

Luxembourgish¹

Peter Gilles

University of Luxembourg

1. Introduction: Historical background

In contrast to most of the varieties discussed in this volume, Luxembourgish (L.) did not arise through migration from other German regions, but rather through the creation of the nation state in the 19th century and therefore constitutes a particular case.

Furthermore, due to sociolinguistic divergence, present-day Luxembourgish cannot be regarded anymore as a variety of German, but rather as a Germanic *Ausbau* language on its own. Despite these provisos, Luxembourgish shares nevertheless several characteristics with the German varieties discussed in this book: comparatively low speaker numbers, multilingual embedding, reluctant standardization, predominately spoken, and yet still typologically close to German.

Located on the westernmost border of the continental western Germanic language continuum, Luxembourg borders Germany in the east, France in the south and Belgium in the west (Map 1). This specific contact situation, as well as a complex history of territorial changes involving Germanic and Romance speaking areas, led to the emergence of a multilingual situation, which dates back at least to mediaeval times. Intended as a buffer state between the European powers France and Germany (Prussia) after the Napoleonic wars, Luxembourg was founded as a Grand-Duchy in 1815 after the

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Congress of Vienna. It did not take long until the situation changed again when in the course of the Belgian revolution (1830) the historically Romance speaking area from the new Grand-Duchy, the so-called 'quartier wallon', was attributed to Belgium, forming until today the 'Province du Luxembourg'. The remaining, much smaller territory represents since 1839 the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg in its present-day borders. However, the king of the Netherlands was the sovereign of the Grand-Duchy until 1890, when Luxembourg finally gained full independence. This brief overview shows that the process of nation building was initiated and governed by external political factors and agents and did not originate from an independence movement of the population (cf. Péporté *et al.* 2010, Pauly 2014).



Fig. 1 Location of Luxembourg with neighboring countries.

During the 19th century the idea of a shared nation, culture and identity gradually arose (Newton 1996). During the two world wars, Luxembourg suffered tremendously from the occupation through the German Reich resulting in negative stances against everything German.

Today, Luxembourg is a socially and culturally highly diverse and economically powerful country. Of the 590.000 inhabitants (2017) almost 48% are foreign nationals (Statec 2017). The largest groups of migrants come from Portugal (around 97.000) and France (44.000). The high demand of workforce in the service sector (mainly financial and insurance businesses, shops, restaurants) has led to a high number of cross-border workers, who commute to Luxembourg daily (80.000 from France, 40.000 from Belgium, 40.000 from Germany).

2. Sociohistorical and sociolinguistic aspects

From mediaeval to modern times, the geographic region of today's nation state Luxembourg was (and continues to be) strongly characterized by multilingualism where Latin, and later Romance varieties coexisted alongside with German varieties (cf. Rapp 2006, Ravidá 2012). It can be safely assumed that the largely illiterate population used vernacular varieties in their everyday lives, i.e. Germanic Moselle Franconian and Romance Walloon or Lorraine dialects. As the Luxembourg territory was divided into a western 'quartier wallon' and an eastern 'quartier allemand', French and German served

as written languages for administrative purposes. This multilingual situation remained even after the 'quartier wallon' had been separated and attributed to Belgium in 1830. The first constitution of 1848 states in article 30 that the usage of German or French is optional (Mémorial 1848), which then also led to the introduction of these two languages in the school system. The spoken varieties, acquired as the first languages, however, were Moselle Franconian dialects.

This situation with Standard German and French as the High Varieties and various local vernaculars as Low Varieties can best be described as medial diglossia (cf. Auer's 2005 type A). Early reports on language use describe the local vernaculars as *patois*, *Luxemburger deutsche Mundart* 'Luxembourg German dialect', *onst Däitsch* 'our German' or *Lëtzebuurger Däitsch* 'Luxembourg German' (Hoffmann 1996), indicating that the vernacular was perceived as a (spoken) dialect of German, dependent of its *Dachsprache* German. Accordingly, the prestige of this dialect was rather low.

The situation begins to change slowly at the end of the 19th century and will eventually result in a largely changed language situation in the 1980s (cf. Horner/Weber 2008). The dialect (and partly also multilingualism) becomes more and more associated with the national identity. The negative attitudes and the low prestige towards the dialect have been transformed into positive attitudes and positive prestige. Especially after the Second World War, people increasingly expressed the idea that their mother tongue is not a German dialect anymore, but rather a separate language. This process is recognizable e.g. in the change of the language name to *Lëtzebuergesch* ['lətsəbuəjəʃ] or also *Eis Sprooch* 'our language'. In the 1980s authors begin to write more and more texts in Luxembourgish, helping to establish a very active literature scene, where Luxembourgish acquired the status of a literary language alongside with German and French. This

changing situation cumulated in the adoption of the language law of February 24, 1984 (Mémorial 1984): Luxembourgish was for the first time recognized as the national language ('langue nationale') and German, French and Luxembourgish were considered as the administrative languages. In addition, French was attributed the role of the only language for legislation. The language law thus underlined the particular role of Luxembourgish in the overall multilingual setting. Note, however, that no specific language planning measures, e.g. to foster Luxembourgish, were foreseen in the law. It was merely intended to stress the status-quo and to underline the high positive prestige of Luxembourgish. The language thus today is probably the most important factor to convey national identity and even a national symbol.

The societal multilingualism is maintained and reproduced through the school system and it is still a real paradox that Luxembourgish is hardly present in the school system. While used informally in primary school as a medium of instruction, it is officially not used in secondary schools except for one hour in the 7th grade. Instead, German and French are taught as the most important (foreign) languages.

Nevertheless, Luxembourgish can today be considered as the most important spoken language, which is gradually also used as a written language. Provided that the participants in a conversation speak the language, there are no restrictions regarding topics or degree of formality. Regardless of the setting, it would be inconceivable to switch to another language.

Apart from the private and informal oral domains, Luxembourgish today, is the only language spoken in parliamentary debates, it is increasingly used for official public announcements, which formerly were in French, it can be found in advertisement and is often a required language for certain jobs. Competencies in Luxembourgish are also

required to obtain the Luxembourg nationality, which also led to a rising number of second language learners (cf. Weber-Messerich 2011). However, French (and increasingly also English) is the most used language at the workplace and also as a lingua franca in shops or restaurants. The role of Standard German, besides its use as language of alphabetization, is somewhat more difficult to assess: It largely is used as a passive language of media consumption (newspapers, German TV chains, books) and partly as language of local administration.

On the structural level an ongoing process of dialect levelling is reducing the regional variation within Luxembourgish itself. The various regional dialects of the South, the East, the West and the North show a gradual loss of former dialect features in favor of the central variety of Luxembourg. The central Luxembourgish variety, sometimes called *Koiné* or *Gemeinluxemburgisch* ('common Luxembourgish'), serves as emerging standard variety, which is acknowledged by the population (Gilles 1999, 2000, 2006a).

While newspapers are generally in German or French, the language on radio or TV is Luxembourgish (*RTL Radio Lëtzebuerg*, *eldorado*, *RTL Télé Lëtzebuerg* and *Radio 100komma7*).

The appearance of digital media (SMS, chat, email, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp etc.) had and still has a tremendous effect on the development of Luxembourgish (Belling 2015). Nearly all these texts are composed in Luxembourgish, even though the spelling system is not taught in schools at all (Gilles 2015a).

In church Luxembourgish is used for the sermons, whereas chants and the service of the word maybe in the three languages. A translation of the gospel has been provided only recently (Ecclesia catholica 2009, Biwer-Pettinger 2015).

According to the most recent census of 2011, 55.8% (265.731) of the resident population uses Luxembourgish as their first language. This figure roughly corresponds to

the population having the Luxembourg nationality and in this group intergenerational transmission of Luxembourgish as the first language is clearly guaranteed. The census furthermore asked for the main languages used at work, in school or in public. Here, 70.5% (323.557) of the respondents stated that Luxembourgish is among their main languages. These figures thus indicate that there is also a substantial group of second language speakers. Taken together, these figures may also serve to underline the vitality of the Luxembourgish language (cf. Fehlen 2009, 2013a, 2013b, Fehlen/Heinz 2016).

Standardization is mainly observed for orthography and the lexicon, where a medium level of standardization has been reached (Gilles/Moulin 2003). Luxembourgish today has a fully developed official orthography (cf. Newton 2000, 2002, Moulin 2006, Gilles 2015a). The recent orthography has been introduced in 1975 and was slightly reformed in 1999 (Mémorial 1975, Mémorial 1999). This system is also used for all examples in this article.

3. Phonetics and phonology

For a general overview of the phonetics of Luxembourgish see Gilles/Trouvain (2013).

The phonetic vowel inventory has the following structure (tab. 1):

Tab. 1 Vowel inventory of Luxembourgish.

	Monophthongs			Diphthongs	
	front	central	back		
Close	i: i		u: u	iə	uə
Close-mid	e: e		o:		
Open-mid	ɛ:	ə	ɔ	ɜɪ	əʊ
Near open	æ	ɐ		æɪ	æʊ
Open	a:		ɑ	ɑɪ	ɑʊ

The closed monophthongs exhibit a duration opposition, although the short vowels tend to be realized as more open and centralized [ɪ, ʊ]. Apart from a few recent loans (*ähnlech* ['ɛnlɔç] 'similar', *Dän* [dɛn] 'dane'), long [ɛ:] only occurs before [ʀ] and can be considered as a conditioned allophone of /e:/. Typologically interesting is the fact that Schwa can also occur in stressed syllables (*Dëscher* ['dɔʃɐ] 'table-PL', *Ënnen* ['ənən] 'onion_PL'). Short, near open [æ] is currently taking part in vowel lowering and will eventually merge with [a:]. Contrary, e.g. to Standard German, the open vowels are clearly distinguished by quantity and duration, with long [a:] conspicuously fronted and short [ɑ] back and sometimes even slightly closed towards [ɔ]. Luxembourgish has eight diphthongs, constituting a comparatively rich system. While the pair [iə] / [uə] shows a centralizing articulation, the pair [ɜɪ] / [əʊ] shows the mirroring, i.e. decentralizing articulation. The two pairs [ɑɪ] / [æɪ], [ɑʊ] / [æʊ], with their difference both in quality and duration, historically arose through a phoneme split of MHG long *i/iu* (= [y:]) and *û* due to the

influence of the Central Franconian tonal contrast; compare G. *Seide* ['zaidə] 'silk', *Seite* ['zaitə] 'side', *bauen* ['baʊən] 'to build', *Bauch* [baʊχ] 'stomach' to L. *Seid* [zait], *Säit* [zæit], *bauen* ['baʊən], *Bauch* [bæ:ʊχ] (Gilles 2002).

The long-lasting and ongoing language contact with French (F.) and German (G.) have enriched the sound inventory with several loan consonants and loan vowels. Most of these sounds are confined to clearly identified borrowed words. Due to the missing rounded front vowels, borrowed words from German normally underwent an automatic de-rounding process, i.e. the vowels in G. *über* ['y:bə] 'above', *Höhe* ['hø:ə] 'height' > L. *iwwer* ['iwe], *Héicht* [hɛɪçt]. However, several borrowed words from German and French can maintain their rounded front vowels, i.e. G. *Bühne* ['bü:nə] 'stage', *Föhn* [fø:n] 'hair dryer' > L. *Bühn* [by:n], *Föhn* [fø:n], F. *flûte* [flyt], *acteur* [ak'tœ:ʀ] > L. *Flütt* [flyt], *Acteur* ['aktœ:ʀ]. In general, the different degrees of the phonological adaption of borrowings lead to a mixed system where unadapted forms co-exist alongside with adapted forms.

A similar case is observable for the integration of the French nasal vowels [ã] and [õ]. Words borrowed a long time ago show phonetic adaption towards short vowel followed by a velar nasal, i.e. F. *franc* [frã] 'Franc', *béton* [be'tõ] 'concrete', *Jean* <name> [ʒã] > L. *Frang* [frɑŋ], *Bëtong* ['bətɔŋ], *Jang* [ʒɑŋ]. More recent borrowings, on the other hand, can keep a nasalised vowel, i.e. F. *chance* [ʃã:s] 'chance', *saison* [se'zõ] 'season' > L. *Chance* [ʃã:s], *Saison* ['se:zã:]. Note that in this case the two nasal vowels [ã] and [õ] of French are not distinguished anymore, they rather merge into a single back nasal vowel [ã:]. The French nasal vowel [ɛ̃] is integrated into Luxembourgish without further modification: *Interieur* ['ɛ̃(n)tɛʀjœ:ʀ] 'interior'.

The phonetic consonant inventory is shown in tab. 2.

Tab. 2 Consonant inventory of Luxembourgish.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Alveolo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d				k g		
Nasal	m		n				ŋ		
Vibrant								ʀ	
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ	ç z			χ ʁ	h
Approximant						j	w		
Lateral			l						

Although voicing plays a role in distinguishing the obstruents, the plosives are organized in a fortis/lenis distinction, with [p, t, k] as (often aspirated) fortis and [b, d, g] as lenis realizations. Like the neighboring German dialects (and in French, too) the vibrant is a uvular [ʀ]. The velar approximant [w] occurs only after [ts] (*zwee* [tswe:] 'two', [ʃ] (*schwammen* [ˈʃwamən] 'to swim') and [k] (*queesch* [kwe:ʃ] 'angry') and can thus be analyzed as an allophone of /v/. Note however that words like *Qualitéit* [kali'tɛit] 'quality', *Quartier* [ˈkɑrtje:] 'quarters' often follow the French pronunciation whereas *Quartal* [kwɑː'ta:l] 'quarter' or *Quadrat* [kwɑː'drɑ:t] 'square' are identifiable as loans from German. The approximant [j] varies occasionally with the post-alveolar [ʒ] (*jäizen* [ˈjæitsən] ~ [ˈʒæitsən] 'to cry'), where the latter variant can be regarded as the older one (Newton 1993). Note that the glottal stop [ʔ] does not exist in Luxembourgish on the word level, however, it may – and does – occur on the phrase level as a marker of prosodic structuration.

A major difference to Standard German constitute the alveolo-palatal fricatives [ç, ʒ], which derive from the former voiceless palatal fricative [ç] and spirantized [g] through the process of 'coronalization' (Gilles 1999) (*sécher* [ˈzɛçɐ] 'secure', *Spigel* [ˈʃpizəl] 'mirror'). In this process, the place of articulation underwent fronting from palatal to alveolo-palatal. In present-day speech of the older and the middle generation, the contrast

between the post-alveolar and alveolo-palatal fricatives is attested by several minimal pairs and is also reflected in the official spelling ([ç] = <ch>, [ʃ] = <sch>).

post-alveolar [ʃ]		alveolo-palatal [ç]	
<i>mëscht</i> [məʃt]	'(s/he) mixes'	<i>mécht</i> [mæçt]	'(s/he) makes'
<i>Fräsch</i> [fræʃ]	'frog'	<i>frech</i> [fræç]	'naughty'
<i>Dësch</i> [dəʃ]	'table'	<i>dech</i> [deç]	'dech'
<i>vüsch</i> [fi:ʃt]	'ahead'	<i>fücht</i> [fi:çt]	'wet'
<i>Fleesch</i> [fle:ʃ]	'meat'	<i>Fleeg</i> [fle:ç]	'care'

However, due to the closeness of these fricatives to the post-alveolar fricatives [ʃ] and [ʒ], an ongoing merger will eventually lead to a simplification of these fricatives. Especially for younger speakers the merge seems to be largely completed and the above words are all produced with the same fricative.

Syllable and word structure, prosody

Syllable structure is in large parts identical with German, especially regarding syllable onset clusters. Maximally, three consonants are allowed in onset (*Strof* [ʃtro:f] 'punishment', *sprangen* [ˈʃprɑŋən] 'to jump') or coda (*lénks* [leŋks] 'left', *däerft* [dɛrɛft] '(you are allowed to)'), where the nucleus nearest consonant always has to be a sonorant. Most syllables though have one or two consonants in these positions. Compared with German, some differences apply to the syllable coda, where some clusters are systematically avoided in Luxembourgish. This concerns primarily the coda clusters [lf], [ɾm] and [ɾn], which are rarely attested in the core lexicon. Instead, these clusters are split up by inserting a schwa vowel (G. *gern* 'gladly', *arm* 'poor' > L. *gär*, *arem*) or the final nasal is deleted (G. *Korn* 'grain', *Horn* 'horn', *Stern* 'star', *gestern* 'yesterday' > L. *Kar*, *Har*, *Stär*, *gëschter*). Schwa in general is realized in all sorts of unstressed syllables and reduction

occurs rarely (*füttern* [ˈfɪdɐʀən] 'to feed', *sammeln* [zɑmələn] 'to collect'; cf. G. *füttern*, *sammeln*).

Noteworthy phonological processes occur when words are borrowed from French or German. As the core lexicon does not foresee a voiceless alveolar fricative [s] word-initially, certain adaption processes can be noticed: Older borrowings have developed the affricate [ts] in this position (F. *soldat* [sol'da] 'soldier', *solide* [so'lid] 'solid', *Serre* [sɛ:r] 'greenhouse' > L. *Šaldot* [tsal'do:t], *šolitt* [tso'lit], *Šär* [tsɛ:r]). This process, however, has lost its productivity today and recent borrowings display variation between a voiced fricative [z] or the retained voiceless fricative [s], thereby illustrating different stages of loan word integration. Thus, the integration of French *sensible* 'sensitive' actually shows variation between [zæn'zi:bəl] and [sæn'zi:bəl](cf. Conrad (2017).

The accessibility of both French and German allows speaker also to freely vary between two variants, also for stylistic reasons. It is, for example, quite possible that a speaker is switching freely between the French [ˈtæknik] and the 'Germanic' [ˈtæknik] for *Technik* within the same sentence. Finally, multiple language contact can lead to hybrid constructions: The brand name *H&M* is pronounced [haˈfun'dɛm], where [haˈ] originates from French and [und] from German.

All obstruents in the syllable coda are realized voiceless (*Auslautverhärtung*) and this also affects borrowings from French, where final devoicing does not exist (F. *plage* [pla:ʒ] 'beach', *solide* [so'lid] 'solid' > L. [pla:ʃ], [tso'lit]). However, if the following word in the same phonological phrase begins with a vowel, word final devoicing is blocked and the coda consonant(s) are subject to voicing in a liaison-type of resyllabification (*mir ass et och egal* [mi:rɛ] [ɑs] [ət] [oχ] [e:'ga:l] > [mi:rɛɑsətɔχe:'ga:l] 'it doesn't matter for me as well').

Note that [ʀ], which is vocalized usually in the coda, resurfaces again as a vibrant when resyllabified (Gilles 2014).

A further phonological rule reduces all clusters consisting of a sonorant and a plosive into the single sonorant (consonant mutation), when the cluster is located intervocalically.

		Singular		Plural	
-nt	> -n-	<i>Band</i>	[bɑnt]	<i>Bänner</i>	['bæne]
					'ribbon(s)'
-lt	> -l-	<i>Bild</i>	[bilt]	<i>Biller</i>	['bile]
					'image(s)'

All word-final alveolar nasals *-n* are affected by an external sandhi called '*n*-rule' (*n-Regel*, sometimes also *mobile -n* or *Eifeler Regel*; Gilles 2006b). According to this rule, word-final *-n* is realized or deleted dependent on the nature of the initial sound of the following word. The nasal is retained only when the following word begins with a vowel or the consonants *d*, *t*, *ts*, *n* or *h*. In all other cases the final nasal is deleted. In spoken Luxembourgish, *n*-rule is obeyed nearly categorically. For sake of illustration, the deleted *-n* is symbolized by ' _ ' in the following examples.

Retention of <i>-n</i>		Deletion of <i>-n</i>	
<i>den Auto</i>	'the car'	<i>de_ Mechanicien</i>	'the mechanic'
<i>mäin Duuscht</i>	'my thirst'	<i>däi_ Béier</i>	'your beer'
<i>kalen Téi</i>	'cold tea'	<i>kale_ Wäin</i>	'cold wine'
<i>gleewen ech</i>	'I believe'	<i>gleewe_ si</i>	'they believe'
<i>unzefänken</i>	'to start' (extended infinitive)	<i>u_ fänken</i>	'to start'

This rule affects all final *en*-syllables forming part of the morphosyntax of all word classes, but also nasal following a full vowel (e.g. in articles (*deen*, *deem*), pronouns (*hien*, *mäin*, *däin*, *säin*), adjectives (*schéin* 'nice', *fein* 'fine'), nouns (*Steen* 'stone', *Schwäin* 'pig', *Reen* 'rain') etc.).

Besides these general contexts, several exceptional cases for the application of *n*-rule exist, which cannot be presented here. Due to unawareness, the *n*-rule is a source for many spelling mistakes in the informal written language.

The definite article *déi* (NOM/ACC.F. SG/F. PL), *dat* (N.PL) is usually cliticized to *d'* and attached to the following noun. Phonetically, the definite article is characterized by lengthening to [d̥:] (Gilles/Trouvain 2015). This kind of geminate consonant is attested systematically only for the definite article and thus serves a morphosyntactical function.

Word stress is usually on the penultimate syllable (Gilles 2009). With most words consisting of two syllables, the trochaic stress pattern is widespread (*Buedem* 'soil', *Kanner* 'children'). Contrary to most other languages, schwa syllables can also attract stress, if they are in penultimate position and no other stressable syllable is available (*fëschen* ['fəʃən] 'to fish', *kënnen* 'can'). In case the final syllable is heavy, it attracts stress (*Spi'dol* 'hospital', *Ta'pët* 'wallpaper', *Ele'ment* 'element', *aktu'ëll* 'current'). However, and in contrast to Standard German, open final syllables never carry stress, which can be observed nicely for the integration of French borrowings. These words are subject to stress shift to make them fit to the Luxembourgish stress patterns, which means that the final stress is moved to the penultimate or ante-penultimate syllable.

Stress pattern integration for French borrowings

	penultimate stress	
French	Luxembourgish	
<i>cli'ent</i>	<i>'Client</i>	'client'
<i>croi'ssant</i>	<i>'Croissant</i>	'croissant'
<i>décolle té</i>	<i>De'colleté</i>	'cleavage'
<i>té lé</i>	<i>'Tëlee</i>	'TV'

ante-penultimate stress

French	Luxembourgish	
<i>atel'ier</i>	' <i>Atelier</i>	'studio'
<i>para'pluie</i>	' <i>Präbbeli</i>	'umbrella'
<i>défi lé</i>	' <i>Defilé</i>	'parade'

The integration of French *télé* [te:'le:] to Luxembourgish *Tëlee* ['təle:] illustrates clearly how stress on the final syllable is avoided even when the only alternative is an (inherently weak) schwa syllable. The same process of integration happens to the numerous French names in Luxembourgish (*Laurent* ['lorɑ̃:], *Françoise* ['frɑ̃:swɑ:s], *Claudine* ['klo:di:n]).

Compounds are sometimes stressed on the second constituent (*Haus'dir* 'front door', *Mo'gripp* 'stomach flu', *arm'séileg* 'miserable') and it seems that this pattern can be regarded as the original one; due to language contact with German stress is shifting today towards the first constituent of the compound.

Relatively little is known yet for intonation in Luxembourgish. While certain rising and falling contours strongly resemble other related Germanic varieties, at least one rather peculiar and also frequent intonation contour sticks out as characteristic. This contour consists of a rise to the nucleus syllable of a phrase, then instead of forming a plateau on the high level or beginning with a final fall, the intonation drops to mid-high level and forms a constant plateau until the end of the phrase (Gilles 2015b). This intonation contour clearly is specific to Luxembourgish, it does neither occur in German nor French.

4. Morphosyntax and syntax

The morphosyntactical system is characterized by a large overlap with traditional Moselle Franconian dialects, but differs greatly from Standard German. For certain features, Luxembourgish has clearly developed new grammatical structures, diverging more and more both from Standard German and the neighboring dialects in Germany. For further information cf. Döhmer (2017: ch. 4), Newton (1990), Russ (1996), Schanen/Zimmer (2012). Bruch (1955) can be considered as outdated, but still presents useful historical information.

4.1. Inflection of the noun

Nouns are categorized according to the three well-known genders masculine, feminine and neuter. The former two genders are still rather productive, while neuter nouns are somewhat rarer. Masculine seems to be the default gender, as most new words entering the language are masculine (*Handy* M < German *Handy* N 'mobile phone'). Loans from French often keep their gender, which can deviate from the gender of the corresponding word in German.

	French	Luxembourgish	German
<i>Atelier</i>	M	M	N
<i>Bord</i>	M	M	N
<i>Büro</i>	M	M	N
<i>Café</i>	M	M	N
<i>Courage</i>	M	M	F
<i>Baggage</i>	M	M	F
<i>Examen</i>	M	M	N
<i>Telefon</i>	M	M	N

Some nouns may show gender variation, indicating that the borrowing process is not terminated yet (*en/eng Agenda* M/F 'calendar', *e/eng Garage* M/F, *e/eng Grupp* M/N 'group', *en/eng Accident* M/F, *en/eng E-Mail* M/F 'email').

Luxembourgish nouns are not carrying case marker anymore; all case marking is instead realized through articles and adjectives. On the other hand, an extended system for plural marking has developed (Nübling 2006, Dammel/Kürschner 2008). The most common plural suffix is *-en* which is used with most masculine and feminine nouns (*Af* > *Afen* 'ape(s)', *Kär* > *Kären* 'grain(s)', *Dier* > *Dieren*, 'door(s)', *Tut* > *Tuten* 'bag(s)'). This suffix is also applied for most borrowings (*Handy* > *Handyen* 'mobile phone(s)', *iPhone* > *iPhonen*, *Point de vue* > *Point-de-vuen* 'perspective(s)'). The suffix *-er* is attached to masculine and neuter nouns only (*Däsch* > *Däscher* 'table(s)', *Mond* > *Männer* 'mouth(s)', *Boot* > *Booter* 'boat(s)', *Netz* > *Netzer* 'net(s)'). Moreover, this suffix is also selected when the singular form is stressed on the final syllable (*Ge'brauch* > *Ge'bräucher* 'custom(s)', *Pro'dukt* > *Pro'dukter* 'product(s)', *Pro'zent* > *Pro'zenter* 'per cent(s)'). Note that the suffix *-er* – contrary to *-en* – is sometimes triggering vowel mutation (Umlaut) and/or consonant mutation when possible (*Rad* [ʀa:t] > *Rieder* ['riedɐ] 'wheel(s)', *Land* [lant] > *Länner* ['læne] 'country/countries'). Finally, a large group of plurals is formed by using a zero suffix, which arose through the apocope of a former word-final *-e* (*Schong* 'shoe(s)', *Päerd* 'horse(s)', *Strämp* 'sock(s)'). Here as well, Umlaut can apply. In general, Umlaut in singular-plural constellations constitutes a complex system involving one-to-many relations and vowel shortenings, some of which are shown in the examples below.

Umlaut relations in plural formation

Singular		Plural		
<i>Bam</i> [bam]	a:	<i>Beem</i> [bem]	e:	'tree(s)'

<i>Schaf</i>	[ʃa:f]	a:	<i>Schief</i>	[ʃiəf]	iə	'closet(s)'
<i>Baart</i>	[ba:rt]	a:	<i>Bäert</i>	[bɛ:rt]	ɛ:	'beard(s)'
<i>Saz</i>	[zɑ:ts]	a:	<i>Sätz</i>	[zæ:ts]	æ	'sentence(s)'
<i>Rass</i>	[rɑ:s]	ɑ	<i>Röss</i>	[rəs]	ə	'crack(s)'
<i>Stach</i>	[ʃtaχ]	ɑ	<i>Stéch</i>	[ʃteɕ]	e	'stitch(s)'
<i>Land</i>	[lant]	ɑ	<i>Länner</i>	[lænɐ]	æ	'countries'
<i>Nol</i>	[nol]	o:	<i>Neel</i>	[ne:l]	e:	'nail(s)'
<i>Drot</i>	[drot]	o:	<i>Dréit</i>	[drɛ:it]	ɜɪ	'wire(s)'

Recently, the hitherto inexistent plural suffix *-s* is observed exclusively for some loans from English, where it competes with *-en* (*Fan* [fɛ:n] > *Fans/Fannen* [fɛ:ns/fɛ:nən] 'fan(s)', *Band* [bænt] > *Bands/Banten* [bænts/bæntən] 'band(s)', *App* [æp] > *Apps/Appen* [æps/æpən] 'app(s)').

Depending on the syntactical construction, the combination of first names and surnames can show an own inflectional pattern. Today, the most common way to build name compounds follows the pattern 'first name' 'surname', where both components remain uninflected: *Claudine Flammang*, *Pierre Majerus*. The traditional system, however, has a reversed system, where the surname is put first and inflected for genitive (Flores Flores 2014, Krier 2014). The choice of the genitive marker {-s, -en, -ens} itself is governed by phonological properties of the family name.

Genitive in family names

<i>Flammang</i>	-s	<i>Flammangs Claudine</i>
<i>Gaasch</i>	-en	<i>Gaaschen Denis</i>
<i>Klees</i>	-ens	<i>Kleesens Maryse</i>

When the family name ends with *-er* the affixation of the genitive-*s* triggers an assimilation rule, which changes the whole syllable to *-esch*: *Jean Becker* [ʒɑ: 'bæ:kɐ] > *Beschesch Jean* ['bæ:kəʃ ʒɑ:]. Although this system is still in use, one can observe its gradual loss and

replacement of the reverse pattern, probably due to influence of French and German but also due to the general loss of inflection of nouns.

4.2 Adjective inflection

Along with articles and pronouns, adjectives are employed to mark case and number in the noun phrase. Regarding syntactical functions, Luxembourgish today distinguishes nominative, accusative and dative while the genitive has vanished except for a few lexicalized expressions (*uganks der Woch* 'beginning of the.GEN week', *Enn des Mounts* 'end of the.GEN month') or phrasal verbs (*ech sinn der Meenung, dass ...* 'I have the.GEN opinion, that ...'). A special status has the partitive (see below).

The former distinction between strong and weak adjective inflection, which is quite prominent in Standard German, does not exist anymore. Only the dative forms for masculine and neuter still has the *-em*-suffix, indicating the former strong inflection (tab. 3).

Tab. 3 Inflection of the adjective.

	Singular						Plural					
	Masculine			Feminine			Neuter			M/F/N		
Nom.	den/en	dënn-en	Téi	déi/eng	dënn	Zopp	dat/en	dënn-t	Äis	déi	dënn	Zoppen
Acc.	den/en	dënn-en	Téi	déi/eng	dënn	Zopp	dat/en	dënn-t	Äis	déi	dënn	Zoppen
Dat.	dem/engem	dënn-en	Téi	der/enger	dënn-er	Zopp	dem/engem	dënn-en	Äis	den	dënn-en	Zoppen
	'the/a'	'thin'	'tea'	'the/a'	'thin'	'soup'	'the/a'	'thin'	'ice'	'the'	'thin'	'soups'

Striking is the syncretism of all nominative and accusative forms. In fact, all former nominatives have been lost (presumably in Early Modern German times) and the accusative took over the nominative as well. On the formal side, Luxembourgish thus presents a rather reduced case system. As for the syntactical functions, however,

nominative and accusative still are distinct and mostly distinguished through word order. This formal syncretism of nominative and accusative applies to all inflecting nominal word classes, i.e. adjectives, articles and pronouns (except some personal pronouns).

The synthetic formation of the comparative by attaching the suffix *-er* has survived only for a few high-frequency (and irregular) adjectives (*gutt - besser* 'good - better', *wéineg - manner* 'little - less', *gär - léiwer* 'gladly'). The comparative is today predominately constructed with the particle *méi* 'more', e.g., *méi schéin* 'nicer', *méi al* 'older'. It is said that this formation is due to French influence, where the corresponding forms also contain a particle *plus* 'more' (e.g., *plus beau* 'nicer', *plus vieux* 'older'). However, no proof for this claim has been provided until today. The superlative is formed with the suffix *-st*, e.g., *schéinst* 'most nice', *eelst* 'oldest', *gréisst* 'biggest', *neist* 'newest'. When possible, the stem vowel shows mutation (Umlaut). For the uninflected superlative, the particle *am* and the suffix *-en* is used (*am schéinsten*).

4.3 Articles

Luxembourgish distinguishes definite and indefinite articles. Both sets of articles occur as full forms and reduced forms (Krier 2002, Döhmer 2017). The above-mentioned syncretism of nominative and accusative is observable here as well.

The system of the definite articles is presented in tab. 4. The full forms contain long full vowels throughout, whereas the reduced forms contain schwa or are realized as a consonantal clitic *d'* [d̥].

Tab. 4 Inflection of the definite article.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
NOM/ACC	<i>deen / den</i>	<i>déi / d' [d̥:]</i>	<i>dat / d' [d̥:]</i>	<i>déi / d' [d̥:]</i>
DAT	<i>deem / dem</i>	<i>där / der</i>	<i>deem / dem</i>	<i>deenen / den</i>

As a general tendency, the reduced/clitic forms are applied when no adjective is used in the noun phrase. As soon an adjective enters the noun phrase the full form of the article is employed.

*d'Haus/*dat Haus* 'the house' vs. *dat/*d' neit Haus* 'the new house'
*d'Hand/*déli Hand* 'the hand' vs. *déli/*d' kleng Hand* 'the small hand'
*d'Inselen/*déli Inselen* 'the island' vs. *déli/*d' interessant Inselen* 'the interesting islands'

Definite articles are obligatory also with first names and also product names: *den Denis*, *d'Sara*; *de Word*, *den Excel*.

Demonstrative articles are presented in tab. 5.

Tab. 5 Inflection of the demonstrative article.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter	Plural
NOM/ACC	<i>däsen</i>	<i>dës</i>	<i>dëst</i>	<i>dës</i>
DAT	<i>dësem</i>	<i>dëser</i>	<i>dësem</i>	<i>dësen</i>

The indefinite articles derive from the numeral *een(t)* 'one' (tab. 6). Due to sound change, the phonetically distant *eng-* [æŋ] forms developed.

Tab. 6 Inflection of the indefinite article.

	Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
NOM/ACC	<i>een / en</i>	<i>eng</i>	<i>een / en</i>
DAT	<i>engem</i>	<i>enger</i>	<i>engem</i>

Indefinite articles are not possible in the plural; however, a construction has arisen where forms of *eng* are used with cardinal number and plural nouns to indicate an approximation (e.g., *eng 20 Leit* 'approximately 20 people', *mat engen 100 Booter* 'approximately 100 boats').

Forms of *een* are furthermore also used as the indefinite pronoun to refer to one or more unspecified persons (cf. the German *man*). Being a nominative, *een* then functions as the subject of the sentence. Other than *man*, this *een* is not allowed in the front end of a sentence, which then triggers inversion making *een* move to the middle field of the sentence.

<i>Kann een hei parken?</i>	'Can one park here?'
<i>Et kann een hei net parken. / *Ee kann hei net parken.</i>	'One cannot park here.'
<i>Ech weess, dass een hei parke kann.</i>	'I know that one cannot park here.'

4.4 Personal Pronouns

The system of the personal pronouns, too, distinguishes between full and reduced forms (tab. 7). Furthermore, the formal distinction between nominative and accusative is still available for the first and second person. The *h*-initial pronouns *hien*, *hatt*, *him*, *hir*, *hinnen* hint at a historical connection with the languages of the low countries (cf. Bruch 1955).

Tab. 7 Inflection of personal pronouns.

Number	Person	Gender	Nominative	Accusative	Dative
Singular	1.	—	<i>ech</i>	<i>mech</i>	<i>mir / mer</i>
	2.	—	<i>du / de</i>	<i>dech</i>	<i>dir / der</i>
	3.	masc.	<i>hien / en</i>		<i>him / em</i>
		neutr.	<i>hatt / et / 't</i>		<i>him / em</i>

		fem.	<i>si / se</i>	<i>hir / er</i>
Plural	1.	–	<i>mir / mer</i>	<i>eis~ons</i>
	2.	–	<i>dir / der</i>	<i>iech</i>
	3.	–	<i>si / se</i>	<i>hinnen / en</i>

In terms of politeness, Luxembourgish has conserved the *tu-vos* distinction, where 2SG *du/de* is used to address persons informally and 2PL *Dir/Der*, *Iech* is used to express politeness and formality.

Remarkable is the 3Sg.N: The pronoun *hatt* 'it' (< West Germanic **hit*, cf. English *it*), although grammatically neuter, is used exclusively to refer to female persons in an informal way name, in contrast to the more formal feminine *si* 'she' (cf. Nübling 2015). This is because the grammatical gender for women is neuter throughout in Luxembourgish. When addressed with the first name, all related grammatical forms (articles, personal pronouns, possessive pronouns) must be neuter. In the example below, all forms referring to the first name *Martine* are neuter, i.e. the article *d'* (= cliticised *dat*), the personal pronoun *hatt* and the possessive pronoun *seng*. By contrast, when a woman is introduced by a title, e.g., *Madame* 'Mrs.', followed by the surname, then the whole construction and all referring pronouns are feminine, i.e. *d'* (=cliticised *déi*), personal pronoun *si*, possessive pronoun *hir*). However, a title followed by a female first name, *Prinzessin Kate* 'Princess Kate', creates a grammatical conflict between feminine and neuter gender in the noun phrase. This conflict manifests itself in the referring pronouns which can vary between feminine (*si*, *hir*) and neuter (*hatt*, *seng*).

D'[=dat]*Martine*, *hatt*_{Neut} *huet gëschter seng*_{Neut} *19 Joer kritt*.

'Martine, she turned 19 yesterday.'

D'[=déi]*Madame*_{Fem} *Weydert*_{Fem}, *si*_{Fem} *huet gëschter hir*_{Fem} *59 Joer kritt*.

'Mrs. Weydert, she turned 59 yesterday.'

D'[=déi]Prinzessin_{Fem} Kate_{Neut} hatt_{Neut}/si_{Fem} krut gëschter seng_{Neut}/hir_{Fem} 31 Joer.
 'Princess Kate, she turned 31 yesterday'

The use of neuter for female persons is governed by several grammatical and socio-pragmatic factors, among them age of speaker, age difference between speaker and referred woman or social distance, which are not fully understood yet (cf. Döhmer *in print*).

4.5 Possession and Partitive

Various grammatical means are available for the expression of possession, where the possessive articles and possessive pronouns *mäin* 'my', *däin* 'your' (SG), *säin* 'his/her', *hir* 'her', *eis* 'our' and *är* 'your' (PL) play an imminent role. Besides the forms with diphthong or long vowel, several forms contain short vowel and a following velar nasal (*meng*, *deng*, *seng*), thus adding suppletion to the paradigm. Note that female persons are referenced with the neuter article/pronoun.

<i>Du hues mäi Buch verluer.</i>	'You lost my book.'
<i>Däi Buch ass erfogefall.</i>	'Your book fell down.'
<i>D'Tina huet säi Buch vergiess.</i>	'Tina has forgotten her book.'

The inflexion of the possessive article and the possessive pronoun is largely identical.

Only the in the NOM/ACC.N the possessive pronoun carries the suffix *-t* (*mäint* 'mine', *däint* 'yours' (SG), *säint* 'his/hers', *hiert* 'hers', *eist* 'ours', *äert* 'yours' (PL) already known from the definite article and adjective inflection: *Dëst Buch ass däint*. 'This book is yours.'

Regarding the 3SG, it is possible to further expand this kind of possessive noun phrase by preponing a noun phrase in the dative to indicate the possessor. However, this option is only available when the possessor is a person.

Du hues dem Sara säi Buch verluer. 'You have lost Sara's book.'
D'Tina huet dem Sara säi Buch vergiess. 'Tina has lost Sara's book.'

Related to possessions are partitives, which are used to express the fraction in the sense of 'a portion of this specific X'. Partitives are only allowed with mass nouns or countable nouns in plural. In Luxembourgish, partitives show up as articles or pronouns. The partitive article is *däers* for mass nouns in masculine or neuter, *där* is used for mass nouns in feminine or for plurals (cf. Döhmer 2017). Historically, these forms are derived from the definite article *der*.

Partitive articles

Hu mer nach däers Tëi? 'Do we still have [a portion of this specific] tea?'
Mir brauchen däers Waasser. 'We need [a portion of this specific] water.'
Et gouf vill där Mesuren. 'There were lots of those activities.'

4.6 Prepositions

Most prepositions govern dative or accusative. To express the direction towards a locality (city, village) prepositions with accusative are used (*op* 'up' for localities like cities or villages, *an* 'in' for country names). On the other hand, positions require prepositions with dative (*zu* 'off' for localities, *an* 'in' for country names).

Direction

Position

locality	country	locality	country
<i>op Zolwer</i>	<i>an Däitschland</i>	<i>zu Zolwer</i>	<i>an Däitschland</i>
<i>op Esch</i>	<i>an d'USA</i>	<i>zu Esch</i>	<i>an den USA</i>

For prepositions with dative, a following masculine or neuter definite article *dem* is cliticised to the preposition (*mat + dem > mam* 'with the', *bei + dem > beim* 'at the', *op + dem > um* 'on the', *ënner + dem > ënnerem* 'under the' etc.). This cliticization is not possible for the feminine article *der* except for *zu + der > zur* 'to the'.

4.7 Verbs

The Luxembourgish verbal system distinguishes between full verbs, modal verbs and auxiliary verbs. The traditional distinction between strong and weak verbs is still observable, but is more and more dismantled due to a massive deterioration of past tense forms (Nübling 2005, Dammel/Nowak 2011).

The following tab. 8 illustrates the morphology of the regular verb *bauen* 'to build'. As expected, the infinitive consists of the verbal stem and the suffix *-en*. The presented personal suffixes are used for nearly all verbs. Note that the 1SG has the *-en* suffix, rendering this form homonymous with the infinitive and the 1/2PL. All *-en* suffixes contain a clearly pronounced schwa [ə], the reduction to a syllabic nasal [ŋ] is quite rare.

Tab. 8 Basic inflection of the verb.

Infinitive	bauen	-en		
Past participle	gebaut	ge- ... -t		
	Sg.		Pl.	

1.	bauen	-en	bauen	-en
2.	baus	-s	baut	-t
3.	baut	-t	bauen	-en
Imperative	bau!	-∅	baut!	-t

If the verbal stem ends in *-t*, *-d* or *-s*, the identical personal suffix is omitted, i.e. *kascht-en* > 3SG/2PL *kascht* 'to cost', *räiss-en* > 2SG *räiss*. Schwa insertion like in German is not attested for these cases (cf. German *kosten* > *es kost-e-t* 'it costs'). Luxembourgish has imperative forms for singular and plural: *bau!* and *baut!* 'build!'. The former is constituted by the verbal stem and the latter by the verbal stem and the ending *-t*.

Since only a few verbs have a preterit today, most verbs form a present perfect ('Perfekt') instead, consisting of an auxiliary verb and the past participle of the full verb: *si hu gebaut* 'they have built' (Glaser 2006, Krier 2015). The pluperfect is constructed by putting the auxiliary into past tense: *si hate gebaut* 'they had built'. Sentences in subjunctive ('Konjunktiv') are predominately built by using the subjunctive forms of the auxiliaries *ginn* 'to give' (for present tense) and *hunn* 'to have' or *sinn* 'to be' (for past perfect). The following list illustrates these common tenses.

Present tense indicative	<i>Si bauen eng Universitéit.</i>	'They build a university.'
Present tense subjunctive	<i>Si géifen eng Universitéit bauen.</i>	'They would build ...'
Past perfect indicative	<i>Si hunn eng Universitéit gebaut.</i>	'They have build ...'
Past perfect subjunctive	<i>Si hätten eng Universitéit gebaut.</i>	'They would have build ...'
Pluperfect indicative	<i>Si haten eng Universitéit gebaut.</i>	'They had build ...'
Pluperfect subjunctive	<i>Si hätten eng Universitéit gebaut gehat.</i>	'The would have had build ...'

Additionally, a 'super perfect' ('Doppeltes Perfekt') can be found in informal

Luxembourgish as a means of intensification. In this case, the past perfect construction is

augmented by the past participle of the auxiliary (*gehat* for *hunn*, *gewiescht* for *sinn*), thereby letting the sentence exhibit two participles in a row.

Dat hunn ech mer geduecht gehat. 'I have thought this.'
Huet dir dat gefall gehat? 'Did you like this?'
Da wier de Problem geléist gewiescht. 'Then the problem would have been solved.'

Future tense occurs only rarely and present tense is used instead. Sometimes a construction with the auxiliary *wäerten* 'will', e.g. *Si wäerten eng Universitéit bauen.* 'They will build a university.' is also used to express future meaning. However, in these cases the auxiliary *wäerten* is also transporting a certain uncertainty and probability, which brings this verb in closer connection to the modal verbs.

The paradigms of the auxiliaries *hunn* 'to have' (tab. 9), *sinn* 'to be' (tab. 10) and *ginn* 'to give' (tab. 11) are highly irregular. The subjunctive is formed through Umlaut of the preterit.

Tab. 9 Inflection of the verb *hunn* 'to have'.

Infinitive		hunn			
Past participle		gehat			
	Indicative				
	Sg.	Pl.			
1.	hunn	hunn			
2.	hues	hutt			
3.	huet	hunn			
	Preterit				
	Indicative		Subjunctive		
	Sg.	Pl.	Sg.	Pl.	
1.	hat	haten	hätt	hätten	
2.	has	hat	häss	hätt	
3.	hat	haten	hätt	hätten	

Imperative	hiefl!	hieft!/hutt!		

Tab. 10 Inflection of the verb sinn 'to be'.

Infinitive		sinn		
Past participle		gewiescht		
		Indicative		
		Sg.	Pl.	
1.	sinn	sinn		
2.	bass	sidd		
3.	ass	sinn		
		Preterit		
		Indicative		Subjunctive
		Sg.	Pl.	Sg. Pl.
1.	war	waren	wier/wär	wieren/wären
2.	waars	waart	wiers/wäers	wiert/wäert
3.	war	waren	wier/wär	wieren/wären
Imperative		siefl!	sieft!/sidd!	

Tab. 11 Inflection of the verb ginn 'to give'.

Infinitive		ginn		
Past participle		ginn		
		Indicative		
		Sg.	Pl.	
1.	ginn	ginn		
2.	gëss	gitt		
3.	gëtt	ginn		
		Preterit		
		Indicative		Subjunctive
		Sg.	Pl.	Sg. Pl.
1.	gouf	goufen	géif	géifen
2.	goufs	gouft	géifs	géift
3.	gouf	goufen	géif	géifen
Imperative		gëff!	gitt!	

The auxiliary *ginn* 'to give' has been grammaticalized not only for the subjunctive but also for passive voice (so-called 'geben-Passiv'; Nübling 2006b, Lenz 2011). *ginn* is thus largely equivalent to German *werden/würden*, which does not exist in Luxembourgish.

Active voice	<i>De Mecanicien fléckt den Auto.</i>	'The mechanic repairs the car.'
Passive voice	<i>Den Auto gëtt (vum Mecanicien) gefléckt.</i>	'The car is repaired (by the mechanic).'

A further common passive voice is the so-called 'recipient passive' ('Rezipientenpassiv'), which is constructed with the verb *kréien* 'to get' employed as an auxiliary.

Recipient passive voice	<i>Hie kritt d'Hoer geschnidden.</i>	'He gets his hair cut.'
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A present participle does not exist at all, except from a few lexicalized or borrowed forms (*rosen* < German *rasend* 'furious' *fléissen* < German *fließend* 'fluent', *spannend* 'exciting').

The past participle can be regarded as one of the most central verb forms as it carries a high functional load in the formation of the different tenses. As for its construction, two basic principles can be distinguished: Historically weak verbs form the past participle with the prefix *ge-* and the suffix *-t* (*fëllen* - *gefëllt* 'to fill'), while strong verbs show the suffix *-en* instead (*sangen* - *gesongen* 'to sing').

As for the placement of the participle suffix *-en*, an allomorphic rule governs whether the suffix is present or not. Accordingly, the suffix *-en* is present when the last consonant of the stem is voiced. On the other hand, the suffix *-en* is not realized when the last consonant of the stem is voiceless (Gilles 2011).

Past participle of strong verbs

voiced stem consonant

[v]	<i>reiwēn</i>	<i>geriwēwen</i>	'to rub'
[z]	<i>weisen</i>	<i>gewisen</i>	'to show'
[z]	<i>steigen</i>	<i>gestigen</i>	'to climb'
[ŋ]	<i>sangen</i>	<i>gesongen</i>	'to sing'

voiceless stem consonant

[f]	<i>gräifen</i>	<i>gegraff</i>	'to grab'
[s]	<i>géissen</i>	<i>gegoss</i>	'to bite'
[χ]	<i>richen</i>	<i>geroch</i>	'to smell'
[ŋk]	<i>drénken</i>	<i>gedronk</i>	'to drink'

In contrast to German, many weak verbs show vowel alternation in the participle which is due to the so-called 'reverse Umlaut' (German 'Rückumlaut'), where the stem vowel has a back vowel/diphthong which corresponds to the front vowel of the infinitive (Gilles 2011): *denken* > *geduecht* 'to think', *féieren* > *gefouert* 'to drive', *fäerten* > *gefaart* 'to fear', *stellen* > *gestallt* 'to put', *leeën* > *geluecht* 'to lay', *bitzen* 'to sew', *jäizen* > *gejaut* 'to scream', *nätzen* > *genat* 'to wet', *setzen* > *gesat* 'to set', *späizen* > *gespaut* 'to spit'.

For weak and strong verbs, the preterit is characterized by a steady loss. The only weak verbs with regular preterit forms is the high-frequency verbs *soen* 'to say' (*si soten* 'they said') and the modal verbs (see below). As for the strong verbs, only around 20 to 30 have attested preterit forms, many of them rarely used and steadily replaced by past perfect constructions. The main characteristics are vowel alternations, which are due to Ablaut (preterit and past participle), 'Wechselflexion' (2/3SG present) and Umlaut (subjunctive). In the following, the most common strong verbs are listed.

Vowel alternations of strong verbs

infinitive	3SG present	1/3SG preterit	1/3SG subjunctive	past participle	
<i>bleiwen</i>	<i>bleift</i>	<i>blouf</i>	<i>bléif</i>	<i>bliwēwen</i>	'to stay'
<i>gesinn</i>	<i>gesäit</i>	<i>gesouch</i>	<i>geséich</i>	<i>gesinn</i>	'to see'
<i>ginn</i>	<i>gëtt</i>	<i>gouf</i>	<i>géif</i>	<i>ginn</i>	'to give'
<i>goen</i>	<i>geet</i>	<i>goung</i>	<i>géing</i>	<i>gaangen</i>	'to go'
<i>stoen</i>	<i>steet</i>	<i>stoung</i>	<i>stéing</i>	<i>gestanen</i>	'to stand'
<i>kommen</i>	<i>kënnt</i>	<i>koum</i>	<i>kéim</i>	<i>komm</i>	'to come'
<i>leien</i>	<i>läit</i>	<i>louch</i>	<i>léich</i>	<i>geleeën</i>	'to lay'
<i>setzen</i>	<i>sätzt</i>	<i>souz</i>	<i>séiz</i>	<i>gesiess</i>	'to sit'

<i>geschéien</i>	<i>geschitt</i>	<i>geschouch</i>	<i>geschéich</i>	<i>geschitt</i>	'to happen'
<i>stiechen</i>	<i>stécht</i>	<i>stouch</i>	<i>stéich</i>	<i>gestach</i>	'to pierce'

One of the most striking feature is the levelling of the vowel in the preterit. All the different preterit vowels which constitute the seven Ablaut series have been radically simplified to the uniform diphthong <ou>/[əʊ]. The subjunctive with its uniform diphthong <éi>/[ɛɪ] is structurally linked to the preterit via Umlaut.²

The shown vowel alternations for the 3SG are not to be confused with Ablaut but are rather due to so-called 'Wechselflexion' ('changing inflection', cf. Nübling 2001), which applies also to the 2SG and sometimes to the 2PL.

Vowel alternation due to 'Wechselflexion'

infinitive	2SG	3SG	2PL	
<i>kommen</i>	<i>kënns</i>	<i>kënnt</i>	<i>kommt</i>	'to come'
<i>bannen</i>	<i>bënns</i>	<i>bënnt</i>	<i>bannt</i>	'to bind'
<i>sangen</i>	<i>séngs</i>	<i>séngt</i>	<i>sangt</i>	'to sing'
<i>saufen</i>	<i>säüfs/sëffs</i>	<i>säüft/sëfft</i>	<i>sauft</i>	'to swig'
<i>kréien</i>	<i>kriss</i>	<i>kritt</i>	<i>kritt</i>	'to get'
<i>zéien</i>	<i>zitts</i>	<i>zitt</i>	<i>zitt</i>	'to pull'
<i>iessen</i>	<i>ëss</i>	<i>ësst</i>	<i>iesst</i>	'to eat'
<i>ginn</i>	<i>gëss</i>	<i>gëtt</i>	<i>gitt</i>	'to give'
<i>gesinn</i>	<i>gesäis</i>	<i>gesäit</i>	<i>gesitt</i>	'to see'
<i>goen</i>	<i>gees</i>	<i>geet</i>	<i>gitt</i>	'to walk'
<i>kafen</i>	<i>keefs</i>	<i>keeft</i>	<i>kaaft</i>	'to buy'
<i>maachen</i>	<i>méchts</i>	<i>mécht</i>	<i>maacht</i>	'to make'
<i>huelen</i>	<i>hëls</i>	<i>hëlt</i>	<i>huel</i>	'to take'
<i>soen</i>	<i>sees</i>	<i>seet</i>	<i>sot</i>	'to say'

² For a comprehensive listing of all verbs and all verbal forms, the reader is referred to the Lëtzebuerger Online Dictionnaire (LOD), <<http://lod.lu>> or to Luxogramm – Grammatiches Informationssystem zum Luxemburgischen, <<http://luxogramm.uni.lu>>.

The modal verbs are also among the most irregular verbs. Besides the vowel alternation in the preterit and the subjunctive they also show the suffix *-t* to signal the preterit. For the present tense and the preterit, the 1/3SG has no personal suffix.

infinitive	present 3SG	preterit 3SG	subjunctive 3SG	
<i>net brauchen</i>	<i>brauch</i>	<i>braucht</i>	<i>bräücht</i>	'not need'
<i>däerfen</i>	<i>däerf</i>	<i>duerft</i>	<i>dierft</i>	'may'
<i>kennen</i>	<i>kann</i>	<i>konnt</i>	<i>kéint</i>	'can'
<i>mussen</i>	<i>muss</i>	<i>musst</i>	<i>misst</i>	'must'
<i>sollen</i>	<i>soll</i>	<i>sollt</i>	<i>sollt</i>	'shall'
<i>wëllen</i>	<i>wëll(t)</i>	<i>wollt</i>	<i>wéilt</i>	'will'

4.8 Selected syntactic characteristics

One important feature concerns the typologically striking inflexion of the complementizer position in dependent clauses ('complementizer agreement'). In a subordinate clause, the conjunction receives inflectional marking for the 2SG and for the 1/3PL. The corresponding inflectional suffixes *s* and *en* seem to have stranded right after the conjunction in the 'complementizer position'. In the following examples the suffixes are underlined.

2SG	<i>Mir wëssen, datt <u>s</u> du fortge<u>s</u>.</i>	'We know that you leave.'
2SG	<i>Ech weess net, wéini <u>s</u> du ukénn<u>s</u>.</i>	'I don't know when you will arrive.'
1PL	<i>Fro d'Sara, ob (<u>e</u>) mir komme sollen<u>e</u>.</i>	'Ask Sara, whether we should come.'
3PL	<i>Hatt gesäit, datt (<u>en</u>) se sangen<u>e</u>.</i>	'She sees that they are singing.'

This double placement of the verbal suffix is mandatory for the 2SG {*s*} and optional for the 1/3 PL {*en*}. Note that for the latter *n*-deletion can apply and this might be the reason why the extra suffix currently is subject to eventual loss.

The next feature concerns the word order in verb clusters in subordinate clauses. If the verb cluster consists of a finite modal verb or a finite verb for the subjunctive (i.e. *géif*) and an infinite, dependent verb, one can encounter the serializations 1-2 and 2-1, which both are acceptable.

1-2	..., <i>ob ech dat <u>ka</u> vergläichen</i>	'..., whether I could compare this'
2-1	..., <i>ob ech dat vergläiche <u>kann</u></i>	
1-2	..., <i>dass dir mech <u>géift</u> verstoen</i>	'..., that you would understand me'
2-1	..., <i>dass dir mech verstoet <u>géift</u></i>	

According to the recent study of Döhmer (2017), the serialization 1-2 is the most common at around 80%, which is said to be the older and original serialization (cf. Bruch 1955).

The less common serialization 2-1, on the other hand, could have been introduced through Standard German, where 2-1 is the nearly exclusively used.

5. **Lexicon**

Work on lexical structures of Luxembourgish started as early as the 19th century (Gangler 1847). The most extensive dictionary is the *Luxemburger Wörterbuch* (1950-1977), comprising some 50.000 dictionary entries covering also regional variants, loans from French, idioms, names for animals and plants as well as place names. When the teaching of Luxembourg as second language gained momentum from the 1980s onwards, smaller dictionaries were published little by little to cover (and develop) the core vocabulary (e.g. Dermann-Loutsch 2006, 2008, Zimmer 2008). The most recent dictionary is the

Lëtzebuenger Online Dictionnaire (LOD) (2007ff.), which intends not only to document the present-day vocabulary but also to implement the recent spelling rules (Ecker 2013).

Contrary to the older *LWB*, the *LOD* thus also takes part in the standardization process.

Throughout its history, Luxembourgish has always been and still is influenced by French and German, predominately on the lexical level (cf. Conrad 2017, Southworth 1954). The oldest layer is probably due to the imminent role of the French language and culture on European languages from the 16th to 18th century. Today, these words belong to the core vocabulary and some of them still retain their French pronunciation.

Examples are: *Tour* [tuʁ], *Cours* [kuʁ] 'course', *Boulevard* ['bulɔva:ʀ], *Bourse* [buʀs] 'stock exchange/purse', *Chance* [ʃã:s], *Chamber* [ʃã:mbɐ] 'parliament'. From the 19th century onwards the influence of French increased for at least three reasons: (1) The bilingual political elites of the 19th century introduced more and more French into the administration and the institutions of Luxembourg. (2) The mandatory teaching of French gradually made this language accessible for the whole population. (3) A long-time positive attitude towards French language and culture supported and facilitated borrowing; note however that this positive attitude is recently changing.

Quantitative statements about the amount of loans in the vocabulary are notoriously difficult. According to my very broad and cautious estimation, some 10 to 15% of the vocabulary result from language contact with French, also including internationalisms with French origin (e.g. *Adress* 'address'). It is important to keep in mind that nearly all loan can be replaced by a Luxembourgish cognate or construction and the usage of either word is subject to various stylistic and sociolinguistic parameters.

As expected, most loans are nouns, whereas adjectives and verbs are somewhat lesser affected. The degree of integration into Luxembourgish is observable in spelling and pronunciation. The following list is meant to give an illustrative impression.

nouns			adjectives		
French	Luxembourgish		French	Luxembourgish	
<i>tirebouchon</i>	<i>Tirebouchon</i>	'corkscrew'	<i>douce</i>	<i>duuss</i>	'soft'
<i>fond</i>	<i>Fong</i>	'bottom'	<i>efficace</i>	<i>effikass</i>	'efficient'
<i>tourmure</i>	<i>Tourmure</i>	'phrase'	<i>exigent</i>	<i>exigent</i>	'demanding'
<i>bol</i>	<i>Boll</i>	'bowl'	<i>favorable</i>	<i>favorabel</i>	'favorable'
<i>vélo</i>	<i>Vëlo</i>	'bicycle'	<i>foutu</i>	<i>futti</i>	'broken'
<i>arbitre</i>	<i>Arbitter</i>	'referee'	<i>impeccable</i>	<i>impeccabel</i>	'impeccable'
<i>rideau</i>	<i>Riddo</i>	'curtain'	<i>jaloux</i>	<i>jalous</i>	'jealous'
<i>perte</i>	<i>Perte</i>	'loss'	<i>louche</i>	<i>louche</i>	'suspicious'
<i>piscine</i>	<i>Piscine</i>	'pool'	<i>marbre</i>	<i>marber</i>	'marble'
<i>pouvoir</i>	<i>Pouvoir</i>	'power'	<i>ambigu</i>	<i>ambigu</i>	'ambiguous'

As for verbs, loans from French can be recognized easily by their word formation suffix -*éieren*, which allows to borrow any French verb into Luxembourgish. Among the 5000 verbs in the *LOD* around 850, i.e. 17%, are derivations with the suffix -*éieren* and can be regarded as loans from French, of which a few examples are presented below.

<i>abordéieren</i>	'to address'	<i>bougéieren</i>	'to move'
<i>accouchéieren</i>	'to give birth'	<i>rafistoléieren</i>	'to patch up'
<i>egaliséieren</i>	'to make level'	<i>traitéieren</i>	'to treat'

For the uninflected word classes, some borrowed adverbs and conjunctions from French are used quite frequently: *de plus en plus* 'more and more', *plus ou moins* 'more or less', *just* 'just', *entre-temps* 'meanwhile', *vu que* 'because', *mee* (< F. *mais*) 'but'. Borrowed discourse particles and interjections are: *bien* 'well', *soit* well then, *bon* 'OK', *d'accord* 'all right', *voilà* 'there!', *ça va* 'allright', *allez* 'come on!'. Greeting routines, although part of the very core

vocabulary, come from French to some extent, too: *Bonjour* 'good day!', *Awuer* 'goodbye' (< F. *au revoir*), *Äddi* 'bye-bye' (< F. *adieu*). Finally, some swearwords originate from French as well: *zut* 'damn', *Merd* (< F. *merde*) 'shit', *Putain* 'fuck' (cf. Krier 2011).

As in other languages, kinship terms may be influenced by French as well. Tab. 12 displays kinship terms of the family, where shaded cells indicate a possible loan from French.

Tab. 12 Kinship terms in Luxembourgish.

Grousselteren				
	Boma/Groussmamm		Bopa/Grousspapp	
Tatta	Mamm		Papp	Monni
Cousine	Schwëster	EGO	Brudder	Cousin
Niess	Meedchen/ Duechter		Jong/Fils/Bouf	Neveu/Nëwwi
	Enkel			

While French kinship terms like *Tatta* ['tata:] 'aunt', *Monni* ['mɔni:] 'uncle', *Cousine* ['kuzi:n] 'cousin' F and *Cousin* ['kuzɛ:] 'cousin' M can be found in several other languages as well, *Niess* [niəs] (< F. *nièce*) 'niece', *Neveu* ['nəvø:] (< F. *neveu*) 'nephew' and especially *Fils* [fis] (< F. *fils*) 'son' underline the strong influence of this language on parts of the core vocabulary. This holds true also for the informal terms *Boma* ['bo:ma:], *Bomi* ['bo:mi:], *Bom* [bo:m] 'grandmother' and *Bopa* ['bo:pɑ:], *Bopi* ['bo:pi:], *Bop* [bo:p] 'granddad', which possibly derive from F. *bonne-mère* and *bon-père*, respectively.

The adjectives for the base colors are: *schwaarz* 'black', *blo* 'blue', *gro* 'grey', *gréng* 'green', *mof/violett* 'purple', *rout* 'red', *giel* 'yellow', *wäiss* 'white', where *mof* [mɔf] is a loan from the French *mauve*. French provided further color terms like *beige* [bɛ:ʃ], *orange* [ˈORã:ʃ] or *saumon* [ˈso:mã:] 'salmon'.

The multilingualism of the speech community may also allow for the alternation of (largely) synonymous words from French and Luxembourgish. The actual choice of a lexical item from the list below (and, of course, from many more) can depend on language competence, personal preference and stylistic function.

French	Luxembourgish	
<i>Choix</i>	<i>Auswiel/Wiel</i>	'choice'
<i>Avantage</i>	<i>Virdeel</i>	'advantage'
<i>But</i>	<i>Zil</i>	'aim'
<i>Gouvernement</i>	<i>Regierung</i>	'government'
<i>jugéieren</i>	<i>beuerteelen</i>	'to judge'

Finally, determining German loan words in Luxembourgish is much more difficult, due to the structural closeness of the two languages. Usually, when a word from German is imported, it is automatically modified according to the phonological structure of Luxembourgish and thus making its German origin invisible. German loans can therefore only be identified when they still exhibit German phonological traits, which deviate from Luxembourgish. Examples are *eben* 'just now' instead of **even*, *einfach* 'easy' instead of **eefach*, *berücksichtigen* 'to consider' instead of **berécksüchtigen*, *leider* 'sadly' instead of **leeder* (cf. however *Bäileed* 'condolence', *et deet mir leed* 'I am sorry'). An interesting case constitutes the adjective *süß* 'sweet', which has been borrowed recently from German to refer to an 'interesting/attractive' person or animal by young speakers. The traditional Luxembourgish adjective *séiss*, on the other hand, is (mainly) used to refer to 'sweet taste'.

It might come as a surprise, that despite the high amount of societal and individual multilingualism, code-switching is nearly inexistent (cf. however Stell/ Parafita Couto 2012, Krier 2014b). Loan words like then ones presented above, are always regarded by Luxembourgers as mere lexical insertions or ad-hoc borrowings and not as a

switch into another language. For the present-day language situation, it is simply inconceivable to switch to French or German for more than a word, as they are regarded as foreign languages. Two exceptions can be identified: Firstly, when citing someone the language of this specific person may be used. Secondly, highly multilingual migrants, who grew up with several languages at home, may switch between their first language, French and Luxembourgish in informal, in-group interaction.

6. Conclusion

In a process of emancipation, Luxembourgish evolved from a regional dialect of German in the 19th century to the national language during the 20th century (Gilles 2000). Due to its multifunctional usage, today as the most important spoken language and due to the high positive attitudes, Luxembourgish can be regarded as a Ausbau language. Being the national language of a nation state, Luxembourgish today cannot be called a minority language. The structural divergence from Standard German and from the neighboring Central-Franconian dialect is progressing.

Written language use is increasing constantly and the various digital media are offering new alleys to extend and expand the usage in the written domain. Language standardization is evolving, too, where the orthography is highly standardized. Lexicon and grammar remains on a lower level of standardization. However, the implementation of these standards is rather limited, as Luxembourgish is still not a fully-fledged subject in the educational system.

Nevertheless, the language today is very vital and stable. The transmission of the language from generation to generation is guaranteed. However, being embedded in a

highly multilingual and multicultural situation, where roughly 50% of the population is constituted by international migrants, it is not impossible that the language situation might face profound changes in the future.

Although language contact is taking place on all levels, the grammatical system is affected noticeable only in the vocabulary, where borrowing from French and German is common practice. Core grammatical features are stable and develop language-internally without substantial impact from contact languages.

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