *Electives*
- eggs!? (all selections > scrambled…)

Tool 2: UI, etc.

- user interface 1 (Thai: direct translation vs. technical terms)
- user interface 2 (Bulgarian, Chinese: "our site")
- study guidelines (visual "hooks" don't catch all fish;
  ANY photos instill trust)
- function descriptions (different nationalities> d   ls)
  - Chinese shoppers!
- level study tips (silence vs. "parroting")
- communication strategies (rude?)
- Why learn L2? (Bulgarians promote Thai!?)

Tool 3: Going between languages

- cultural notes for each new course
  - language + culture ("Better than Discovery Channel!")
  - gather from locals > prioritize
  - translation: all CN's into all languages

- "mesh" language
  - generated from modify tables
  - cultural overlap influences translation
    (dishes: Chinese <> Japanese XXX Bulgarian <> Turkish)

Tip of the iceberg

- user interface: automatic, intuitive…
  for which culture!
- visuals, icons > obvious meaning?
- directional dilemma (Arabic? Hebrew?)
- images with fonts
- images that might offend
- colour considerations (lovely vs. love hotel!)
- reconsider for age demographic!?
- etc. etc. etc.…

köszönöm ‫!תודה‬ děkuji
mahalo 고맙습니다
thank you
merci 谢谢 danke
Ευχαριστώ شكرا
どうもありがとう *gracias*

Questions?

Feedback, please!

- Check out…

  Fool for Language

  &

  www.sulantra.com

- All feedback is read – and appreciated!

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