

## **A two-edged sword: comparative assessment frameworks and language education**

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The last two decades have seen the growing use of assessment in the shaping of educational policy in relation to languages. The clearest examples of this in Europe and beyond are the Common European Framework of Reference and the program of PISA testing of reading. What are the positive and negative impacts of such developments? What social, political and cultural values do such assessments embody? The paper interprets these developments in the light of the failure of validity theory in language assessment, and calls for a program of critical research on the local impacts of assessment policies which attempt to further the processes of globalization.