Towards Multilingual Education in ECEC in Luxembourg

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22 October 2024, SEALBHÚ seminar

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SCRIPT

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https://humanities.uni.lu/playlist/collaborative-book-reading?autoplay=1

- Felice (3.5), emergent multilingual, 66% of children do not speak Luxembourgish as a home language
- Ms Clara, Luxembourg, experienced teacher

- Flexible language use in early education (Luxembourgish, Portuguese, English)
- Translanguaging: deployment and flexible orchestration of entire semiotic repertoire to communicate, make meaning and learn (García & Otheguy, 2020).

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Outline

1. Educational policies in ECEC in Luxembourg
2. Practices, beliefs and changes thereof
3. Effect of professional development (MuLiPEC)
4. Changes of attitudes and practices
5. Current practices in the non-formal sector
6. Concluding comments

https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/699/

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1. Educational policies in ECEC in Luxembourg

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- Trilingual country with societal translanguaging

- 47% of the residents do not have Luxembourgish citizenship

- One third of the children speak 1 language, one third 2, one third 3 or more (SNJ, 2023); 34% of children in the *école fondamentale* speak Luxembourgish as a first language at home (STATEC, 2024)
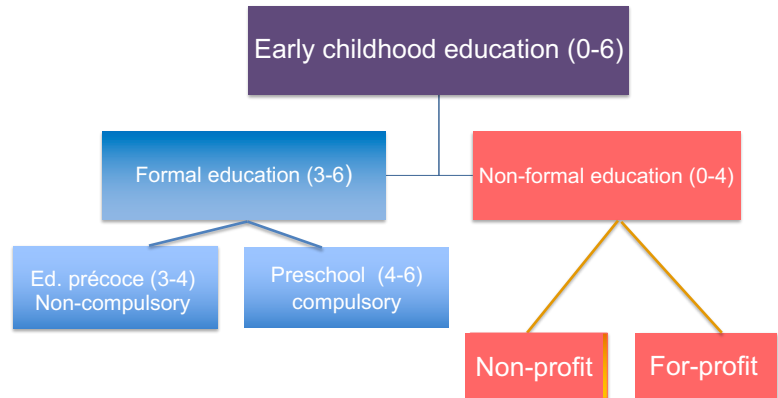

https://solbookbox.com/blog/dialogic-reading-a-guide-for-new-parents

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ECEC in Luxembourg

Early childhood education (0-6)

Formal education (3-6)

Non-formal education (0-4)

Ed. précoce (3-4)
Non-compulsory

Preschool (4-6)
compulsory

Non-profit

For-profit

Multilingualism?

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Multilingualism in Education

- New orientations in language teaching and didactics
  - Council of Europe 2001
  - Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures (FREPA) (Candelier et al., 2012)
  - "Multilingual education" in the Anglo-American world
  - Dynamic perspective of language acquisition

https://www.newvic.ac.uk/careers-blog/2020/4/21/the-power-of-multilingualism

- Multilingual education programmes in ECEC on the rise
- Educators often portrayed as being insecure about the manners of working with multilingual children and families (Bergeron-Morin et al., 2023; Peleman et al., 2023)
- Need for training

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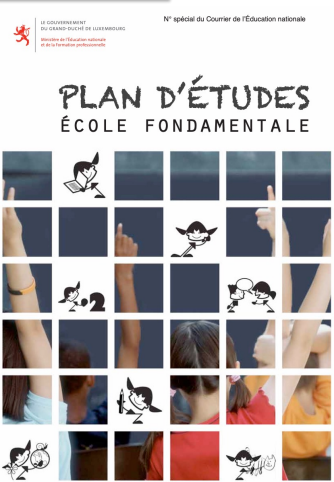## Multilingualism in ECEC in Luxembourg

Early childhood education (0-6)

Formal education (3-6)

Ed. précoce (3-4)
Non-compulsory

Preschool (4-6)
compulsory

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Multilingualism?
➢ **Focus on Luxembourgish**

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Multilingualism in ECEC in Luxembourg

Language awareness

"Skills relating to the awakening of and openness to languages must be developed in a transversal way in different areas of learning during elementary school. The main objective is to develop a metalinguistic awareness among pupils, to enable children to acquire a plurilingual and pluricultural sensitivity and to enhance their knowledge and skills in different languages, including those that are not among the languages of instruction."
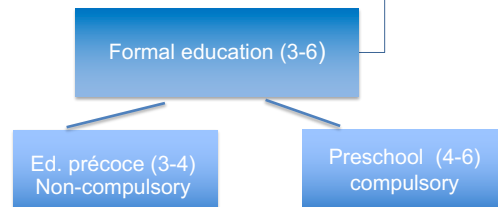
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Multilingualism in ECEC in Luxembourg

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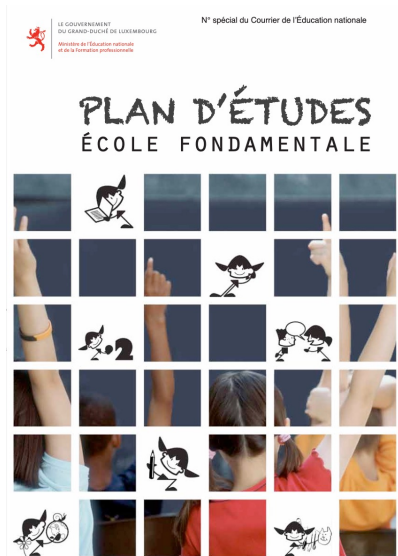
- Compare words and phrases in different languages
- Recognize and reproduce sounds and/or words from another language
- Discover the same book in different languages
- Discover different writing systems: Latin alphabet, Chinese ideograms, hieroglyphics

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The modified Youth Act and the «éducation plurilingue» programme in ECEC

- Failure of the education system to meet the needs of a growing heterogeneous population
- Ongoing underachievement of children with low SES and migrant background (PISA, EPSTAN)
- Criticism of the traditional sequential and separative approach to language education
- A serious of reforms to address inequalities, among them the Luxembourg's early language education policy
- New law applicable in the formal and non-formal sector (Children and Youth Act of 2016)

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Mutlilingual education in the formal sector

Early childhood education (0-6)

Formal education (3-6)

Ed. précoce (3-4) Non-compulsory

Preschool (4-6) compulsory

Éducation plurilingue in ECEC since 2017 in formal and non-formal educational settings

Language education (Luxembourgish, *French,* language awareness)

Language hierarchy

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Mutlilingual education in the non-formal sector

Early childhood education (0-6)

Non-formal education (0-4)

Non-profit

For-profit

Context: No formal policy guidelines until 2017

➢ Diversification of linguistic profiles and pedagogical approaches depending on the staff and clientele

➢ Structures dominant in Luxembourgish or French or bilingual

➢ Multilingualism was a reality but not reflected or used pedagogically

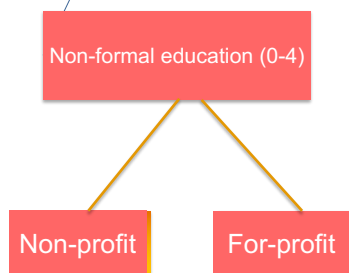➢ Monolingual norms (Neumann 2011; Neumann & Seele 2014; Neumann 2015; Seele 2015, 2016)

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Mutlilingual education in the non-formal sector

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Early childhood education (0-6)

Non-formal education (0-4)

Non-profit

For-profit

Éducation plurilingue in ECEC since 2017
in formal and non-formal educational settings

Nationaler
Rahmenplan
zur non-formalen Bildung im
Kindes- und Jugendalter

National framework for non-formal education:
- Language education (Luxembourgish, French, home languages)
- Collaboration with parents
- Networking with educational and cultural organisations

"Especially the regular and pedagogical access to different (picture) books in several languages opens up essential educational opportunities for young children." (p.44)

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2. Practices, beliefs and changes thereof
Before the 2017 policy

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Monolingual language ideologies: dominant language privileged (Bergroth & Palviainen, 2016; Kratzmann et al., 2017)

Language separation (Seele, 2016), flexible bilingualism (Neumann, 2015; Seele, 2015)

Teachers and educators indicate positive attitudes toward multilingualism, but negative or ambiguous attitudes towards multilingual education (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018)

Collaborative practices with parents were rare (43% engaged in activities 1-2 year; 41% never, Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018)

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- Positive attitudes towards multilingualism (as expected in multilingual setting; Weber, 2014)
- Negative correlation between Luxembourgish und multilingualism (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018)
- Initially sceptical attitudes towards multilingual education and translanguaging

- Reasons
  - Language policies and curriculum (Catalano et al., 2018)
  - Maximising time for learning (Rossell & Baker, 1996)
  - Teacher and parental expectations
  - Fear of confusion (Angelis, 2011; Gkaintartzi, 2015; Palmer et al., 2014; Palviainen & Tarnanen, 2018)
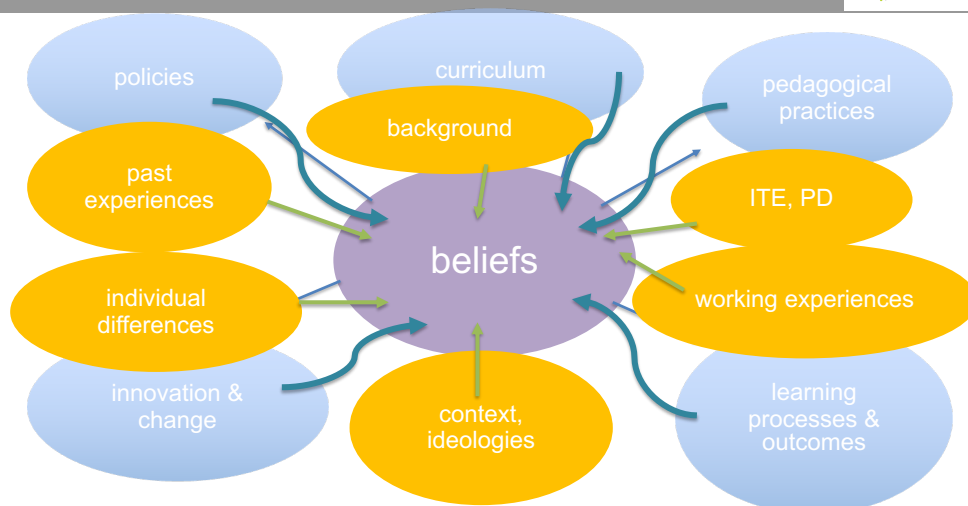
    ➢ Understanding of language learning and bilingualism

https://extension.unr.edu/publication.aspx?PubID=2762

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Why change attitudes and beliefs?

(Coplan et al., 2011; Levin & Wadmany, 2006; Li Xu, 2012; OECD, 2009 ; Ottley et al., 2015)

(Abreu, 2015; Busch, 2010; Borg, 2011; Bernat & Gvozdenko; 2005; Li & Walsh, 2011; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992).

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Professional development

- PD is the systematic effort to ensure that professionals are adequately qualified, and to provide them with opportunities to complement, consolidate, and develop their attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Egert, 2015).

- Meta-analyses: Egert (2015); Egert et al. (2018); Peeters et al. (2014); Peleman et al. (2018)

- PD can can be transformative to some extent (Egert et al., 2018; Peleman et al., 2018). Results of PD:
  - Improved pedagogical awareness, knowledge, understanding of learning and teaching
  - Some effect on beliefs (King, 2014; Ottley et al., 2015)
  - Reconceptualization of the role of the educators
  - More meaningful, playful and interactive language

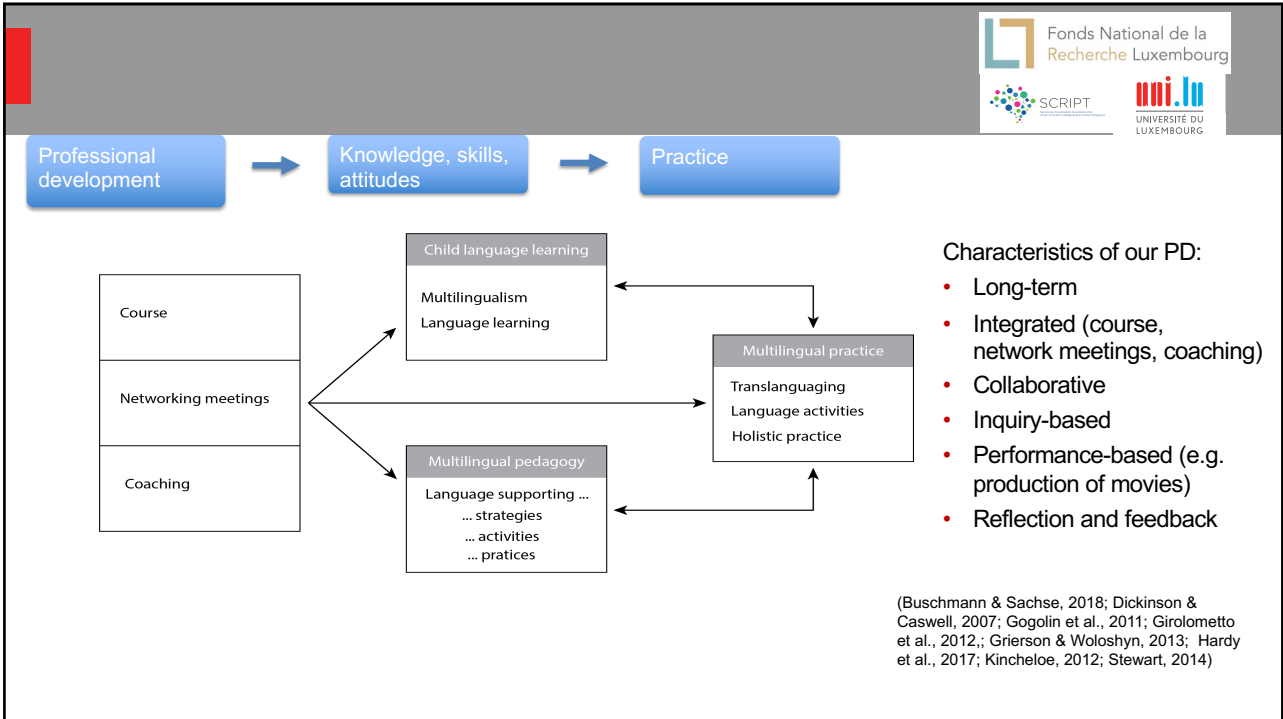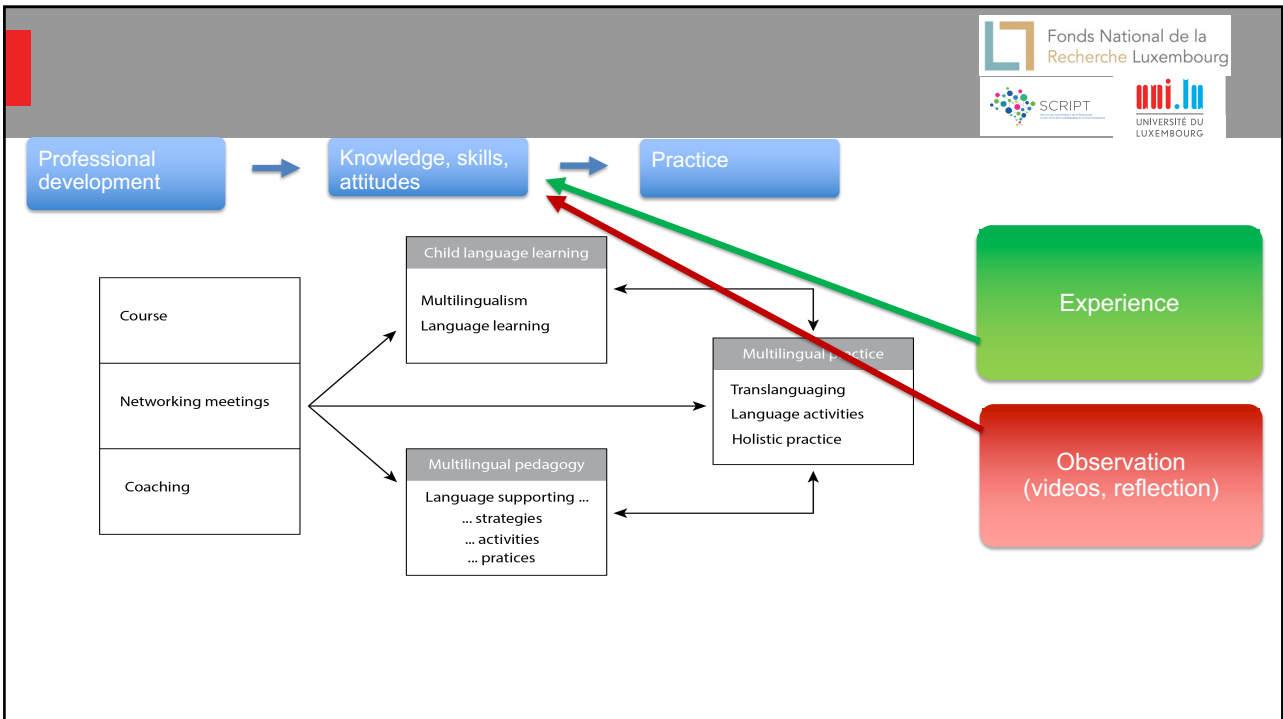 and literacy activities and better scaffolding

https://www.thomas.co/resources/type/hr-blog/4-principles-change-enablement

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3. Effect of professional development (MuLiPEC)

Professional development → Knowledge, skills, attitudes → Practice

- Topics:
  - Perspectives on multilingualism
  - Language development
  - Language teaching
  - Translanguaging pedagogy
  - Activities to develop multiple languages in a holistic, child-centred and playful way (e.g., storytelling, rhymes, songs)
  - Language-supporting strategies
  - Reflection on the video-recorded activities of the practitioners

PD (N:46)
May & September 2016

Longitudinal study (N:7)
September 2016 - September 2017

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4. Changes of attitudes and practices

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Moving away from
- Formal and isolated activities
- Activities in Luxembourgish only
- Not allowing home languages

Moving to
- Holistic projects, centred on children's interests and needs
- Activities in other languages
- Allowing and using home languages
- ➢ Translanguaging

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Away from formal and monolingual activities

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- A highly structured approach focussed on the teaching of Luxembourgish

[I though]They learn with the drills I use. But by simply talking to them, uh, children will acquire much more. (Ms Jane)

I did not sing songs because I always thought that I take away these few minutes from the children to learn Luxembourgish. I became aware that the children did not learn less Luxembourgish when I told them stories in German or French from time to time. (Ms Vivian, July and September 2016)

I am now aware that children learn much more through daily language use than I thought. (Ms Carla)

- Significant increase in singing songs, rhyming and storytelling in an additional language

- Receptualization of the role of the teacher; creation of a more child-centred learning environment (Hayes et al., 2013; Joplin et al., 2013

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Holistic environments in the formal sector

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Narrating stories on a similar topic in Luxembourgish, German and French

Offering many opportunities to use language in various situations

Creating monolingual and translanguaging spaces

Keeping to the target language and using the home language(s) as a scaffold

Engaging and developing languages through translanguaging

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Holistic environments in the non-formal sector

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- Model
- Imitate
- Discuss
- Artwork
- Play
- Recite
- Try

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Space for multilingualism: children's home languages

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- Children are allowed to play in their home languages
- Conscious use of the home languages to ensure comprehension and meaning-making, and contribute to the children's well-being

I have the advantage that I have more languages and I try to jump from one language to another so that the kids feel good. When the German child says, 'I would like to sing that song', then we sing that song. Or we had the little Portuguese child who said 'I would like to sing that song in Portuguese' and then we sang it in Portuguese. (…) I ensure that Luxembourgish always remains there, that is my main point [my role]. When I see that children don't follow, then I get back either in French or with a language I can express myself in. And then I add Luxembourgish once again (Ms Sandy, September 2016)

It helps children feel well, accepted, understood, secure (interview Ms Clara, September 2016)

- Understanding of the relationship between well-being, respect, trust, identity-building and learning (Cummins, 2009)
- Understanding that the use of the home language does not impede language development but furthers it (García, 2009; Langeloo et al., 2019)

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Translanguaging: an example
communicating, meaning-making, learning

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- Non-verbal communication strategies

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- Felice (3.5), emergent multilingual, 66% of children do not speak Luxembourgish as a home language
- Ms Clara, Luxembourg, experienced teacher
- Luxembourgish, Portuguese and English

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Translanguaging: an example
communicating, meaning-making, learning

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Actor	Luxembourgish Portuguese English
Ms C	What does he eat?
F	Grapes
Ms C	Grapes? Yes, these could be grapes.
F	Grapes, not red.
Ms C	No. These are cherries
F	Cherries (…) Snail.
Ms C	Yes, this is a snail. A grasshopper, it jumps, doesn't it?
F	Oh, another one.
Ms C	Another one. Snail.
F	Uh, snake.
Ms C	No, it is not a snake, it is a worm. It is a worm. (…) What is this?
F	Uh, red and black.
Ms C	It is red and has black dots but what is it called?
F	I do not know what it is.
Ms C	Uh, you do not know? That is a ladybird. A ladybird.

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Daily language use

　Ms V. to Spanish-speaking child: Walk, walk (Sp).

Artwork

　We use the most beautiful colour for the wolf, the most beautiful colour (F).

　We take the most beautiful colour, the most beautiful colour (P).

Storytelling in Luxembourgish and French

　These are comics with their superheroes (P) with all their superheroes.

　He starts eating (F), starts eating (…). He eats an apple (F).

Child: Wolf (F)
Ms V.: It's not a wolf, it's a fox. (F)
Child: Fox. (F)
Ms V.: Yes, a fox.
Child: Fox.

Il était trop féroce !

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Use of home languages and effect

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- Effect on relationship with and between children

  I noticed much more of the children and I could be more responsive at these moments. I came to know them better. I reacted differently. We got very close to the children. (…) Very different relationships developed. (Ms Carla)

  But they reacted differently as well because we let them communicate in their home language to us and their peers. (Ms Jane).

- Effect on motivation to speak and language learning: children and the teachers had opportunities to develop their language repertoire

He is now pleased and has opened up. And I think that he participated a lot in the activity with the snail where he, I don't know, it seems to me as if he, he was valued. Well, my language also exists. Because Oliver has been speaking ever since, Oliver asks, really, he asks a lot of things, sometimes in German and I answer in Luxembourgish. He goes to Isabelle and asks things in French. (Interview July 2017)

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Translanguaging

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- Dynamic and flexible language use (Garrity et al., 2015; Gort and Pontier, 2013; Gort and Sembiante, 2015)
- Throughout the day and year
- Multiple languages
- Switches, translations, repetitions (Lewis et al. 2013; Milsud & Vella, 2018; Palviainen et al. 2016)
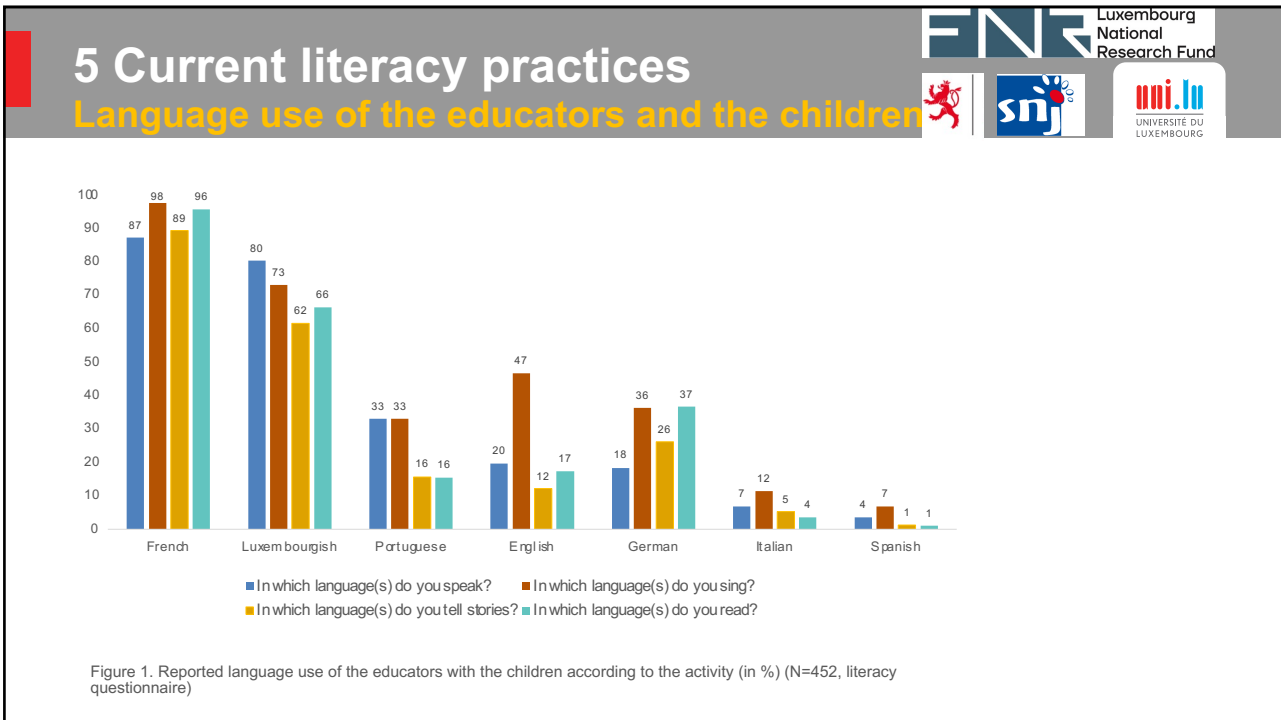
- A variety of functions:
  - Adapt to child
  - Facilitate communication
  - Improve sense-making
  - Value home language
  - Help the children express themselves
  - Ensure well-being

(García, 2011; Garrity et al., 2015; Gort & Pontier, 2013; Kirsch, 2021; Palviainen et al., 2016; Velasco & Fialais, 2018; Young & Mary, 2016)

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- Translanguaging should be strategic, monitored and responsible (García, 2009; Mård-Miettinen et. al., 2018)
- Translanguaging understood as a resource-based pedagogy rather than a pedagogy that helps fight social inequities
- Towards a translanguaging pedagogy (García et al., 2017)

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5 Current literacy practices
Language use of the educators and the children

Figure 1. Reported language use of the educators with the children according to the activity (in %) (N=452, literacy questionnaire)

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Storytelling in multiple languages: Beliefs

Reading books and telling stories in the <u>main</u> language of the centre

- influences the development of <u>that</u> language: 75% agreed or strongly agreed
- is beneficial for the development of <u>all</u> languages: 59% agreed or strongly agreed

Reading books and telling stories in <u>other</u> languages

- has a positive effect on language development: 70% agreed or strongly agreed

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https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/features/article/eyfs-best-practice-all-about-dialogic-reading

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Observed literacy activities in multiple languages in crèches

- Literacy activities do not happen daily
- The educators' understanding of literacy varies across the settings from formal to broad
- The ways in which they engage children varies
- The languages within the multilingual programme vary
- The extent to which educators organise literacy activities with parents to value home languages varies.

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Dialogic, inclusive, and participatory approach

Luxembourgish, Portuguese, French

		Translation
1	Ms Joana	{pointing to the picture of the chain of frogs lifted in the air by a hawk}
2	Gloria	A seal, a seal.
3	Ms Joana	Do you think so?
4	Gloria	Yes
5	Ms Joana	Does it look like a fork?
6	Gloria	No, a seal, yes. {imitating the movement of a seal}
7	Ms Joana	Like a seal? Yes, or perhaps like a snake.
8	Ms Joana	{turning to the book} And the hawk begins to get tired. {sounding exhausted} I cannot deal with this anymore. The frogs are too heavy for me. {turns the page, pointing} Look, here they are. And whoops, he lets all frogs go.
9	Ygor	{screaming} Uuuuh.
10	Ms Joana	{screaming} Uuuuh. All frogs scream. Oh no, what happens now? {turning to Etienne} Look, they all scream because they have fallen. Uuuuh {screaming}. And then {imitating frogs plunging in the water} Plip, plop.
11	Niklas	In the water.
12	Ms Joana	Where are they?
13	Gloria	{Enthusiastically} A big {drawing a circle with her arms}.
14	Etienne	Fish
15	Ms Joana	They are with the fish? You think so? We'll see. Look. {turning the page, reading}. And where are we, they ask each other.
16	Yalena	{Laughing}
17	Ms Joana	Where have we landed? Where do you think they are?
18	Niklas	In the water.
19	Ms Joana	Yes, in the water.
20	Gloria	In big {showing a circle}.
21	Ms Joana	In a big what?
22	Niklas	Big water.
23	Ygor	Big pond.

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5 Current literacy practices
Language use of the educators and the children

Literacy

Skill ← → Social practice

Bilingualism

Additive, separatio ← → Dynamic, translanguaging

Pedagogies

Behaviourist ← Constructivist → Social constructivist

Observed interactions

Monolingual labelling letters ← → Multilingual interactions around texts to make meaning and engage

Children's learning
Language development, narrative skills, use of books, manner of participation, manner of storytelling, interest in stories, knowledge about print

Kirsch & Hornberger (2024)

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Parental involvement

- More evidence of collaborative events with parents to value home languages

	2016 (Kirsch, 2018)	2020 (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021)
Daily conversations	44.0% several times a week (N:99)	89.6% several times a week (N:277)
Collaborative literacy activities	41.1% never (N:99) 43.0% 1-2x / year 7.5% once every few weeks	35.8% never 42.6% 1-2x / year 18.3% once every few weeks

- In the observed day-care centres, the educators and the parents used multiple languages in the literacy activities with the children.

- Challenges: engaging everybody, tokenistic activities, attitudes

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5. Concluding comments

- Relevance of policy for the implementation of the multilingual education programme in Luxembourg
  - From more monolingual to more multilingual - but large variations
  - Offer of formal and informal literacy activities in ECEC centres - but large variations
  - Flexible use of languages
  - A second language (Luxembourgish or French, depending on the centre) is not introduced in a systematic way
  - Currently, not all children have equal educational opportunities in ECEC
  - Programme may not contribute to raise equal opportunities (OCED, 2022)

- Multiple factors influence the language and literacy practices
  - Status of the languages (language hierarchies)
  - The institutions (e.g., dominant language, pedagogy)
  - The individual (e.g., beliefs, understanding of literacy, bilingualism, pedagogy, & experiences, collaboration with parents)

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5. Concluding comments

- Complexity of the implementation process
- Educators need time, patience and perseverance to develop <u>inclusive</u> multilingual education
- Next steps
  - Policy-makers: guidance vs. flexibility
  - Continued offer of professional development for individuals and teams (e.g., literacies, implementation)
  - Initial training/ education (e.g., pedagogy, multilingualism)
    - Pedagogies
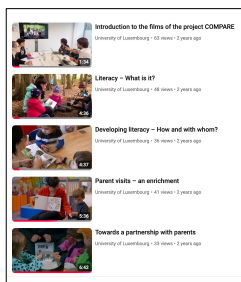   - Attitudes towards languages and language learning

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One does not have to "know/ speak" "all" of the children's home languages to implement multilingual pedagogies. It is about an attitude of openness and appreciation and an effort to help children communicate and learn with their entire repertoire.

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