



OPEN PROJECT TESTING PHASE

National report Template_ Italy

Author/Organization	Fondazione S.Rita
Country	Italy
Provinces/Cities where the test took place	Bergamo, Palermo, Florence, Cagliari, Reggio Calabria, Rome
Date of the document	11/12/2015
Version of the document	01

Context

Describe the context where the testing phase took place, the specific entities and the type of persons involved in the testing and other significant points you retain helpful to understand the general conditions of the testing context. Please provide also an idea of the number of persons involved and the number of events organized.

The testing seminars took place from October till December 2015. They were organised in collaboration with the Italian National Deaf Association and took place in the main seat of the Association and 5 provincial seats, strategically reaching the Deaf community in the North, Middle and South Italy. Participants were people with hearing impairments, sign language learners, teachers and interpreters.

Six testing events were organized. The cities where the testing took place are the following:

- Bergamo, 24 October
- Palermo, 19 November
- Florence, 28 November
- Cagliari, 04 December
- Reggio Calabria, 17 December
- Rome, 17 – 19 December (in the event of the final conference)

The testing seminars lasted from 2 to 3 hours on average and followed the subsequent agenda:

- 1) Introduction by the representatives of the Deaf Association
- 2) Presentation of the project by Fondazione S.Rita
- 3) Platform test

The participants were first hosted in a bigger hall where the introductions by the Deaf Association and Fondazione S.Rita took place. The participants were subsequently accompanied to computer labs where each participant had the opportunity to individually test the platform on the computer. Each participant had approximately 30 – 50 minutes time for testing the platform.

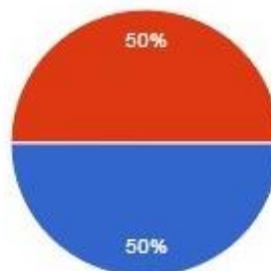
Numerical indicators

A total of 156 persons attended the 6 testing seminars. The feedback was collected via a Google Form questionnaire. Fifty-two questionnaires were filled in, by participants 20 to 70 years old. Forty out of fifty-two persons that filled in the questionnaires belong to the deaf community.

Sex

Male 26 50%

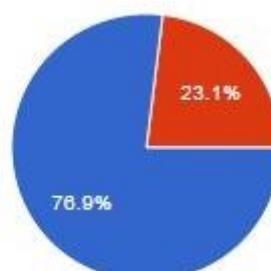
Female 26 50%



Deaf or hearing

Deaf 40 76.9%

Hearing 12 23.1%

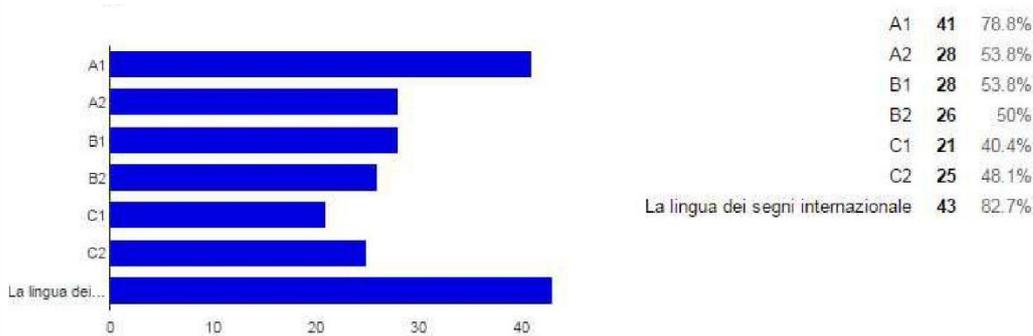


Tested scenarios

Indicate which sign languages and which learning units were tested indicating also the number of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups implemented for each learning units.

The participants tested the Italian Sign language and the International Sign. They tested all learning units, from A1 to C2.

As follows an overview of the learning levels tested and the corresponding number of persons that tested each level.



Two interviews were carried out with the Italian Sign language interpreters and three focus groups with deaf participants. Each focus group consisted of 5 persons and 1 moderator.

Satisfaction level

Describe the general level of satisfaction with the platform, as emerged during the testing phase (questionnaires, focus groups, interviews). You could also use graphs and tabs, elaborated from the questionnaires database, or the interview and focus group documents. If significant, please compare the different satisfaction levels with respect for instance to age and gender.

The participants were generally very satisfied with the platform and showed a great interest in using it for English language and Sign language learning. Their enthusiasm was substantial both before and after the testing took place.

The participants were also very knowledgeable about the existing applications and tools (although a restricted number) developed for providing support for foreign language learning to deaf persons. Being already familiar with e-learning tools they were very open to “trying out” the platform, with no difference in the age groups.

There was no significant difference in the feedback between the younger and the older

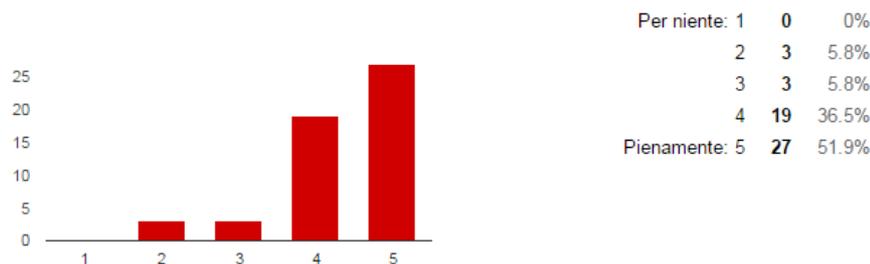
participants, nor between the two gender groups.

The only difference was that the younger generations was more interested in testing and learning the International Sign.

1. The platform is interesting to use. I like it.



2. The platform is fun to use.



Usability

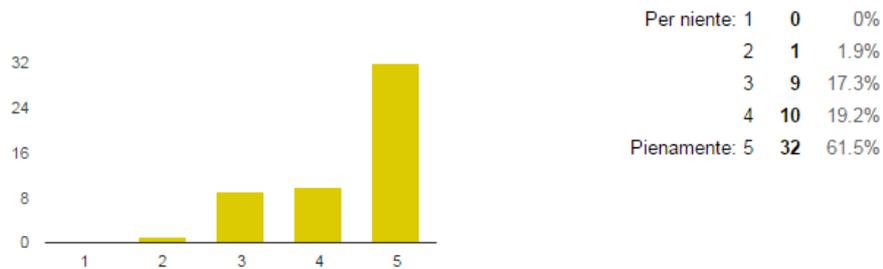
Describe if users found the platform easy to use and navigate. You could use also graphs and tabs, elaborated from the questionnaires database, or the interview and focus group documents.

The users found the platform functional and easy to use, as 80.7% of the users agreed that the controls were easy to use (4%), and 78.9% agreed the graphics is likable. According to 59.6% of the users there were no errors in the platform.

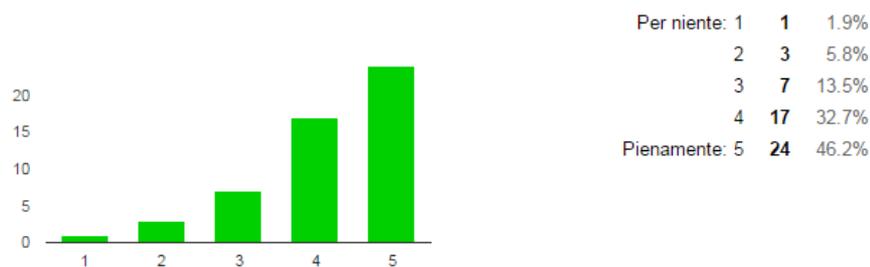
There were however some technical problems encountered during the testing. On some computers for example it was not possible to view the subtitles. Also, it happened very often that by viewing the video in full screen the users were taken to the VIMEO platform, so it was difficult for the users to find their way around on the Vimeo platform, together with all the other videos uploaded.

It was difficult for the users to navigate the platform layout, asking for a simplified layout of the learning topics.

3. The platform controls are easy to use.



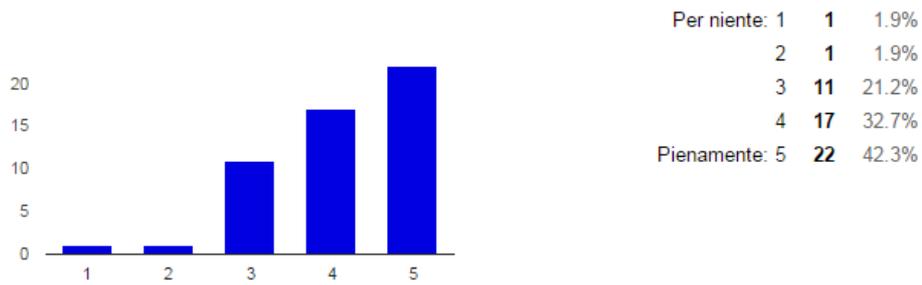
4. The platform graphics is likable.



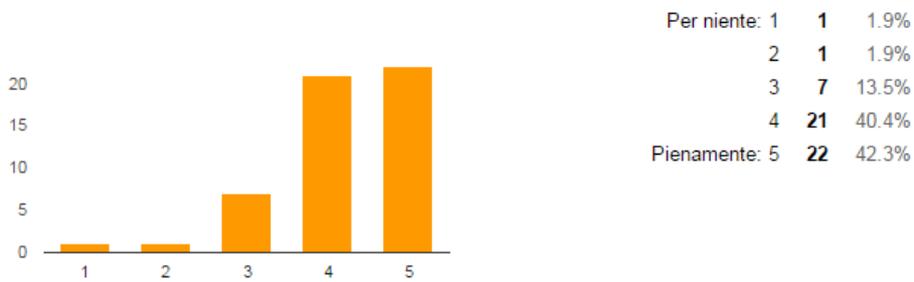
5. There are no errors in the platform



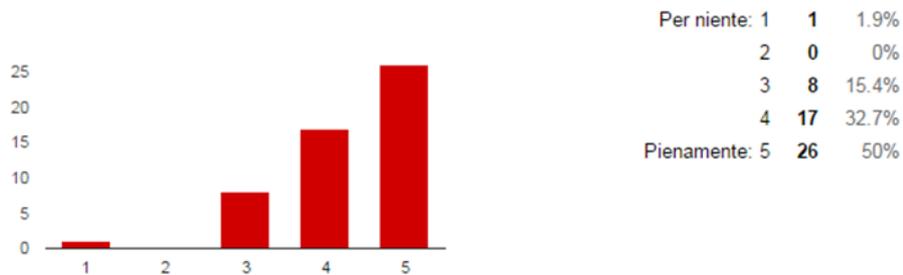
6. The technology used makes the learning environment realistic



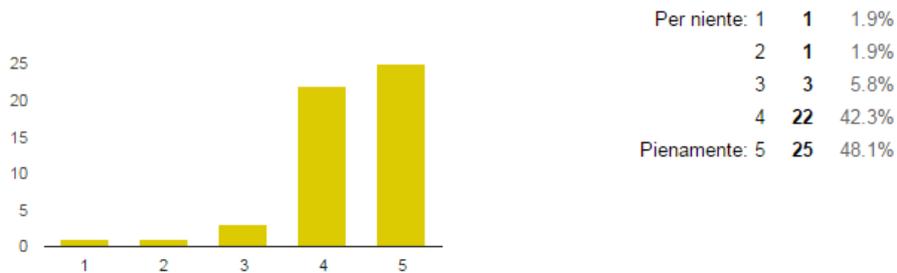
7. The platform is customizable enough for my learning needs



8. The platform responds to my action rapidly and softly



9. The videos are on a suitable quality level

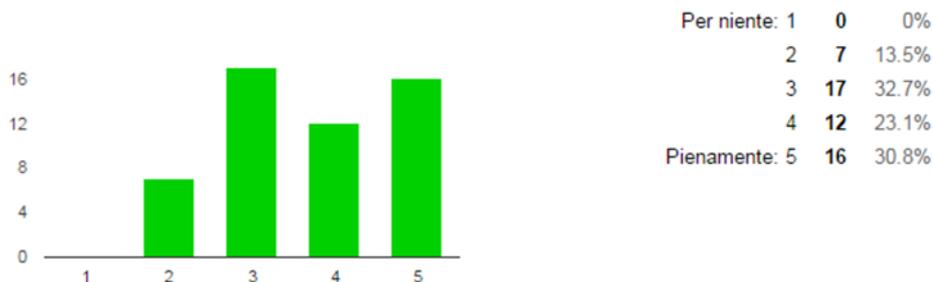


Pedagogical aspects

Describe if the platform facilitates the learning process. You could also use graphs and tabs, elaborated from the questionnaires database, or the interview and focus group documents.

The users on the whole provided a very positive feedback on the pedagogical aspects of the platform, 82.7% (4/5) of the users agreeing that the contents covered by the platform were interesting in terms of learning and 80.8% (4/5) stating the platform could improve their general language skills. They found the platform to be a quality and valid learning tool, and a good alternative to the traditional learning methods (80.7% or 4/5), but said that the content, though valid and well prepared, offered learning material only for a basic level of communication, and strongly suggested to enrich the content and add new learning topics.

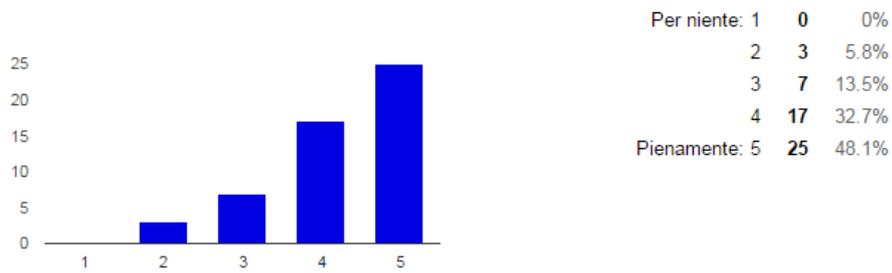
10. The quantity of the materials usable in the platform is sufficient



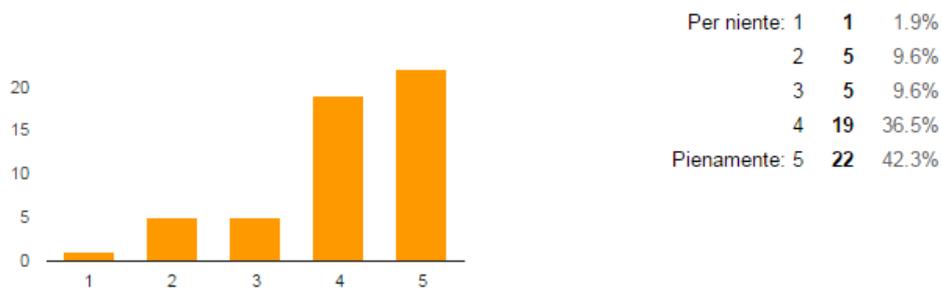
11. The contents covered by the platform are interesting in terms of learning



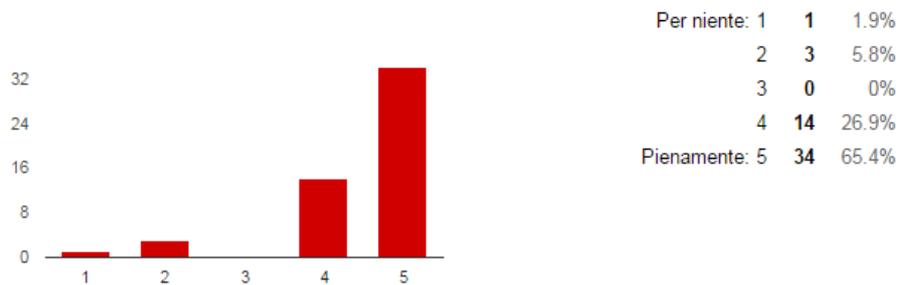
12. I think the platform could improve my general language skills



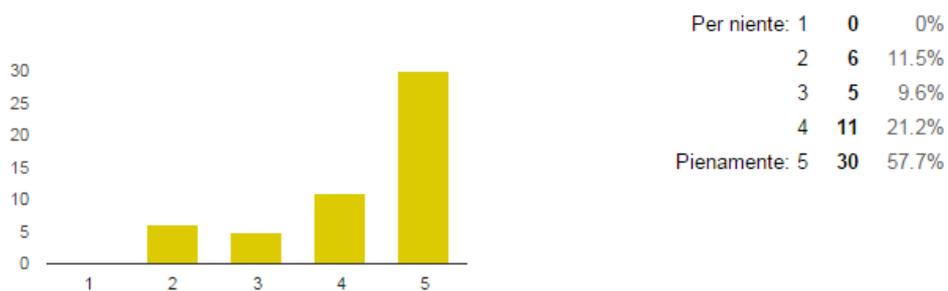
13. *I think I could learn more about English using this platform*



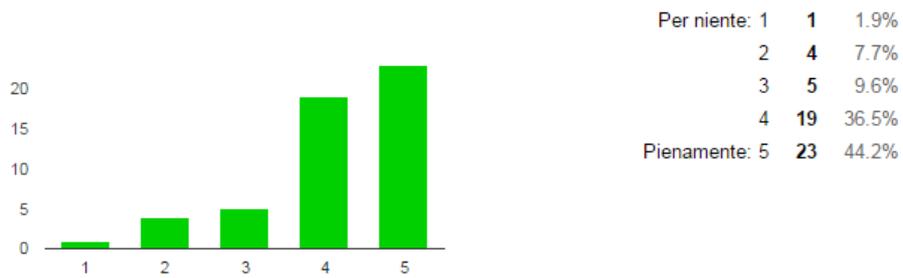
14. *I think I could learn more about International Sign Language using this platform*



15. *After using the platform I'm more interested into learning a new language*



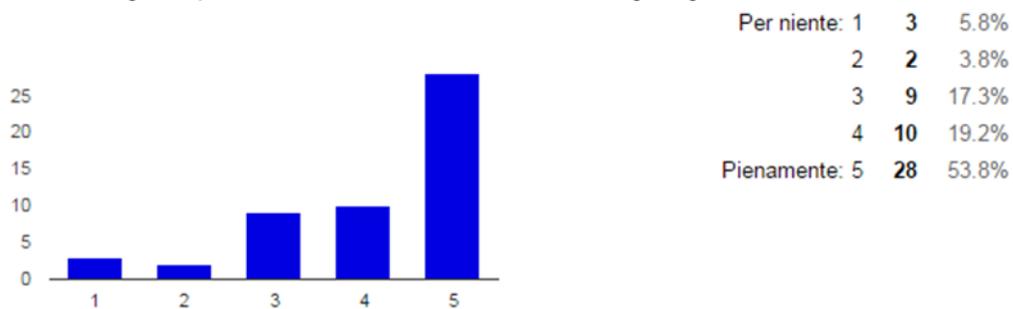
16. *The platform helped me to understand different cultures*



17. The platform helped me to broaden my horizons



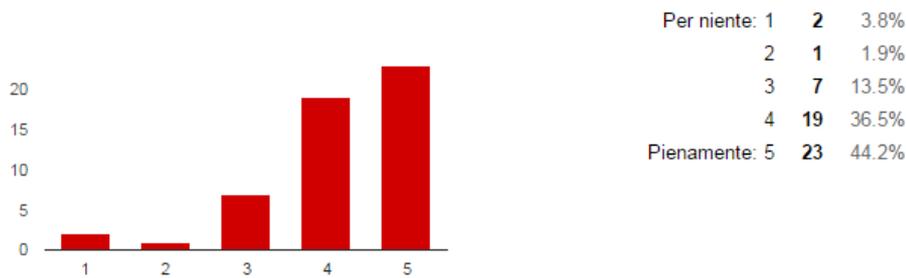
18. After using the platform I'm more interested into going abroad



19. I think the platform could help me in an everyday life situation abroad



20. *I think the platform provides a valid learning alternative to traditional learning methods*



Other significant points

Add additional points you retain helpful for the testing phase and for improving the platform.

What participants appreciated the most in the platform was the following:

- The possibility of learning the English language
- The possibility of learning other countries' sign language
- The variety of languages available
- The variety of themes available
- The disposition of the interpreters
- High quality of the videos
- The innovative technology
- Functional and easy to use

What participants appreciated less in the platform was the following:

- Short videos
- The green background
- Blurring of the interpreters
- Fast labial
- Too-basic dialogues

Suggestions and conclusions

Describe suggestions to implement or modify the platform as emerged during the testing phase. Bring your conclusions about the platform and the WP.

During the testing we have gathered feedback of all users that have tested the platform, as follows the most common suggestions made by the participants:

- enrich the existing content, especially at the advanced level
- introduce new topics (e.g. at a job interview abroad, behaviour in emergency situations - ambulance, police, in a pharmacy, etc.)
- add other languages (English, Chinese, French)
- introduce images of objects mentioned in the dialogues in the background of the videos
- introduce the slow motion function of the dialogues and the labial reproduction
- introduce double subtitles, that is the possibility to have the English subtitles and the national language subtitles displayed simultaneously in a video (e.g. Italian sign language interpreters + subtitles in Italian + subtitles in English)
- introduce the subtitles translation word per word, so one can understand exactly which sign relates to which word
- introduce the possibility to update the content directly by private users, like Wikipedia content
- introduce a video chat to communicate with teachers, interpreters and deaf persons from abroad
- simplify the layout of the topics to choose from

Some users suggested that the framing should be done “the American way”, that is that the framing should be from head to half thigh.

Regarding the labial reproduction, it was noted that to be able to understand the labial one needs to see not only the mouth, but the entire face, because also the facial movements are important in order to understand the words pronounced. It would be useful to implement the labial reproduction for all of the languages, most importantly because often when abroad one meets local inhabitants that don't know the sign language but try to use pronounce words slowly so the deaf person can understand the labial reproduction.

Regarding the signing of the International Sign, some users noted that sometimes there were elements present from the American Sign Language.

The users were on the whole very satisfied with the tool and found it a valid tool for learning the English language and the International Sign. The users showed a genuine interest in using the platform on their own in their free time.

An interesting fact that came out during the testing is that the platform was found useful not only for the deaf persons, but also for the hearing persons that are studying to become Sign Language interpreters and the members of the families of the deaf persons.

This means that the platform can be used as a solid learning tool not only for learning English and IS, but also the National Sign language by hearing persons. For the time being the platform provides a basic level language learning, but, once implemented some changes in the platform, such as new topics and further content, it has a potential to become a high quality e-learning tool for deaf persons.