



Impacts of international language assessments on multilingualism: evidence from an iterative impact study of *Progetto Lingue 2000*

Sarah Ellis, Head of Assessment Services, Southern Europe
Roger Hawkey, Consultant to Cambridge English

ALTE PARIS 10-11 April 2014





Does *our presentation* fit the ALTE Conference themes?

Language Assessment for Multilingualism

promoting:

- ❖ Mobility
- ❖ Linguistic Diversity
- ❖ Intercultural Communication
- ❖ Fairness & Quality



Assessment research in support of Multilingualism?

“the ways in which effective testing can encourage learning across the whole range of languages, and ... how the huge body of research on the assessment of English language skills can be applied more widely.”

ALTE Paris Conference: *Language Assessment for Multilingualism*



Multilingualism and language status?

An event for the fifth annual European Day of Languages, October 2012, at the European Parliament, addressed the theme 'Is English enough?'

ALTE's Martin Nuttall answered:

'When we asked this question we already knew that the answer would be *'No, of course not'.*

What we're trying to do is *encourage discussion of the importance of teaching languages and using a wide range of languages at a time when English is becoming more and more widely used'.*



Linguistic Diversity in Italy

- ❖ Standard Italian used by the vast majority, but Italy still characterised by a wide range of dialects, varieties and registers, so a relatively high index of linguistic diversity
- ❖ A new factor in recent years: the immigration of people from poorer countries: in January 2013, there were 5,187,721 foreign nationals resident in Italy, 8.3% of the country's population.



Could an *Impact Study* help give some answers on Language Assessment for multilingualism?

The *impact study* of a major language education project (PL2000) could be revealing and relevant if it emphasised attention to:

- ❖ multilingualism
- ❖ fairness and quality.

For Cambridge, remember, positive impact belongs with Validity, Reliability, Practicality and Quality Management as a *required asset* of a high-stakes exam.



Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca

In its *Progetto Lingue 2000*, the Ministry of Instruction, Universities and Research (MIUR), Italy, sought to introduce innovation in key aspects of language teaching and assessment:

- ❖ **small homogeneous learning groups**
- ❖ **target annual learning hours in short learning modules**
- ❖ **new technologies**

and including...



note the significant support, here, for multilingualism:

- ❖ ‘certification in *four* foreign languages through a funding agreement between MIUR and foreign exam boards, offering schools access to international certificates in four foreign language across the school system’.





The Cambridge *PL2000* Impact Study: aims and approaches

With the agreement of MIUR, Cambridge English Language Assessment Research and Validation Department and its Bologna Office, a research team is carrying out the *PL2000 Impact Study* to:

- ❖ record and analyse *PL2000* effects on learners, teachers, parents, education managers
- ❖ identify key assessment and other areas of support from exam providers.



The Cambridge English *Progetto Lingue 2000* Impact Study is *iterative*, carried out firstly between 2001 and 2002, and again between 2012 and 2014.

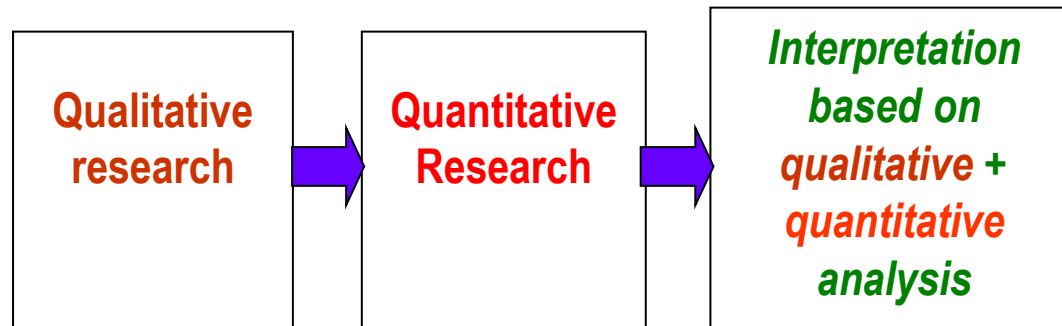
Hence the updated name now: *Progetto Lingue 2000* Impact Study Revisited (PLISR)

2001 → 2002 ----- 2012 → 2013 → 2014



PLISR Research methods..

The *PL2000* Impact Study uses a *sequential exploratory mixed research methods* – qualitative and quantitative – design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011):





**With the impact study team collecting
qualitative data through:**

- ❖ **interviews and meetings with teachers, heads of schools, parents, (ex)-students, officials**



- ❖ **classroom observations at a case-study selection of schools in northern, central and southern Italy**



Semi-structured Interviews:

Using the PLISR interview Guide, including

- ❖ Introductions
- ❖ Context and orientation to *PL2000* and the impact study

A set of question areas, to cover:

- ❖ discussant views / experience of the *PL2000*
- ❖ views / experience of ELT, including: changes; school actions *re* EL; CLT? / materials, curriculum and lesson planning; learner roles; modern technologies; T support; CLIL; assessment
- ❖ round up and thanks.



PLISR research episodes were audio and video-recorded *with permissions* ...





Scale and Scope of the *Progetto Lingue 2000* Impact Study

Recorded PLISR episodes for data analysis included:

- ❖ 39 English classroom lessons, 23 at primary, 16 at middle school and secondary school levels
- ❖ *semi-structured* interviews involving 121 interviewees, (25 hrs 42 minutes), in English and Italian (incl. teachers, heads, parents, officials, ex-students)
- ❖ additional meetings with 80 participants
- ❖ *all* video- and / or audio recorded



We had rich *qualitative* data, but how to *analyse*?

Folkestad (2008:5) sees the first steps in sorting recorded *qualitative* data as ‘unitizing and categorizing’ using ‘a step-by-step procedure’:

- ❖ listen to, annotate and read each unit of data / episode
- ❖ assign each unit *to categories*
- ❖ develop category titles that distinguish each category from the others.

The analysis of PLISR data followed a similar approach.



PLISR key topics from the data analysis

The responses and observed lessons were analysed and key relevant response topics were derived from the 40,000 word summary analysis of the episodes.

The occurrences of each topic were labeled, **colour-coded** and counted.

Numbers of references to each category indicated their prominence in the recordings of the PLISR episodes.



Key impact topics emerging ...

1. communicative approaches to ELT (as proposed in the *PL2000* and as seen now) (399)
2. language assessment and exam provider approaches, services, influences (245)
3. computer-based and other technological approaches and ELT (119)
4. teacher training and support (81)
5. changing sociolinguistic context of English in Italy (60)
6. teacher >< student relations (55)
7. influences of parents (53)
8. content and language integrated learning (CLIL)(31)



PLISR: the quantitative dimension

We checked the *qualitative* findings from interviews, group discussions, classroom observations, against more *quantitative* data, through PLISR teacher *questionnaires*.

Here, key findings from around 350 returns from trialled 2014 teacher questionnaires followed up qualitative data collected in 2012-13. We shall be following up our survey further.

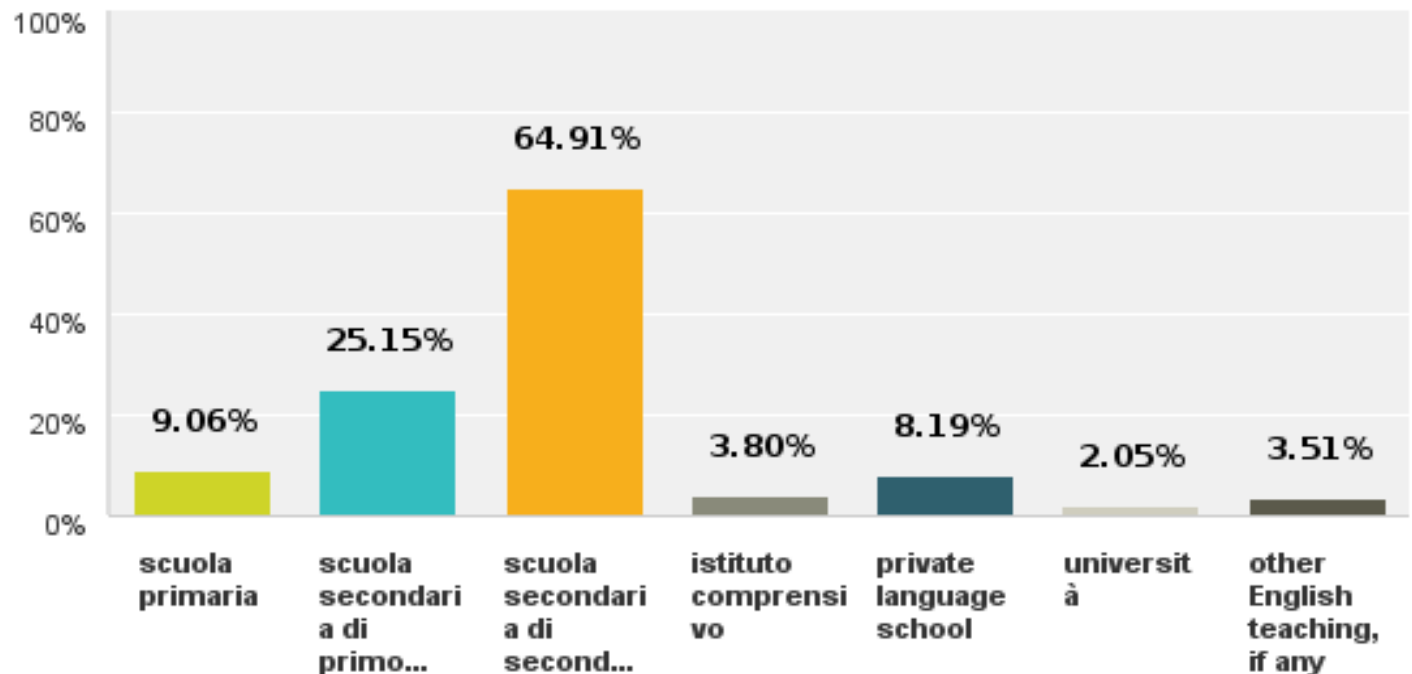


The PLISR Questionnaire Responses

The questionnaires came mainly from teachers at lower and upper secondary Schools (90%)

Q6 What type(s) of school are you teaching at now?

Answered: 342 Skipped: 2





- ❖ from a full range of Italian regions
- ❖ mainly (90%) female [*Note that July 2011 Eurostat information, shows 94% female language teachers at primary level, 71% at lower secondary and 60% at upper secondary*]
- ❖ 75% with 15 or more years teaching experience
- ❖ 51% teaching 18 or more regular English lessons a week

Interestingly, for a Project now 15 years old,

- ❖ 56% of the teachers claimed to be *very or quite* strongly aware of *PL2000*.



PLISR Teacher Questionnaire Findings on Key Issues



CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH
Language Assessment
Part of the University of Cambridge

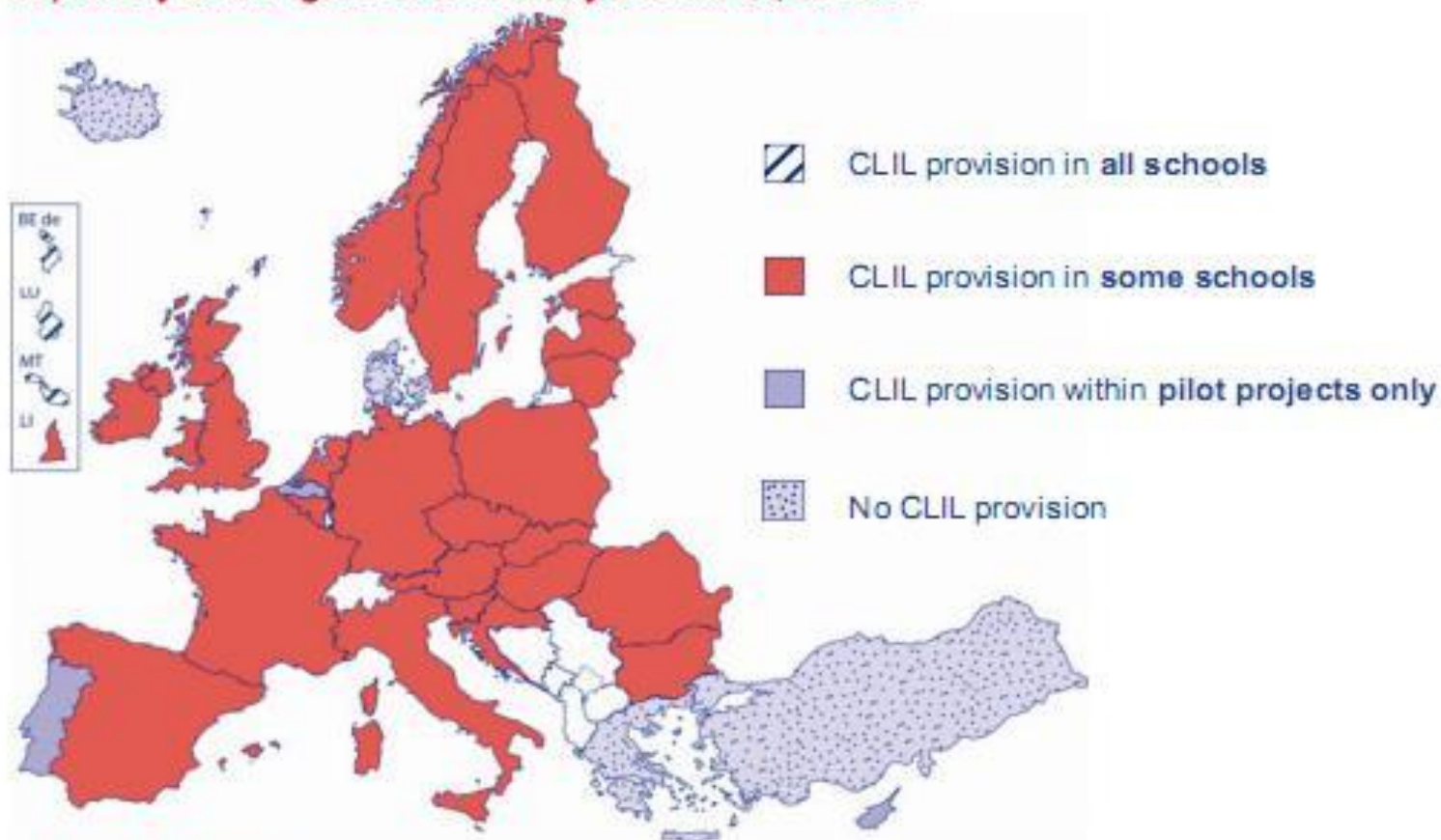
	Very Strongly	Quite Strongly	Only a Little	Not at All
Communicative Language Teaching	57%	38%	4%	1%
External English Exams	56%	30%	12%	2%
New ideas from textbooks	43%	44%	12%	1%
Changing position of English in Italy	35%	44%	19%	4%
Computers and other ELT technologies	32%	46%	20%	1%
Teacher in-service meetings, support	25%	41%	32%	2%
Relationship with your ELT colleagues	19%	52%	24%	5%
CLIL	19%	34%	37%	10%
Parent attitudes	12%	36%	43%	9%



Introducing CLIL

(L'introduzione della metodologia CLIL i nei Licei Linguistici; Rapporto di monitoraggio nelle classi terze dell'a.s. 2012/2013

● **Figure B9: Existence of CLIL provision in primary and/or general secondary education, 2010/11**



Source: Eurydice.



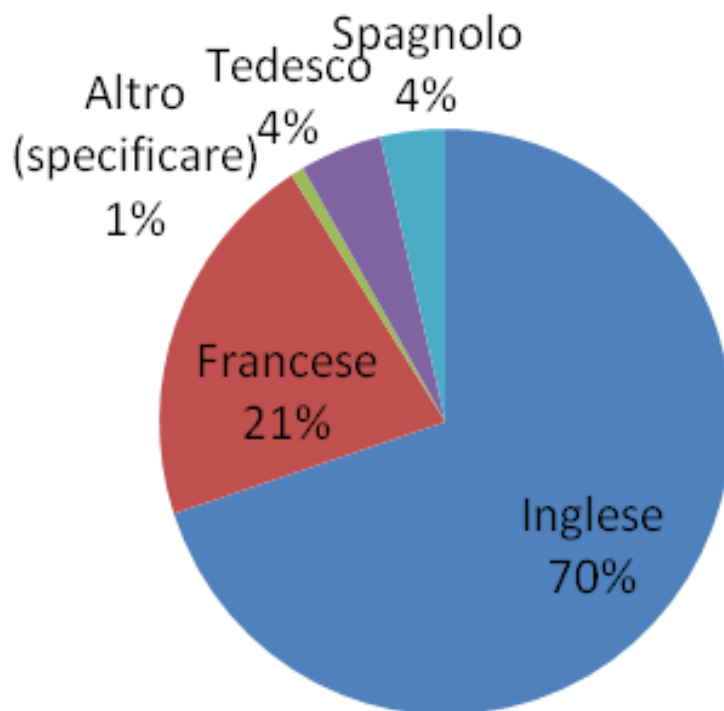
Languages for CLIL

MIUR 2014 - DG Ordinamenti scolastici e per l'Autonomia scolastica

Gruppo di lavoro Monitoraggio introduzione della metodologia CLIL nei Licei, p.17

Lingua straniera dell'insegnamento

CLIL



PLISR participants catching the Multilingual Essence?

- ❖ *‘Students of the early PL2000 era were always with their noses in books’. Now they’re encouraged to use the new technology, seeing ‘real life’ all the time....The Internet etc means they want ‘real language’. PL2000 was practical, forward-looking. It got local authorities, parents, schools aware of the importance of the certification of learning ...’ (English teacher)*
- ❖ *‘In this school, whose main subjects are economics, marketing, finance, we are talking about a language certification, not only in one language, but in two or even three languages’ (School Head)*



- ❖ *‘Will CLIL strengthen over the next ten years? Like being in frequent action in ten years time? It should be’ (Head of English)*
- ❖ *‘CLIL methodology is used, to integrate EL using interdisciplinary models. In primary school, they do Science, Maths and Italian in English’. (School Head)*
- ❖ *‘University students have studied some of their courses in English, listen to music in English, surf the net in English and write to their penfriends in English....’ (Language School Director)*



- ❖ *We watched a 17-18 y.o. students' joint teacher >< student multi-media presentation (Interactive whiteboard, PowerPoint, words with interpretation, live and onscreen, individual and pair performances, music and singing), in a student-created WW1 classroom remembrance show. With key facts, features, pictures, music, and readings aloud of Great War poems. It was very moving, ending with a rendition of Sting's 'Children's Crusade'.*



Recall the broad scope of the *Progetto Lingue 2000*

PL2000 aimed “...to innovate the teaching and learning of foreign languages by promoting the acquisition of precise communication skills by pupils of all levels of school”.

<http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/argomenti/autonomia/progetti/lingue.htm>

Definitely multilingual in essence.



Thank you.

rogerhawkey@btinternet.com

s.ellis@cambridgeenglish.it