



ClipFlair. Foreign Language Learning through Interactive Revoicing and Captioning of Clips

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

Using audiovisual material in the foreign language classroom is a common resource for teachers since it introduces variety, provides exposure to nonverbal cultural elements and, most importantly, presents linguistic and cultural aspects of communication in their context. However, teachers using this resource face the difficulty of finding active tasks that will engage learners and discourage passive viewing.

One way of working with AV material in a productive and motivating way is to ask learners to revoice or caption a clip. **Revoicing** refers to adding voice to a clip, such as dubbing, free commentary, audio description and karaoke singing. **Captioning** refers to adding written text to a clip, such as standard subtitles, annotations and intertitles. **Clips** can be short video or audio files, including documentaries, film scenes, news pieces, animations and songs.

ClipFlair develops materials which enable foreign language learners to practice all four standard CEFR skills: writing, speaking, listening and reading. ClipFlair also defines audiovisual-specific skills, namely *watching*, *audiovisual speaking* (i.e. revoicing) and *audiovisual writing* (i.e. captioning). Within the project scope, material for 15 languages will be created, including English, Spanish and Portuguese, but focus is placed on less widely taught languages, namely Estonian, Greek, Romanian and Polish, as well as minority languages, i.e. Basque, Catalan and Irish. Non-European languages, namely Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Ukrainian are also foreseen. In the long term, the project intends to develop materials that can potentially be used by any FL learner by expanding the community to include any language, level or age.

The [ClipFlair](#) platform has two main areas: the [ClipFlair Studio](#) and the [Clipflair Social Network](#).

The **Studio** offers the captioning and revoicing tools needed by activity authors to create activities. It is also the space where learners can practice and learn languages by using these activities. **ClipFlair activities** typically involve captioning and/or revoicing of clips.

At the **Social Network**, users can find material, including activities, clips and tutorials, collaborate through groups, send feedback through forums and find information about the project.

The consortium consists of ten institutions from eight European countries, with proven experience and competences to undertake the tasks in their field of expertise and to create material for 15 languages. There is a balance between experts in the three fields involved: Language Teaching, Audiovisual Translation and Accessibility, Information and Communication technologies.

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1. Project Objectives

According to the European barometer survey Europeans and Languages (2005) there are three main factors for discouraging language learning: time, motivation and expense of language classes. The project aims to counter these factors by providing a motivating, open and easily accessible application for foreign-language learning through revoicing (including dubbing, audio description, karaoke singing and reciting) and captioning (including subtitling, and video annotations).

Subtitling as a language learning activity was first introduced by the [LeViS](#) project. According its evaluation report, learners not only consolidated and improved their linguistic skills, they were also very enthusiastic because of the innovative nature of the subtitling activities. ClipFlair aims to build on the success of LeViS by:

- a) finding new ways to interact with video-clips and by offering ready-to-use revoicing activities
- b) promoting an ever growing library of activities, and
- c) establishing a community of authors and learners.

The methodological objective is to establish a methodological framework for FLL through the interaction of words (written and spoken), image (still or moving) and sound.

The main objective of the project is to develop educational materials for FL learning by covering the four skills (reading, listening , writing and speaking) and reinforcing cultural awareness. These materials include the web application [ClipFlair Studio](#) which offers the revoicing and captioning tools for activity creation and use. The clips and activities for all CEFR levels of the target languages, accompanied by metadata, are available at the gallery of the [ClipFlair Social Network](#). Instructors have the option to create their own activities or use the ones already available. The online access to the Studio and the Social Network not only addresses the incompatibility and software installation issues faced previously, but also promotes the use of ClipFlair as a tool for online teaching and learning. Through the Social Network, the project aims to form a wide web community of learners, teachers and students and enable them to cooperate with other users and provide their own input to the process.

Finally, the project's objective is to exploit and disseminate project outcomes and products.

Benefits are expected to flow directly to language learners and teachers. Tutors from the partner institutions are actively involved in the development of the web platform by testing and evaluating its versions during the first stage of the project and contributing to the overall design. They also act as activity providers or authors of activities they can use in their classrooms. The activities produced are meant to be used by learners as best suits their settings (classroom, distance and self-learning).

The Social Network and the Studio are open to all, which means that teachers and learners outside the consortium are directly benefited, as they can freely access and use the material. Dissemination and social media are expected to reach wider audiences.

Investigators in the field are also expected to be benefited, as the use of revoicing in language learning is innovative and interesting research results and opportunities may arise.

2. Project Approach

The Work Programme has been carefully developed by a precise analysis of the work needed to achieve the project's aims and objectives according to the triptych Tasks-Methodology-Task assignment. Each task is clearly defined in relation to the project's needs and is assigned to qualified partners with the necessary and demonstrated expertise to accomplish the task at hand. Tasks are clearly scheduled according to the appropriate order of events and timeframes for the educational and technical demands of the project and indicators to measure work progress have been designated, which will also assist in the effective management of the overall project.

The approach adopted by the consortium to develop the work of the project is through Combined Management (Project Coordinator and Local Coordinators). The management model of the project is two-tiered. On the one level, UPF, as the coordinating institution undertakes the overall management of the project covering administrative issues, monitoring the global progress of the project and the coordination of the partner activities. On the other level, leading roles within different work packages have been allocated to different partners.

According to the particular partner's expertise the roles in the project are the following:

- Project Coordinator: The coordination and monitoring of the project activities has been assigned to UPF with longstanding experience in coordinating and participating in numerous European projects.
- ICT & Educational Technology Expert: Computer Technology Institute & Press "Diophantus" has a longstanding expertise and interest in educational technology and its pedagogical exploitation in the educational process in school, design and development of educational software and educational activities, teacher training, distance learning techniques and practices, design & development of www applications and complex information systems.
- Domain Expert (for designing the pedagogical methodology): All project partners act in this role since every participating institution has established experience in language teaching and can provide valid pedagogical material for the target languages. All partners contribute to the educational specifications of the project outcomes. The partnership includes academically renowned experts in audiovisual translation and accessibility, who offer their input and expertise.
- Activity Developer: This role applies to all project partners. Following the guidelines as they have been formulated within the project, partners create language learning activities according to the different needs of identified target groups.
- Local coordinator: UPF, UAB, ICL and NUI have established connections with the Associate Partners involved and guide them through the piloting task.
- Evaluator: The project validation/evaluation task has been undertaken by the University of Deusto, which has extensive experience in ICT and multimedia in education. UD has produced a detailed plan on the methodologies and tools used (e.g. questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, laboratory observations) including the milestones for assessing the material and provides continuous

feedback to partners. The summative evaluation has been subcontracted in order to guarantee an objective and independent view. It is the responsibility of Joselia Neves a renowned expert in Audiovisual Translation and Language Learning.

Two face-to-face project meetings have taken place, as well as one online meeting which has been recorded and several Google hangouts. Two more project meetings have been planned in June 2013 and May 2014 (immediately after the ClipFlair conference).

The partners also use the collaboration platform <http://colsrv.cti.gr> which was activated right from the beginning of the project for one-to-one and one-to-many communication. Since the Beta version release, project partners also collaborate through the ClipFlair Social Network (<http://social.clipflair.net>) Phone, e-mail and chat tools are also used on a daily basis.

ClipFlair is committed to serving the general public interest, to education in general and in particular to the notion and promotion of literacy. The effort is to make activities fun without ever forsaking the focus on the seriousness of working towards helping citizens understand each other better and the world around them.

ClipFlair has a well-defined approach to foreign-language learning, which is aware of the importance of applying ICT to educational environments (Liu et al. 2002, Chapelle, 1990, 1994, 1997) by producing innovative educational technology and tools. This approach regards audiovisuals as semiotically rich texts, which behave like texts (i.e. they have textuality) and can be studied and “read” like texts.

The project’s approach to learning is based on well-documented and argued principles of learning (e.g. Graham 1997) and on ideas such as the importance of motivation, collaborative work, development of communicative and learning competences, learning how to learn, and making the most of resources available through an eclectic contingent-sensitive methodology. Its main aim is to provide learning materials, resources and tools that can be accessed and used even after the funding period has finished. Emphasis is placed on the importance of assessment and feedback in any learning environment (Bruning et al., 1999; Eggen & Kauchak, 2004). Different types of learners are catered for, but learners who are active and autonomous, computer-literate and motivated to work with “virtual” course mates (Vygotsky (1978) are more likely to be benefited.

The material produced is mainly for less widely learned languages such as Greek, Portuguese, Estonian, Polish, Catalan and Basque, as the project is in favour of multilingualism in Europe and intercultural awareness.

The methodology includes communicative approaches to foreign-language learning, but also functional and tasked-based proposals. In a sense, it also allows for a range of different teaching techniques Schwartz (1995), such as project work, and findings from content and language integrated learning.

The basic unit of learning is the activity, and ClipFlair is based on the idea of compiling a rich resource bank of activities (e.g. Bygate, Skehan, and Swain 2001; Ellis 2003; Van den Branden, Bygate, and Norris 2009), the ClipFlair Gallery. The basic material for ClipFlair is the clip, the audiovisual material, and the specifically designed software to make revoicing and subtitling possible.

ClipFlair aims to motivate learners in the following ways: (i) bringing together potentially isolated learners by means of a social platform, providing a sense of togetherness and belonging to a community; (ii) using attractive audiovisual materials which are not too long to become tedious; (iii) allowing for a great variety of different activities adapted to level and the needs of each language; (iv) providing an easy-to-use, attractive software tool that integrates materials and activities (Beale and Sharples, 2002), and feedback systems (answer keys, or peer evaluation). The system is also flexible enough to allow users to upload their own materials and (for teachers) their own exercises and thus enhance the learning experience by making it more tailor-made (Stepp-Greany, 2002). It is also free, open and easily accessible from any computer and some portable devices. It can be used by learners without a teacher, or by teachers who wish to add variety to their classes.

The idea is for learners to learn by doing, and this case what they are doing is revoicing or captioning clips. Clips are brief audiovisual files, and revoicing refers to changing the voice, or adding voice by dubbing and recording techniques. Captioning refers to a whole range of different formats for inserting written words on the screen (e.g. subtitles, speech bubbles). It is important to point out here that the aim has nothing to do with training future professionals in the area of translating or film dubbing or subtitling. These professions and their activities are filtered through strict criteria to guarantee that all activities are aimed at enhancing and boosting learning of foreign languages.

The inclusion of Web 2.0 features such as forum, blogs and wikis in the platform allows for the psychodynamic setting to be represented. Social interaction and feedback helps learners to be more motivated and focused on the task. The possibility of discussing the development of the task between group members and the teacher improves the learning process.

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3. Project Outcomes & Results

The project outcomes and results are the following:

The Conceptual Framework and Pedagogical Methodology

This includes fundamental principles and factors involved in language learning and video awareness, including a synthesis of the latest specialised literature and relevant educational projects, definitions of terms, educational specifications for the revoicing and captioning tool of the web platform, as well as clip selection criteria. It can be accessed through the [ClipFlair Social Network](#).

The ClipFlair Studio

The [ClipFlair Studio](#) is a web application that provides the tools necessary for the creation and use of language learning activities. It is basically a zoomable area, the *Container*, where activity parts are added, the *Components*.

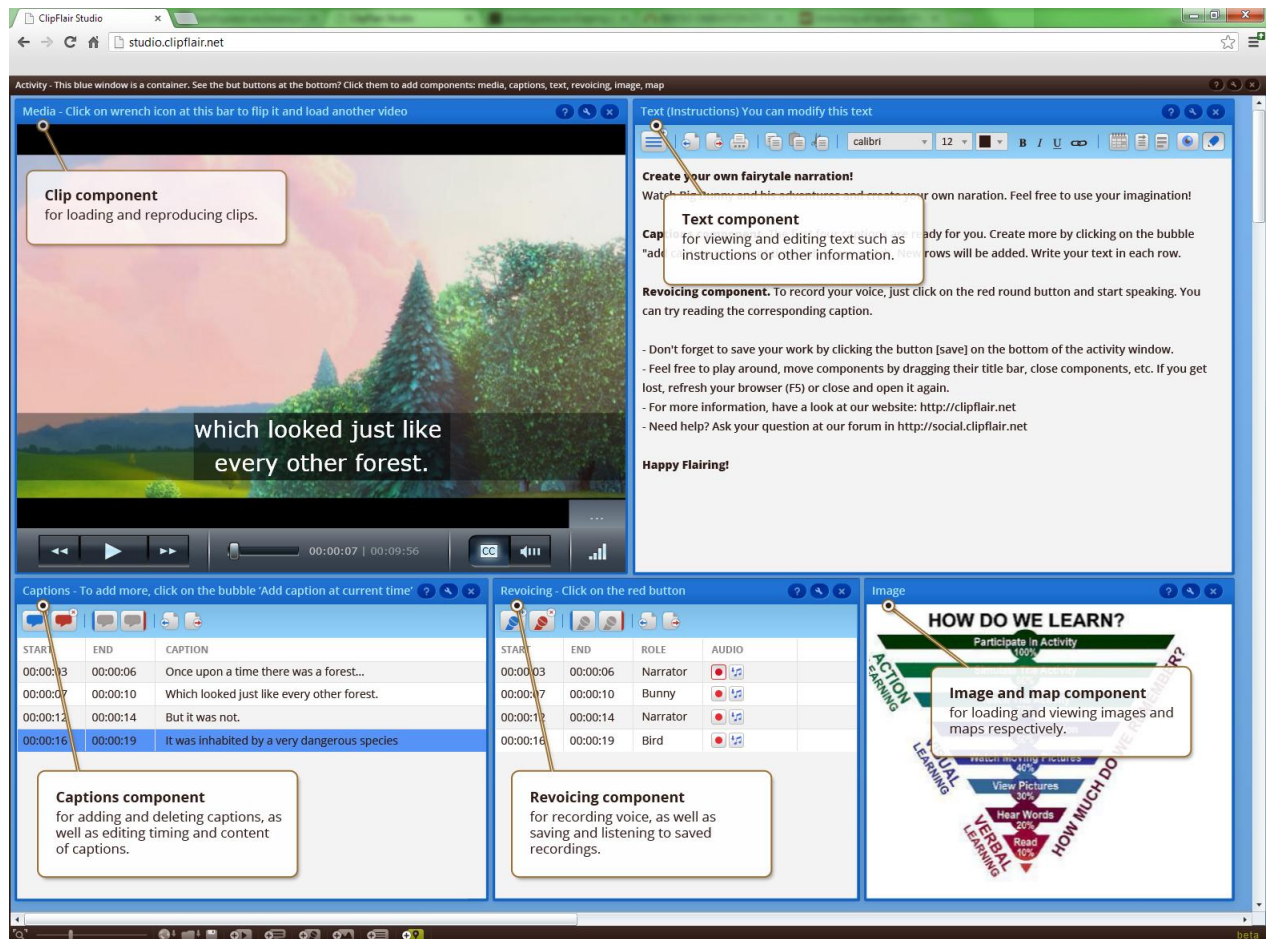


Figure 1: ClipFlair Studio screenshot

There are six types: the *clip* component, for loading and reproducing clips; the *text* component, for viewing and editing text such as instructions or other information; the *captions* component, for adding and deleting captions, as well as editing timing and content of captions; the *revoicing* component, for recording voice, as well as saving

and listening to saved recordings; and the *image* and *map* component, for loading and viewing images and maps respectively.

Each component is editable as far as size, zoom and features are concerned to suit the objectives of each activity, depending on the learner's level and needs. When the activity design is completed these options can be locked so that the learner can focus only on the content of the activity.

The ClipFlair Social Network

The [ClipFlair Social Network](#) and content management system aims to enable users to

- form online communities to collaborate, interact and share materials through *Groups* and *Forums*
- access revoicing and captioning activities, clips and other resources through the *Gallery*
- provide feedback to software developers of the web application (ClipFlair Studio)
- watch and read tutorials on how to use or create activities
- study guidelines for activity creation and evaluation

To achieve these goals the Social Network provides Groups, Wall and Forum engines where users can publish and share their work and get rated for their activities. They can use the dedicated Feedback Forum to provide feedback to software developers both for the Studio and the Social Network itself. The Gallery lists activities, clips and other materials accompanied by metadata.

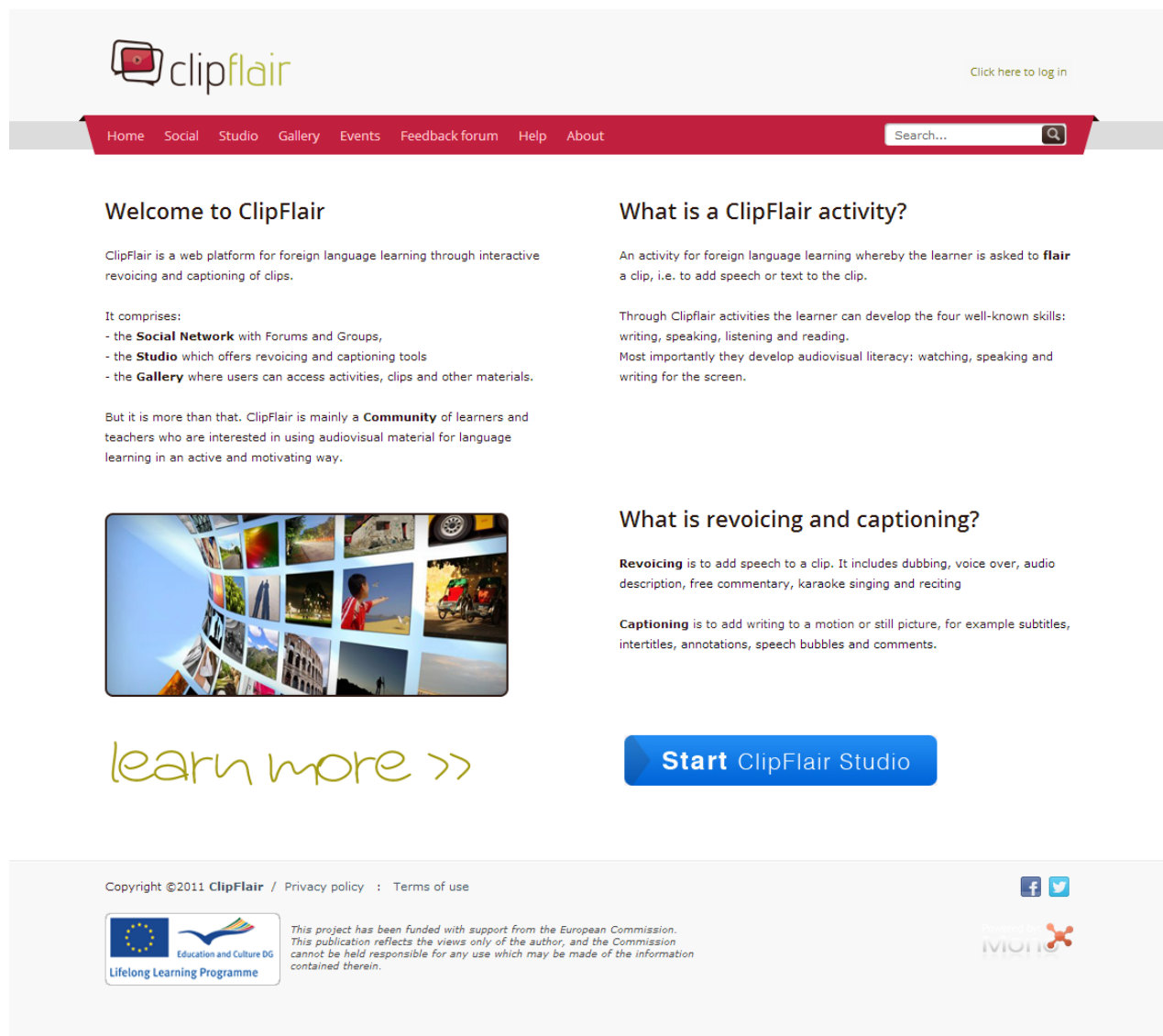


Figure 2: ClipFlair Social Network Screenshot

Its main targeted audience consists of learners, teachers and activity authors. Both teachers and learners can act as authors and create their own activities.

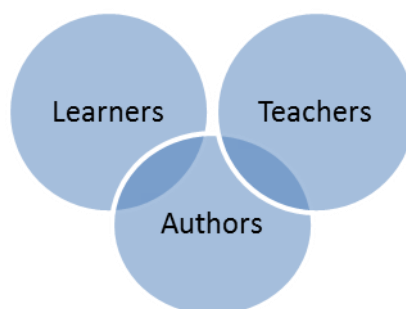


Figure 1. The Social Network's targeted audience

The ClipFlair Gallery

The [Gallery](#) is the library of resources and it is available through the ClipFlair Social Network. It contains revoicing and captioning activities for foreign language learning, as well as reusable material for the creation of activities, namely clips, images and texts. Given the component-based nature of the ClipFlair Studio, the same material can be mixed differently for different activities in different languages. For example, the same clip may be exploited differently for other levels, or the same set of instructions can be used in similar activities.

The screenshot shows the ClipFlair Gallery interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following links: Home, Social, Studio, Gallery, Events, Feedback forum, Help, and About. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar. The main content area displays a list of six activities, each with a thumbnail image, a title, a description, and metadata.

Activity ID	Title	Description	Language	Language Combination	Authors	Action
ACTIVITY #1	* Ár nArán Laethúil	A video explaining the tradition of bread-making.	Irish	Intralingual	Rose Ní Dhubhda	open
ACTIVITY #2	* En casa de Rosa	Dub the protagonists to practicing listening and speaking skills	Spanish	Intralingual	Stavroula Sokoli	open
ACTIVITY #3	* Kou fanyi lianxi	To train both listening and interpreting competences	Chinese	Interlingual	Sara Rovira-Esteva	open
ACTIVITY #4	* Kutsadura		Basque	Interlingual	University of Deusto	open
ACTIVITY #5	* LA FAMILIA	The students will learn the article, the numeral, the present tense of some regular and irregular verbs; the basic vocabulary for house description and family presentation	Spanish	Interlingual	Sanda MORARU	open
ACTIVITY #6	* Lucas y sus hermanos					

Figure 3: ClipFlair Gallery screenshot

Each item in the Gallery is accompanied by relevant metadata which facilitates searching and identifying.

The Gallery also contains tutorials in the form of short clips.

The ClipFlair online community

A community of users of the ClipFlair Studio, including teachers, learners, activity authors and researchers interested in the field, collaborate, communicate and interact and form Groups at the Social Network.

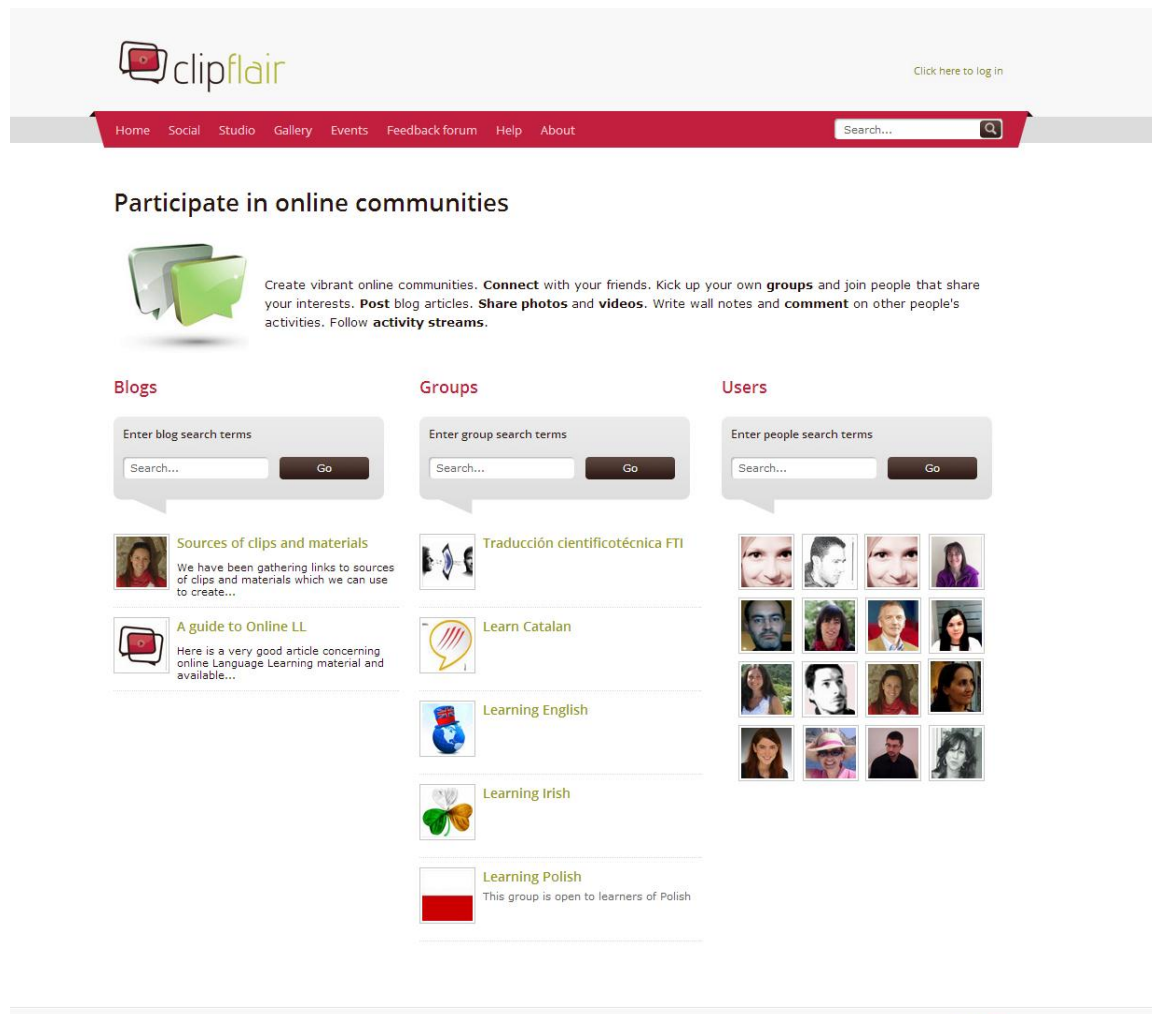


Figure 4: ClipFlair online community screenshot

4. Partnerships

The project has a European dimension because it addresses specific EU educational policies of a common European concern by generating results which have an impact on a European level, aiming to promote Foreign Language Learning. The project focuses on creating learning material for less widely used and taught languages, namely Estonian, Greek, Polish and Romanian as target languages, including minority languages, namely Catalan, Basque and Irish.

To this end, the project mobilizes appropriate institutions from 8 European countries bringing together a critical mass with complementary educational expertise. A diverse number of learners is brought together from countries with different educational policies and different needs in Foreign Language Learning given their geographical location, affiliations and culture. Specialists from the fields of Foreign Language Learning, Audiovisual Translation and ICT, provide their field knowledge and practical observations on culture specific information in the process of translation and its use in education.

The results of the project were conceived and are implemented under the consideration that they are intended to be used by anybody in the EU or beyond, who wishes to learn a foreign language. The consortium has concluded a set of services and educational processes that are expected to satisfy the learning needs and educational conventions of participants, regardless of their nationality. From a technical aspect, the project aims at providing a centralized learning system that can be used in any EU country through the existing technical infrastructure. Furthermore, the dissemination and use of the results after the end of the project, as well as the actions during the lifetime of the project are expected to help to improve the current situation in language learning in several European countries, It is also expected to affect the attitude of learners towards learning lesser used languages, given that they will have access to high quality material.

The consortium consists of institutions that have proven experience and competences to undertake the tasks in their field of expertise and there is a balance between experts in the three fields involved:

The following institutions are associate partners of the project:

- Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh: Elementary school (Galway, Ireland)
- IES Esteve Terradas i Illa: Secondary School (Barcelona, Spain)
- IES Benaguasil: Secondary School (Valencia, Spain)
- Instituto Formación Profesional Juan Bosco: Vocational training institute, secondary level (Albacete, Spain)
- Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Huelva: Adult education provider (Huelva, Spain)
- Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Barcelona: Adult education provider (Barcelona, Spain)
- "Oxfordon" Language School, Bydgoszcz, Poland
- Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Madrid, Spain)

- Università di Pavia (Pavia, Italy)
- Kazimierz Wielki University, Poland

5. Plans for the Future

Regarding the project outcomes, the Conceptual Framework and Pedagogical Methodology will be enriched by the end of the project with further activity templates and samples, best practices and assessment methods.

Further releases of the ClipFlair Studio and the ClipFlair Social Network will be published, integrating user feedback from the piloting phase starting in March 2013, and from the activity creation phase which started in December 2012. The final version of the web platform will be released in April 2014.

Partners have already started developing language learning activities in December 2012 and in March 2013 the current activities will be peer reviewed and posted to the ClipFlair Gallery before the piloting phase. Web 2.0 features of the web platform – such as ranking (contributor content gaining visibility when more popular) and token-based rating - will be used by to evaluate the material produced. Pilot use of the activities involve using the activities developed by activity authors and gathering questionnaires to measure usability and other previously established indicators. Users can report issues, bugs and suggestions in the Feedback Forum of the Social Network. The pilot use results will be used for the final release of the web platform and for fine-tuning the piloted ClipFlair activities.

Project members will continue dissemination activities as planned and presenting the project results at the academic community and beyond. The demonstration video “ClipFlair in 2 minutes” will be produced in March 2013 and the ClipFlair Conference is due in May 2014.

Exploitation will run parallel to the dissemination actions, especially from February 2013, when the beta version of the ClipFlair Studio and Social Network are available for the broader audience. Multiplication will be achieved by reaching short term target groups, as the exploitation activities begin with their participation in the pilot use phase of the project products. Mainstreaming involves the integration of the project results in the curriculum of the universities, secondary schools and adult education providers involved. Mainstreaming will also be achieved through meetings organised by the partners in each country with national and regional education authorities and policy makers. The project will be thoroughly explained and its potential benefits will be described. Connections with other projects will be established, and the partnership will join European Networks.

Two major steps are already being taken towards mainstreaming:

In the case of Greece, the first step towards informing national educational authorities has already been made, as the idea of exploiting subtitling activities for FLL (developed by the LEVIS project) in secondary education has been added to a long-term agreement between CTI and the Greek Ministry of Education.

In the case of Portugal, new English-language guidelines are currently being designed and will be made public and official in June/July 2013 (following approval). The guidelines can contain examples of activities and suggestions for working on the themes and content of the official syllabus. ClipFlair will be mentioned and examples of activities given to illustrate the value of audiovisual materials in foreign-language learning/teaching. The scope of dissemination and usage of ClipFlair will be on a

very large scale, considering it is a national and obligatory document for all schools in Portugal.

Sustainability

From the technical point of view, the infrastructure used for the deployment of the application ensures its viability as far as operational requirements and associated costs are concerned, beyond the project lifetime. CTI, which is the institution responsible for developing the web platform, utilizes a state-of-the-art computing infrastructure, hosted in its certified Computer Center. Its infrastructure currently hosts several critical services, e.g. the Greek School Network's computing facilities, several information systems on behalf of the Greek Ministry of Education, supported by qualified personnel with technical know-how. These characteristics, together with the fact that the equipment purchased within the project (WP3, equipment) will be used exclusively for hosting the ClipFlair web platform, guarantee that the web platform will be maintained and fully operational for at least five years after the end of the funding period.

Access to the resources (web platform and the materials) produced during the eligible period will be free of charge during and beyond the project lifetime. The main project results will continue to be distributed and will easily be obtained through the web. Beyond that, the partners will consider developing a business model to finance the staffing necessary to support new users after the project (e.g. for developing new activities), either by partially commercialising the web platform or by finding private sponsors.

From the educational point of view, the project outputs, i.e. methodology, web-platform and library of activities, will be integrated in the participating universities and associated partners language courses.

Participation does not require advanced technological knowledge or equipment from the users, which automatically allows a large number of people to use the outputs. The project will also offer valuable educational material along with specific guidelines for its exploitation for lesser used languages and third country languages. The social networking potential of this venture, together with the ability to share activities in other social networking sites, will create a solid network for the dissemination of the project.

Furthermore, we intend to exploit existing networks of language learning communities and disseminate the platform through dedicated web sites.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The project addresses the issue of foreign language learning through revoicing and captioning activities, targeting a wide group including virtually any public/private educational body or individual with Internet access. The foreseeable impact is significant and completely in-line to the objectives of LLP Key Activity 2 (Languages) because:

1. The consortium proposes the development of a considerable number of high-quality, innovative activities and lesson plans, ready to be used by FL learners and teachers,
2. The material will be available through a state-of-the-art web networking platform, allowing for improved, easy editing and access (search, storage and handling). The envisaged impact of the suggested social platform is a maximized awareness raising effect within a live, continuously growing FLL community. It will serve as a common link among people interested in learning lesser used languages. Foreign language students will be familiarized with accessibility issues, since several tasks will have deaf (through Subtitling for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing) and blind (through Audio Description) people as intended audiences.
3. The planned activities cover a wide range of languages, including LWULT ones, carefully represented by competent partners in the consortium who will actually utilize and assess the proposed framework in class.

ClipFlair tackles most challenges identified by the First European Survey on Language Competences, especially Challenge 2: “Language policies should promote informal learning opportunities outside school, and consider the exposure to language through traditional and new media, including the effects of using dubbing or subtitles”.

The project promotes European cooperation, involving 8 EU countries, in fields covering three sectoral sub-programmes: Erasmus, Comenius and Grundtvig. The project results (web platform and activities) will be initially targeted to learners of foreign languages at higher education, secondary education and adult learners. The project intends to develop materials that can potentially be used by any FL learner by expanding the community to include any level or age.

Learners will be involved in the pilot use phase of the project as follows:

- University learners through 9 project partners;
- Secondary education learners through the secondary schools participating as associate partners;
- Adult learners through the adult education providers participating as associate partners.

