

I've successfully had my first paper presentation ever at the 2nd International Conference on Arabic Language Resources and Tools held in Cairo, Egypt on 22-23 April 2009, thank a financial support for travel expenses that I was granted by the MEDAR Consortium itself.

The least I could do is write this tiny report about my experience there, so that it may both stimulate bright students to never give up on their ideas and encourage other institutions to actually support them.

Don't think it was easy for me to stand in front of all the scientists I've always looked up to and expound the insight I had into our field.

I actually turned to some of them before my presentation, unspokingly yearning for their attention and help in plucking up enough courage to get on the stage, and their kind words have always been prompt.

My biggest fear was that of uttering the obvious. I've learned so much from most of the attendants' publications that it was impossible for me to conceive that my improvement on their very work never struck their minds.

So after persuading Mohammed Attia to delay his departure only to stay for my presentation, after following Dorte Haltrup Hansen's breathing and relaxation instructions, after hearing my caring mentor Rodolfo Delmonte, who trusted and accompanied me all the way, incite me with a "Go already!" and with Oumayma Al Dakkak's "Good luck!" wish echoing in my mind, there I was, finally on the stage... And it went super smooth! Everything changed in a matter of seconds. There I was, surprisingly comfortable, at ease, enjoying the moment.

I got a chance to meet a fellow-countryman, Paolo Lombardi, working on Arabic 60 kilometres away from me with a different approach. I also met Christian Gaubert, who in France, many years ago tackled the problem from the same linguistic perspective I subscribe to. And I'm grateful to Nizar Habash, for actually asking me questions at the end of my presentation even after saying he wouldn't in order to get me on the stage! And I'm thankful to all the wonderful students of Kareem Darwish who attended the conference like me, and who showed such a big interest and will to collaborate together on projects, and to whom I express my best wishes for a great scientific career and the best of everything.

And of course I'm grateful to the conference organizers. The MEDAR Consortium helped making my dream come true, and spurred me to keep doing my best, by confirming that attention and aids are always rewarded to good wills and works.

My morale is now high; one way or another I'm going to find a PhD scholarship to be able to keep contributing to science and satisfy my inquisitive nature in the healthiest of ways.

So what can I say in the end? Scientific fairy tales do happen!