

University of Luxembourg

ECER 2021

**Collaboration between home and crèches:
perspectives, experiences and expectations
of educators in Luxembourg**

Claudine Kirsch, Gabrijela Aleksić

**Developing multilingual practices and multiliteracies in
ECEC, 6th September 2021**

Outline

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1. The larger context
2. Educational policies in ECEC in Luxembourg
3. The research project COMPARE
4. Findings
5. Concluding comments



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1. The larger context



Super-diversity in Europe (Vertovec, 2019) requires policy-makers and educationalists to adapt language teaching

- UN convention of children's rights demanding respect for their language, culture and values (United Nations, 1987, article 29)
- Index for inclusion: open up for the diversity of the children and the teachers (Booth et al., 2008)



Multilingual policies in ECEC ≠ multilingual practices

- Societal, individual, institutional factors (Fröhlich-Gildhoff et al., 2011; Urban et al., 2011; Salem et al., 2020)
- Teacher beliefs (attitudes, knowledge, values) are difficult to change owing to the number of influential factors (see Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018; Levin & Wadmany, 2006)



Research focus



- The ECEC educators' perspectives on (multi)literacies and collaboration as well as their practices



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2. Educational policies in ECEC in Luxembourg

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- Trilingual country with societal translanguaging
- 47.2% of the residents do not have Luxembourgish citizenship
- 34.5 % of children in the 'école fondamentale' speak Luxembourgish as a first language at home (STATEC, 2021; MENJE, 2020)

'éducation plurilingue' in ECEC since 2017

National framework for non-formal education in ECEC



3 pillars:

- Language education (Luxembourgish, French, home languages)
- Collaboration with parents
- Networking with educational and cultural organisations

Multilingual education: the framework



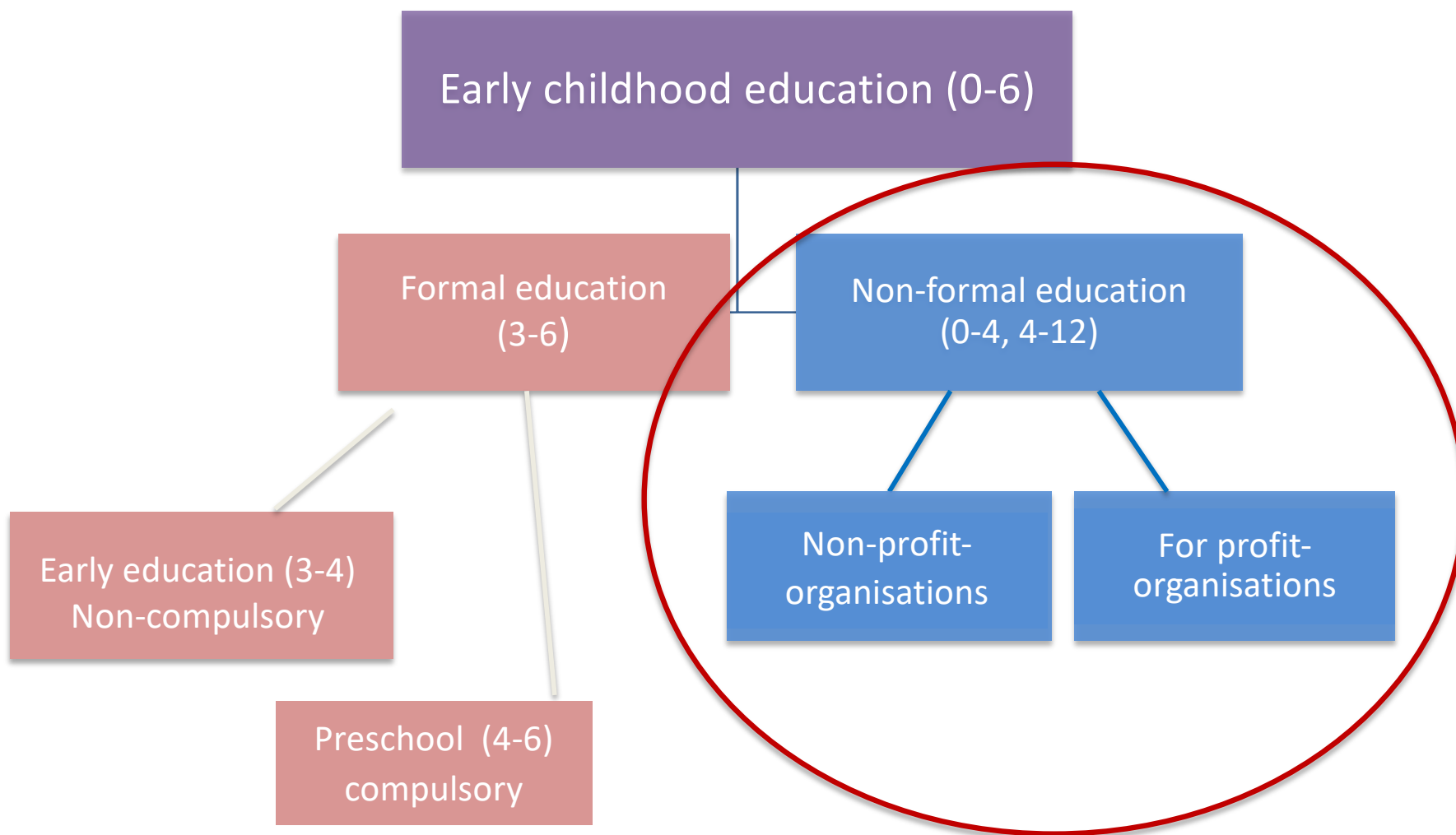
“Especially the regular and pedagogical access to different (picture) books in several languages opens up essential educational opportunities for young children. (p.44)



"Language education in the child-care structure (...) complements and enriches the educational work of families by means of an appreciative attitude, a continuous exchange and targeted offers which actively involve parents in shaping the day-to-day life of the facilities". (p.111)



The educational system in ECE



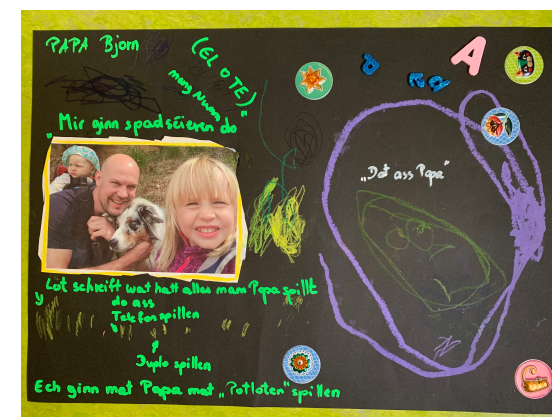
Practices *before* the new policy



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

Language separation as well as flexible bilingualism (Neumann, 2015; Seele, 2015; Kirsch 2020)

Systematic literacy activities in multiple languages and collaborative activities with parents were rare (Kirsch, 2018; Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018; Kirsch et al., 2020)



3. The project COMPARE: Collaboration with parents and multiliteracies Aims



COMPARE (2020 - 2023)

- Funded by the FNR, MENJE and SNJ
- Claudine Kirsch (PI), Gabrijela Aleksić, Džoen Bebić-Crestany, Valérie Kemp and Laura Colucci
- Multidisciplinary and multimethod project

Aims of the project

- Develop, support and **explore/ investigate** collaboration and multiliteracies in non-formal education settings

Our perspectives

- Broad definition (children's experiences and encounters with books, narration)
- Literacy as a social and cultural practice (Barton & Hamilton, 1998)
- Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996)

Web

[https://: compare.uni.lu](https://compare.uni.lu)



3. The project COMPARE

Methods



- Research questions:
 - RQ1: What are the ECEC educators' perspectives on (multi)literacies and collaboration?
 - RQ2: What are their practices?
- Methods: two online questionnaires (open and closed questions)

Collaboration

- 118 questions
- Betz et al. (2017); Lengyel & Salem (2016); Reynolds et al. (2017)
- January - March 2020
- N: 289

Literacies

- 58 questions
- Burghess et al. (2002); Farver et al. (2013)
- April - June 2020
- N: 452

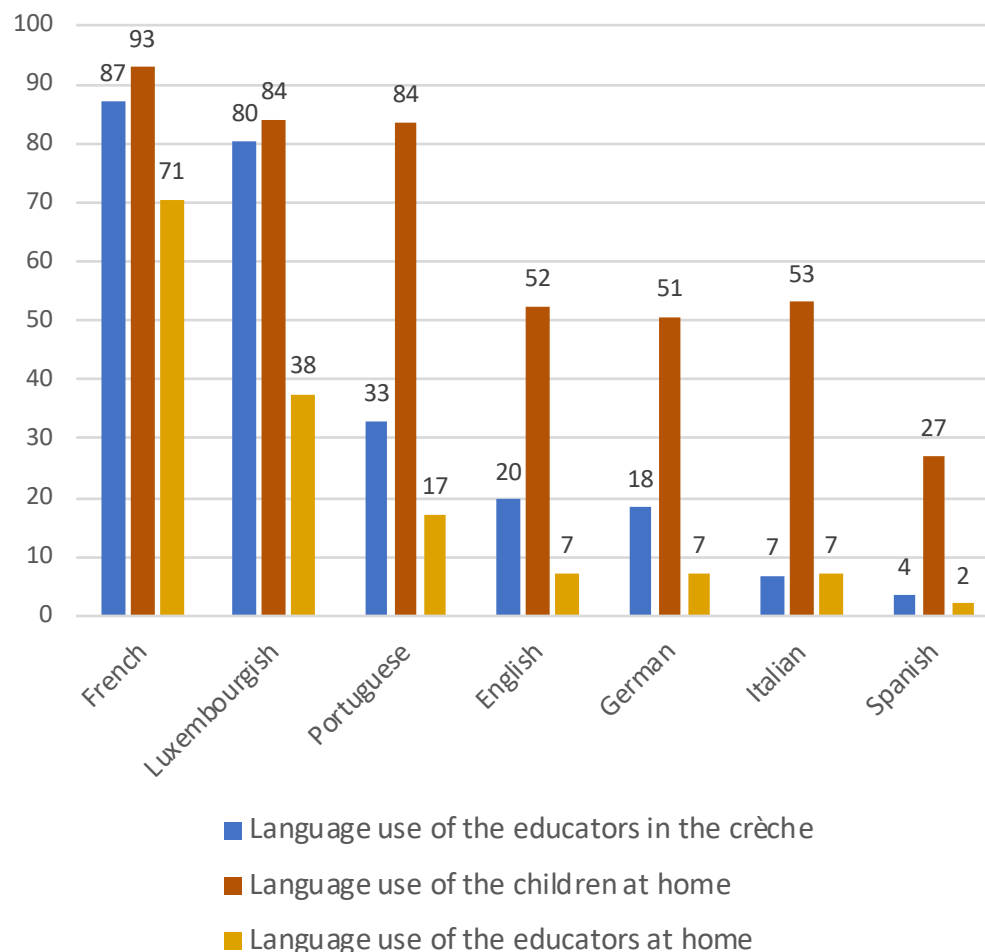
- Majority of educators from non-profit organisations, working less than 10 years

4. Findings

Language use of the educators and the children



Figure 1. Comparison of the language use of the educators and the children (expressed in %), as reported by the educators (N=452, literacy questionnaire)



■ Beliefs

“Communication in more than one language in the institution hinders children’s language development”
- 83% strongly disagreed

■ Practices

- Multilingual environment with a dominance of Luxembourgish and French
- Other languages than the institutional ones are used to value children’s home languages

(Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021)

Literacy activities in multiple languages



■ Beliefs

Reading books and telling stories in the main language of the centre

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

Reading books and telling stories in other languages

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

■ Practices

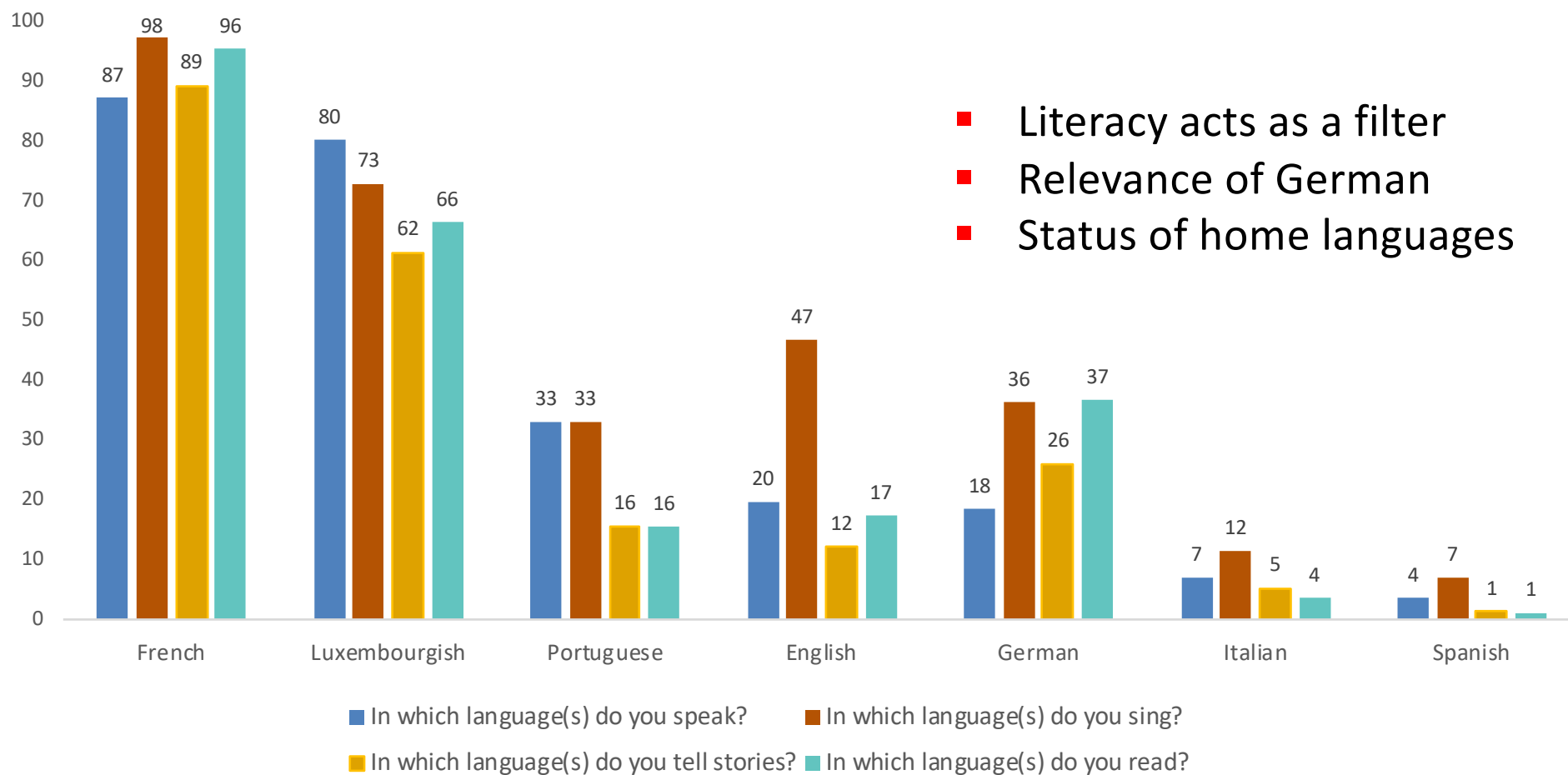
Daily singing daily: 86%

Daily reading books: 65%

Daily telling stories: 62%

	French	Luxembourgish
Singing songs	98%	77%
Reading	96%	66%
Telling stories	84%	51%

Literacy activities in multiple languages



- Literacy acts as a filter
- Relevance of German
- Status of home languages

Figure 2. Reported language use of the educators with the children according to the activity (in %) (N=452, literacy questionnaire)

Literacy activities with parents

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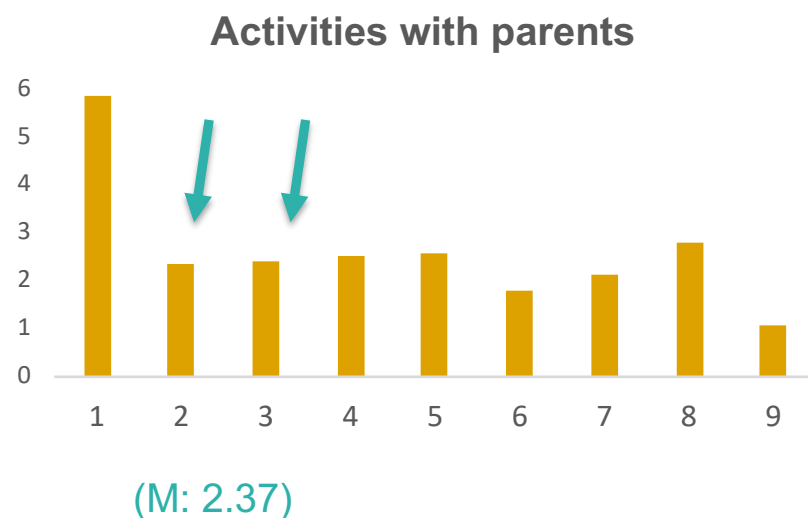


Figure 3. Activities with parents

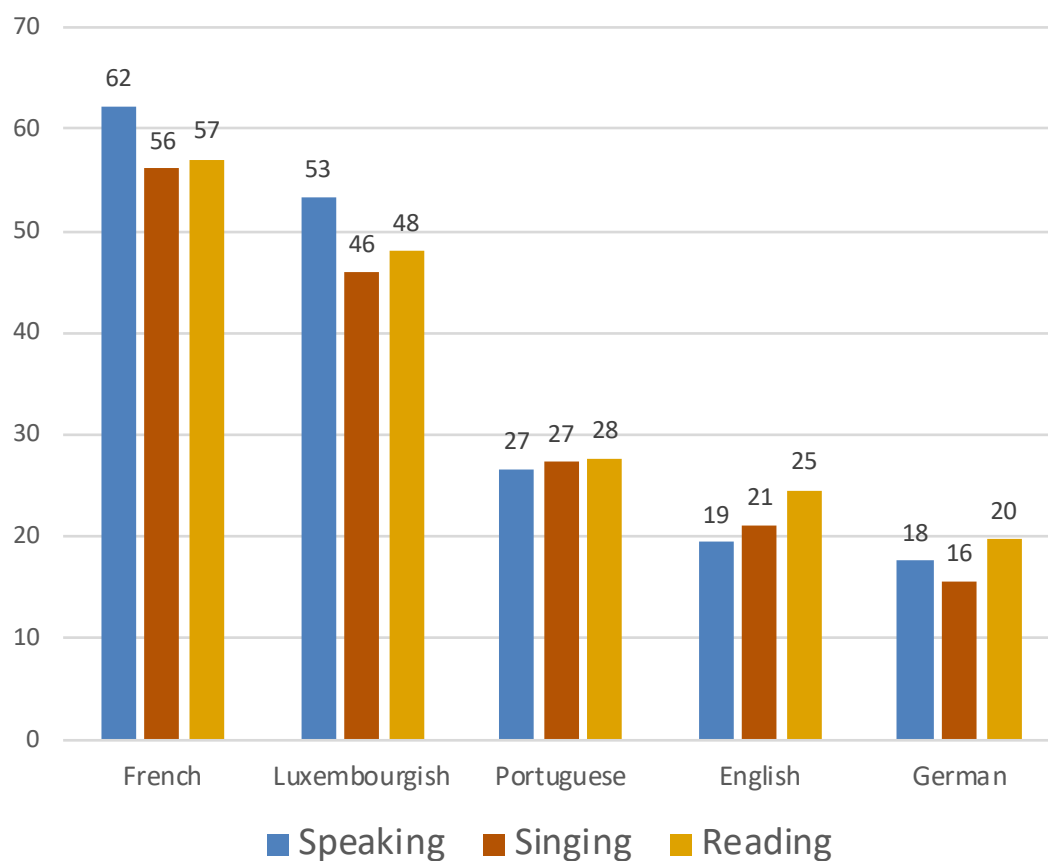
- N: 277 (valid)
- 1 - 6 (almost never – several times a week)
with 2: 1x year; 3: 2x year
- Items:
 1. passing conversations
 2. family members sing/ dance
 3. family members read/ tell stories
 4. family members in other activities
 5. child development meetings
 6. thematic parent meetings
 7. parent café
 8. festivities
 9. home visits

	2016 (Kirsch, 2018)	2020 (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021)
Collaborative literacy activities	41% never (N:99) 43% once or twice a year 8% every few weeks	39% never 43% once or twice a year 18% every few weeks

Language use in parents' literacy activities in the centres



Figure 4. Parents' language use with children (in %) reported by educators (N=289, collaboration questionnaire)



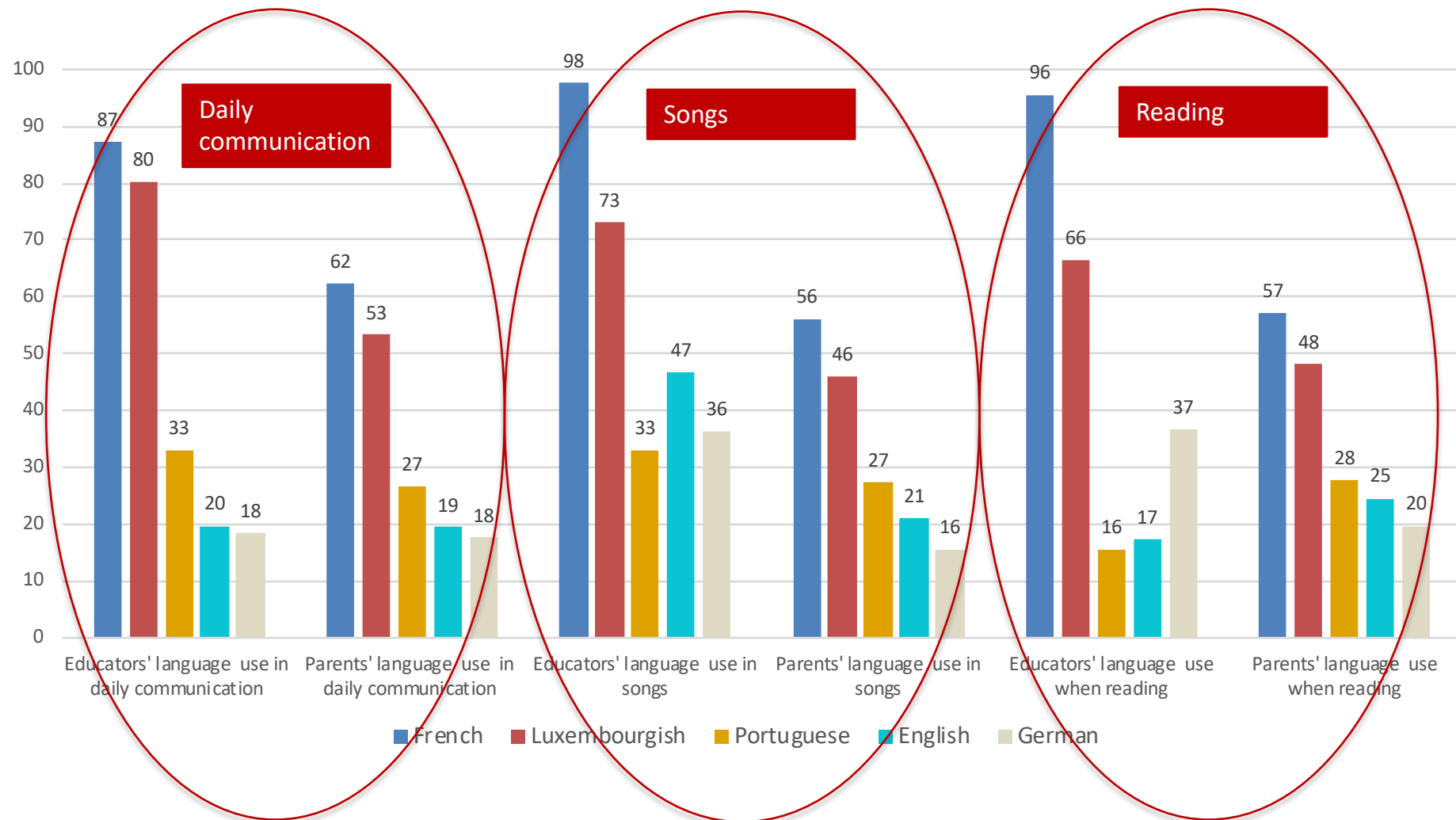
- Parents are reported to use their home languages rarely: once or twice year in literacy and in other activities (N: 212).
- On average: F (57%), L (47%), P (28%), E (23%), G (18%)
- Languages with less status are rarely use
- Future: wish to develop collaborative activities - use more Portuguese (54%), English (53%) and German (51%)

(Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021)

A mirrored pattern of language use



Figure 5. Reported language use of educators (N=452 literacy) and of parents (N=289, collaboration questionnaire) (in %)

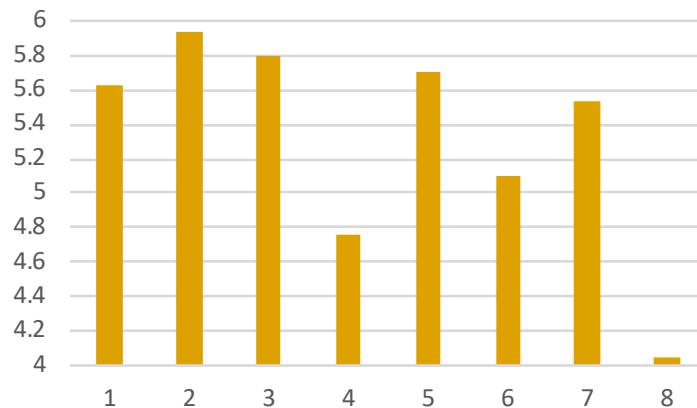


Institutional and personal aims of collaboration

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Personal aims



- 1 - 6 (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
- N: 277
- Items:
 - 1 - 4 contribute to child's well-being
 - 5 - 6 inform and share ideas
 - 7 ensure continuity
 - 8 develop relationships

- Educators generally agree strongly with most items related to communication
- They agree to some extent that the aim of collaboration is to
 - build **relationships** with parents (pers. aim, N° 8, M: 4.04).
 - get to know the child's **cultural background** (inst. aim, N°6; M: 5.41)
 - **include parents** in the crèche (inst. aim, N°7; M: 5.21)

(Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021)

5. Concluding comments



- Positive attitudes to multilingualism - multilingual practices (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2018, 2021)
- The use of multiple languages is reported by the educators
 - Predominance of French and Luxembourgish
 - Educators (and parents) are agents of change (Bergroth & Palviainen, 2016)
- Collaborative activities with parents exist and several languages are used
 - Language hierarchy (Ellis et al., 2011) reproduced by the parents
 - Reflect on the existing language hierarchies & actively challenge them (García et al., 2017; Weber, 2014)



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5. Concluding comments



- Partnerships depends on the professionals' beliefs, experiences, expectations, as well as space and time (Lengyel & Salem, 2016; Reynolds et al., 2017)
- Aims of collaboration:
 - Very important: communication (giving information) (Betz & Bischoff 2018)
 - Less important: learning more about the child's cultural background, building personal relationships and including parents
 - Potential risks: understanding of family practices and children's and parents' linguistic and cultural resources; perception that "other" is "not good"; non-inclusive practices
 - Need for professional development on intercultural education, translanguaging pedagogies and linguistically and culturally sensitive teaching (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Lucas & Villegas 2013)
- Collaboration can influence educators (attitudes, inclusive practices), parents (attitudes, expectations, involvement) and children (preliteracy skills, language skills, school achievements) (Arnold et al., 2008; Reynolds et al., 2017; Salem et al., 2020)



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Fragen?



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