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journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ijeduresFactors influencing communication between parents and early childhood educators in multilingual Luxembourg[☆]Gabrijela Aleksić^{a,*}, Džoen Bebić-Crestany^b, Claudine Kirsch^b^a Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Department of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, Lifespan Development, Family and Culture, University of Luxembourg, 11, Porte des Sciences, L-4366 Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg^b Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, Department of Humanities, University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

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ABSTRACT

The collaboration between educators of early childhood education and care (ECEC) and parents has a significant positive impact on children's development, particularly for young immigrant children. However, research in multilingual and multicultural contexts is scarce. Therefore, the aim of the present study conducted in multilingual ECEC context in Luxembourg was twofold: (1) to identify the significant predictors that influence goal-oriented communication between parents and educators, and (2) to showcase a dynamic interplay between these factors in practice through observations and interviews. To address the first aim, we conducted two regression analyses, one involving parents ($N = 323$) and the other educators ($N = 289$). The analysis with parents showed that the most significant factor that influenced goal-oriented communication was parent satisfaction, while for educators it was educators' professional attitudes towards parents and parent involvement. Furthermore, the results from interviews and observations of parent involvement in literacy activities in two multilingual centres showed that these factors are closely linked. When educators have positive attitudes, they will communicate more frequently and purposefully, and offer opportunities for parents to be involved, which will then lead to parent satisfaction. This study has important implications for policymakers, practitioners, and parents especially in multilingual contexts.

Most people would agree with the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child". In Luxembourg, where the present study comes from, three-year-olds are cared for by their family and, in addition, frequently by educators in early childhood education and care (ECEC) where children spend an average of 32 h a week (Hekel & Louréiro, 2021). Their health is checked up routinely by paediatricians and their speech development by speech therapists. These different agents contribute to children's development in different ways, but dialogue between them, or at least between home and school, is often missing.

Already in the 70 s, Bronfenbrenner (1974) developed an ecological model that suggests that the most effective interventions for children's learning and development must include both parents and teachers. Since then, this was supported by a plethora of studies that showed how collaboration between educators of ECEC and parents has a significant positive impact on children's development, well-being, preliteracy skills, overall school readiness and learning (e.g., Arnold et al., 2008; Barnard, 2004; Hemmerich et al., 2021;

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McWayne et al., 2012; Norheim & Moser, 2020; Paz-Albo Prieto, 2018; Sollars, 2021), particularly for young immigrant children (e.g., Cooper & Lanza, 2014; Leong et al., 2019) and children in multilingual contexts (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016). For example, in their review, Henrich and Gadaire (2008), focusing on the impact of parental involvement in early education in the US, found positive outcomes for children's cognitive development while Leong et al. (2019) identified a significant impact of parent involvement on children's cooperative behaviours but also positive parenting styles.

From a socio-cultural viewpoint, the home and the ECEC of a child represent two important social contexts that positively influence child development presuming that parents and educators work together as partners (Norheim et al., 2022). A collaborative attitude of educators, ranging from invitations to a wish to form a true partnership, can produce multiple positive effects on the children and parents (Leong et al., 2019). In particular, parents appreciate the educators' invitations as they make the parents feel valued and important (Schock & Jeon, 2021). Parental engagement was also reported to increase parents' home learning activities which lead to better learning outcomes and school readiness for children (Barnett et al., 2020). Parents also tend to have more confidence in their role in their child's development through a good relationship with the educators (Larivée et al., 2006). In cases where parents are treated as equal partners and a good exchange is the norm, the responsibility for the development of the child is shared and a relationship of trust and respect is built. This, in turn, results in positive outcomes for the child (Hemmerich et al., 2021), especially their well-being (e.g., Formosinho & Passos, 2019).

While collaboration requires effective communication, the latter has not been a focus in the above-mentioned studies. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify what factors influence communication as a key element of collaboration between parents and educators in ECEC in Luxembourg. Before turning to communication, some contextual information about this small country bordering Germany, France, and Belgium, needs to be presented.

In the highly diverse trilingual Luxembourg (Luxembourgish, German, French), 65 % of preschool-aged children do not speak Luxembourgish as a first language (MENJE, 2022). To reduce attainment gaps in the trilingual education system between Luxembourgish children and those with migration backgrounds and low socio-economic status, the Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth (MENJE) introduced a policy on multilingual education in ECEC in 2017. The policy applies both to teachers in early education and preschool, thus the formal sector, and educators in home-based and centre-based settings, the non-formal sector. The present article focuses on educators working with children aged 1–4 in day care centres. The policy requires educators to familiarize children with Luxembourgish and French and value their home languages. Furthermore, they need to collaborate with parents and network with social and cultural institutions. When implementing the policy, educators need to adhere to the national framework (MENJE & SNJ, 2021) that states "collaboration is characterized by esteem and respect, it identifies parents as experts of their children and creates opportunities for participation" (MENJE & SNJ, 2021, p. 40). In this article, we decided to use the term collaboration, often used interchangeably with cooperation and partnerships in the national framework, although the relationship between home and the ECEC has been defined differently in the literature (involvement, engagement, participation, cooperation, partnership) (Formosinho & Passos, 2019; Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Pushor, 2012). In Luxembourg, collaboration can mean that educators engage in regular communication, for instance in passing conversations or parent meetings, and organize events with parents such as walks or literacy activities. More specifically, regarding joint events (e.g., literacy activities, artwork, or walks) in the Luxembourgish context, Kirsch & Aleksić (2021) reported educators indicating that most parents rarely engaged in such activities (34 % never, 44 % once or twice a year), which is an important finding for the present study. In the present article, we will explore the factors that influence communication by presenting the findings of two surveys completed by educators and parents, and by illustrating key factors and the ways they play out in practice based on observations and interviews. As the Education Ministry (MENJE) foresees that educators and parents engage in joint decision-making and as research on collaboration between parents and educators in multilingual and multicultural early education contexts is scarce (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016; Leong et al., 2019; Peleman et al., 2022), the findings of our study are significant for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and parents in Luxembourg and other countries. Therefore, in this study, we aim to identify factors that influence goal-oriented communication between parents and early childhood educators in multilingual Luxembourg as well as the dynamic interplay between the most significant factors in practice.

1. Conceptualisation of goal-oriented communication

The major component of collaboration between parents and educators is communication seen as a "key to creating partnerships" (Norheim & Moser, 2020, p. 796). Researchers like Goodall and Montgomery (2014) emphasize the importance of an "authentic dialogue" that can foster trust and a "sense of ease or motivation to communicate with one another", which in turn has a positive effect on the child (Hemmerich et al., 2021, p. 3). Other studies also show that it is crucial that communication between parents and educators is based on respect and empathy (Almendingen et al., 2022). However, parents and educators do not always share the same values and expectations when it comes to good communication. For example, they may value different topics and means of communication, such as parents appreciating more informal communication about their child and educators insisting on passing basic information (Einarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir, 2019).

Furthermore, in multilingual contexts such as Luxembourg, taking parents' cultural and linguistic backgrounds into account is important, and failing to do so can hinder communication (Bezcioglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2018), which can result in parents feeling unrecognized or disrespected and eventually avoiding contact with teachers (Schock & Jeon, 2021). The relevance of dialogue and mutual understanding was emphasized by multilingual parents in interviews in a study in Finland (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016). In particular, they found that this relates to open and attentive communication, daily interaction, discussion of individual ECEC plans, and sufficient information about children's development and learning (p. 80).

Given that communication is a crucial part of collaboration and that few studies unravelled what communication in ECEC actually

means in particular contexts, especially multilingual and multicultural ones, this article focuses on what we call “goal-oriented communication”, which we will elaborate on in the following. To encourage collaboration and truly promote collaboration between educators and parents, we argue that communication has to go beyond sharing basic information (e.g., eating, sleeping, activities; e.g., [Einarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir, 2019](#)) and focus on the child’s development and learning (e.g., [Hemmerich et al., 2021](#); [Norheim & Moser, 2020](#)). We, therefore, posit that goal-oriented communication between educators and parents, particularly in multilingual contexts where our study takes place, should:

1. relate to child’s cultural, social, and religious background (e.g., languages, cultural background)
2. contribute to children’s well-being at home or at the day care centre (e.g., children’s needs or emotions)
3. help create continuity between the home and the centre
4. focus on including parents in the daily life of the centre

Based on the previous literature review, we expect that parents who communicate about the child’s daily experiences in the day care and typical routines and practices and who talk about joint activities (e.g., [Einarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir, 2019](#)), can familiarise themselves with the centres’ practices, which, in turn, may help them feel at ease (e.g., [Hemmerich et al., 2021](#)) and create continuity between the practices at home and the centres (e.g., [Norheim & Moser, 2020](#)). This continuity can improve the child’s learning and development (e.g., [Formosinho & Passos, 2019](#)). In addition, this type of communication can help the educators familiarise themselves with the children’s language and cultural backgrounds (e.g., [Bezcioglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2018](#)). In addition, this may help the children feel at ease and contribute to their continuity at home. Moreover, including parents in the daily life of the day care centre may also help parents understand how the centre works – its activities and rituals – which, in turn, can help them create continuity between practices at home in ECEC (point 3) or feel at ease (their own well-being, point 2). This, again, can help educators implement the programme of multilingual education that promotes both language development and respect for children’s language and cultural backgrounds (which goes back to point 1). Finally, all four points gathered are the elements of what we call ‘goal-oriented communication’.

In the following sections, we aim to present a selection of factors found in the literature that influence communication between parents and educators. These are: (1) parent satisfaction, (2) parent involvement, (3) educators’ attitudes, (4) parents’ socio-economic background, and (5) material and human resources in the ECEC centres. Based on our literature review, all factors are of importance in multilingual contexts, such as Luxembourg. The exploration of these factors will further help us identify the most significant ones in the specific context of ECEC in Luxembourg that we will analyse both with quantitative and qualitative methods. While the quantitative analysis will help us pinpoint significant factors statistically, the qualitative analysis will provide a better understanding of the ways in which these factors interact dynamically in the actual practice.

2. Factors influencing communication

2.1. Parent satisfaction

One of the major factors that influence communication, and thus collaboration between parents and educators, is parent satisfaction, which seems to be a multidimensional construct ([Friedman et al., 2006](#); [Payne et al., 2012](#)). It is often defined as parent satisfaction with their children’s education including the teachers and the curriculum ([Fantuzzo et al., 2006](#)). Parent satisfaction has been particularly explored in the ECEC context as studies show that this factor determines parental school choice for their children ([Friedman et al., 2007](#)). For example, based on the analysis of a survey with 648 parents in the preschool context, [Fantuzzo et al. \(2006\)](#) identified three most important dimensions of parent satisfaction: teacher contact (e.g., communication with preschool teacher), classroom contact (e.g., involvement in the classroom activities), and overall school contact. Moreover, [Payne et al. \(2012\)](#) suggested that the construct of parent satisfaction for under school-age children in essence involves two dimensions: time-related (caregiver dependability and convenience) and quality-related (caregiver attentiveness, communication, and cost) dimensions (p. 237), where, once again, communication between parents and educators has been put upfront.

Parent satisfaction is closely linked with parent involvement, which is directly related to the development of children’s cognitive and socioemotional skills (e.g., [Fantuzzo et al., 2006](#)) and parental school choice ([Friedman et al., 2007](#)). A different line of research has shown that parents’ evaluation of their satisfaction with the quality of the ECEC programme quality, for example, is not correlated with the external evaluation of this programme (e.g., [Bassok et al., 2018](#); [Kelesidou et al., 2017](#)). However, research findings regarding the parent satisfaction construct are not straightforward and sometimes contradictory ([Kelesidou et al., 2017](#)). It is not always clear what parents exactly think of when they rate their satisfaction, which is the topic of the following studies.

A study conducted in the Czech Republic by [Wiegerová and Gavora \(2018\)](#) showed that 500 parents who enrolled 2-year-old children in the preschool were satisfied with the institutional education and care on account of the perceived progress of their children in relation to learning routines, making new friends, and learning knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, the authors conclude that the real sources of parent satisfaction with the preschool are unknown and that more research is needed related to preschool teachers’ activities, their approach to children as well as the overall preschool climate ([Wiegerová & Gavora, 2018](#)).

In a study conducted in Australia, 302 parents from 19 early childhood centres participated in a survey about their satisfaction with the interactions with educators ([Almendingen et al., 2022](#)). There were four topics that concerned the parents the most: children’s behaviour, toilet training, health and hygiene, and social development. Most of the parents (92 %) were satisfied with the ways they interacted with the educators in relation to these four topics. In addition, 22 % of parents elaborated that their satisfaction depended on

respectful and responsive educators, and collaborative problem-solving. Parent satisfaction was impeded by negative interactions with educators when parents felt not respected (Almendingen et al., 2022). Therefore, parents who felt respected by educators reported high satisfaction when they interacted with educators and rose concerns about their children. Feeling heard and valued by educators was essential for effective communication, relationship building based on mutual trust, and effective joint problem-solving (p. 534).

Another study on parent satisfaction was conducted in the United States and involved 906 low-income parents of 4-year-olds attending a Head Start programme (Bassok et al., 2018). One of the aims was to examine whether parent satisfaction was correlated with programme characteristics, including (a) observational assessments of teacher-child interactions, (b) structural features of the programme (e.g., teacher education, class size), (c) practical and convenience factors (e.g., hours, cost), and (d) a measure of average classroom learning gains (p. 1). The analysis showed that nearly 70 % of the parents were satisfied with the programme. About 75 % strongly agreed with the statements that the programme supports children's academic and social development, has a warm and affectionate caregiver, is a safe environment, and is affordable (p. 8). However, only 44 % reported that child-teacher interactions were among parents' most important features. Interestingly, only 3 % of the variation of parental satisfaction was explained by the programme features (Bassok et al., 2018). Parents tend to report their satisfaction with the programme in general, however, it is unclear what exact factors contributed to their satisfaction as this study showed that parental satisfaction was not correlated with more than 15 programme features. Bassok et al. (2018) comment that it is possible that low-income families chose programmes based on location and affordability and that their responses in self-reports might be socially desirable. Another possibility is that the parents might decrease their anxiety and dissatisfaction with the programme by reporting higher satisfaction in self-reports (Bassok et al., 2018).

Regarding parent satisfaction in a more culturally and linguistically diverse context, Norheim et al. (2022) found parents with Turkish immigration backgrounds in Norway to be mostly satisfied with the partnership with educators due to almost no discrimination, educators and parents agreeing on the importance of culturally sensitive practices and the educator's education which included a strong preparation for working with parents. Qualitative studies support these claims and also suggest that parent satisfaction is a key requisite for parents' involvement and collaboration with their child's educational setting (Park & Turnbull, 2001). Kalicki (2010) for example concluded that parents with a high interest in the centre's educational philosophy used different communication tools more often than others. As already indicated, parent satisfaction is closely linked with parent involvement (Leong et al., 2019), which we elaborate on in the following.

2.2. Parent involvement

In the past, family involvement was considered rather unidimensional, mostly referring to parents attending parent-teacher meetings or volunteering in the classroom (Fantuzzo et al., 2000). Today, by contrast, parent involvement is seen as a complex and multi-layered factor (Aghallaj et al., 2020; Leong et al., 2019) that includes learning activities both at school and at home with the aim to connect both environments and promote children's learning (Fantuzzo et al., 2000; Leong et al., 2019). Formosinho and Passos (2019) go even further and differentiate between pedagogic, organisational, community, associative, and policy involvement, with the families participating at all levels.

Involvement is particularly important for immigrant and multilingual families since the ECEC is the first point of interaction with their children's educational system. Research shows that immigrant parents' involvement in Head Start programmes significantly contributes to children's mental health and well-being (Yngvesson & Garvis, 2021), children's school readiness and their cognitive achievement (e.g., Cooper & Lanza, 2014). Since many immigrant families have been reported to struggle with work schedules, cultural and language barriers (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016), and the educators' deficit-oriented view on parent involvement (Kim, 2009), they were portrayed as not getting involved with schools (Leong et al., 2019). Sollars (2020) found that invited parents needed support and reassurance to transcend the power imbalance in place. Immigrant and multilingual families might not have a social network and could have different perceptions of how to educate their children, which is why it is important to listen to their views and experience (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016). They appreciate gestures of teachers that indicate that they truly care, and smiles during talks that show real interest in the families' needs, in addition to conversations about the child's needs (Lohmann et al., 2018).

While many studies wrote about parental involvement, few described what it entails. In the Luxembourgish context, our team examined the interactions between educators, the three-year-old children, and their parents in literacy activities in multilingual centres. The parents read stories in the centre's dominant language or their home languages and conversed at times with children about the book. Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin (2023) note that these so-called "joint activities" between parents and educators are scarce in Luxembourg. Furthermore, the results from observations and interviews in two multilingual centres show that the role of parents differed. In one centre, they tended to have an active role and were supported by the educators, whereas in the other one, the educators did not give a role to the parents, which resulted in the latter being more passive. The parents' agency depended on the centre's pedagogy and the reasons for collaboration: while the first centre was based on community values and social constructivist learning theories, this was not the case in the second one, where the educators seemed to invite parents simply to comply with the multilingual programme that called for collaboration. However, Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin (2023) note that the centres in question did not involve all the parents, which reflects the difficulty of involving parents from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which may be due to educators' strong ideologies and attitudes towards parents (e.g., Aghallaj et al., 2020). We elaborate this in the following.

2.3. Educator's attitudes

Previous studies have found an association between the educators' attitudes, the collaboration between educators and parents, and the successful implementation of programmes in educational settings (Żylicz & Rycielska, 2016). A study by Wanat (2010), for

example, indicated that parents often reported an educator's attitude seemingly reflecting a negative notion towards parental involvement. This deficit view discouraged collaboration and communication between these two parties. [Licardo and Leite \(2022\)](#) found that parents and educators had difficulties forming a good partnership when educators had a deficit view of the parents' capabilities. These findings may also be interpreted as indicating that parents and educators have positive attitudes toward each other when they see themselves as equal partners. A study by [Addi-Raccah and Ainhoren \(2009\)](#) confirms that educators have positive attitudes toward collaboration with parents when parents and educators share some power and regularly communicate. One possible source of negative attitudes is the cultural difference between educators and parents. When educators experience parental involvement that may be typical of the parents' country of origin, but unusual in their centre (and country), they may develop negative attitudes ([Bezcioglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2018](#)). Linguistic and cultural ideologies play an important role in the collaboration between educators and parents, as shown in the systematic review of [Aghallaj et al. \(2020\)](#). Educators often distinguish parents based on political and social categories such as nationality, religion, and poverty, and position themselves accordingly ([Betz & Bischoff, 2018](#)). Linguistic and cultural mismatches between educators and parents can be overcome, however, by the educators' openness and efforts.

Overall, previous research studies have established a link between parent-teacher collaboration and teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement (e.g., [Swap, 1993](#)). In line with this, it has been suggested that teachers with positive attitudes are significantly more likely to create and engage in partnerships with parents ([Shick, 1997](#)). Negative attitudes, on the other hand, have been suggested to hinder these types of partnerships ([Lazar & Slostad, 1999](#)).

2.4. Parents socio-economic background

Various studies have investigated the association between the parents' socio-economic status (SES) and their participation in childhood development programmes such as those offered by day care centres ([Mkhize, 2018](#)). Parents' socio-economic status is a determining factor in how educators communicate with families ([Ankrum, 2016](#)). For example, [Betz et al. \(2017\)](#) found that parents with a low SES were more prone to seek informal exchanges than parents with a high SES. As well, some parents with a low SES or migration background experienced more difficulties when participating in schools due to linguistic barriers or their ways of engaging that were perceived as "unusual" and were, therefore, often unrecognized forms of collaboration (p. 22). [Epstein \(2005\)](#) notes that when parents have equal opportunities to be involved, the socio-economic background ceases to have a significant effect.

The consensus seems to be that parents from low socio-economic status have limited resources both in regard to time and money. They also tend to be less comfortable around educators which keeps them from engaging in collaboration ([Machen et al., 2005](#)). These circumstances may be one of the driving forces for the negative association between socio-economic status and participation in ECEC programmes, with parents from a lower SES participating less than those of higher SES ([Alam & Ogawa, 2023](#); [Mkhize, 2018](#)). However, this relation seems to be bidirectional since some researchers found that schools in low-income areas invited parents less, thereby making collaboration harder for parents ([Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007](#)).

Finally, parent educational level influences both parent involvement and satisfaction; however, the findings are not unequivocal ([Kelesidou et al., 2017](#)). For example, in the large nationally representative sample related to the Head Start programme in the US, [Leong et al. \(2019\)](#) found that mothers with higher education who were employed showed higher expectations of their children and were more involved in their children's education than mothers with higher education who were not employed and who may have a different approach to their children's early education.

2.5. Material and human resources

Other factors relevant for the present exploration on the influence on communication between parents and educators, especially in multilingual contexts, are material (e.g., dictionaries) and human resources (e.g., mediators, translators). As seen previously, communication between parents and educators can be challenging on account of linguistic barriers, which may be highest in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts ([Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014](#); [Wagner et al., 2012](#)). The use of translators may be helpful in these cases. This is further supported by a study showing that many parents indicate a preference for using their native language in important meetings to ensure that they understand the different ideas and notions brought forward by the educators ([Larocque et al., 2011](#); [Wolfe & Duran, 2013](#)). In case of cultural mismatches between educators and parents, the use of mediators is useful as they can act as bicultural advocates who connect people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds ([Rossetti et al., 2017](#)). Over time, educators may be able to fill these roles as they learn more about the relevant cultures, their experiences, and expectations.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the context of the study as well as the study aims and research questions. It is followed by the description of the participants. To respond to our research questions, the methods, the data analyses, and the findings are organised by presenting the quantitative data first coming from the questionnaires with parents and educators, followed by the qualitative ones emerging from the interviews and the observations with parents and educators.

3.1. Context of the study

Owing to the multilingual language policy implemented in 2017, children aged 1–3 enrolled in day care centres are familiarized with Luxembourgish and French, and their home languages are valued, for instance on account of the cooperation with parents. Given

the focus on parent involvement, the research project XXX (2020- 2023) investigated collaboration between parents and educators in day care centres in Luxembourg to better understand and support its development. Upon approval of the project by the Ethics Review Panel of the University of Luxembourg (ERP 19–050), the researchers conducted two anonymized surveys with parents and educators and carried out observations and interviews in three centres that volunteered to participate over one academic year (Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023). The observational and interview data presented in this article come from the centres we named *Earth* (West), where Luxembourgish was the dominant language, and *Air* (Centre) where staff spoke predominantly French.

3.2. Aims and research questions

The aim of the present study is to identify the most significant factors that influence goal-oriented communication between parents and early childhood educators in Luxembourg, given its importance for collaboration. From the literature review, we identified the following relevant factors: parent satisfaction, parent involvement, educators' attitudes, parent socio-economic background, and material and human resources. Therefore, we will firstly explore the factors quantitatively to identify the most significant ones in the multilingual context of Luxembourg. Secondly, we will illustrate the dynamic interplay between the most significant factors through observations and interviews with selected parents. Thus, our research questions are as follows:

RQ1. What are the factors that influence goal-oriented communication between parents and early educators in multilingual Luxembourg?

RQ2. How can we identify the dynamic interplay between the most significant factors in practice?

3.3. Participants

Our study involves parents and educators. They both completed a questionnaire on home-school collaboration in 2020 that enabled us to analyse and identify the most significant factors that influence goal-oriented communication. Once the most significant factors were identified, we further analysed interviews and observations in which parents and educators took part to obtain an illustrative example of a dynamic interplay of these factors. We will thus describe our participants who filled in the questionnaires, followed by those who took part in the interviews and the observations.

3.3.1. Questionnaires

Parents. After conducting the missing value analysis, in which cases with more than 50 % of missing answers were removed, the final sample included 323 participants. Of these participants, 86 % were mothers. Regarding their education, 55 % of the participants completed post-secondary education, 25 % secondary school, 12 % vocational secondary school, while 8 % did not complete secondary education. As for their income, 91 % reported to earn an income. Finally, concerning their mother tongues, 29 % reported it to be Luxembourgish, 23 % French, 19 % Portuguese, while the remaining third reported 30 other languages (e.g., Italian, Spanish, Romanian, Hungarian, etc.).

Educators. Of the 289 educators who completed the questionnaires on collaboration, 54 % worked in non-profit organizations. In addition, 53 % were specialized educators in multilingual education and almost 60 % had been working in a day care centre for less than ten years (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021). Regarding the languages used at home, French was the most frequently reported followed by Luxembourgish and Portuguese. Similarly, when asked about the use of children's home languages in the centre, the educators reported French to be the most frequent one (97 %), followed by Luxembourgish (94 %), Portuguese (90 %), English (57 %), Italian (57 %) and German (52 %) (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021, p. 540).

3.3.2. Interviews

Parents. The focus parents in the two centres were chosen on account of language diversity. Each family had one or two different home languages: they communicated in French, Italian, Swiss German, Russian, and Icelandic with their children aged two to four. The focus parents had completed secondary school or post-secondary education and their employment ranged from administrator to vet which suggests lower to middle SES. The two mothers focused on in this article, the parents of Etienne and Cécilia, were multilingual and raised their children in French, and Italian and French, respectively. They had completed higher education and had a high SES.

Educators. We interviewed the manager of *Earth* as well as her deputy who both worked with the two to three-year-olds. Both were multilingual. In *Air*, we interviewed the manager, the vice manager, and the leader of the group of the three-year-olds. All had acquired a post-secondary school qualification.

3.3.3. Observations

In each centre, we observed in the group of the two - to three-year-olds. The two educators observed in *Earth* addressed children mainly in Luxembourgish, but they did not hesitate to communicate in French or German in addition. One educator also addressed children in Portuguese. In *Air*, we observed three educators who communicated with children in French.

3.4. Measures and procedures

3.4.1. Questionnaires

Parents. The questionnaire on collaboration between educators and parents, developed by the third author and based on the work

of Betz et al. (2017), Lengyel and Salem (2019) and Reynolds et al. (2017), is composed of five parts with 148 items in total. In this paper, we explore the part of the questionnaire that focuses on the aims of the collaboration between parents and educators, and more specifically, the factors that influence this collaboration. There are 31 items that cover this topic showing a very good reliability (*Cronbach alpha* = 0.88). For example, the participants were asked to indicate their agreement on a 6-point Likert scale ('strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree') on items such as: "I am pleased with the collaboration in my day care centre" (this item corresponded to our variable *parent satisfaction*). Moreover, they were asked to indicate their involvement: "I usually use my home language when I sing/dance with children in the day care centre" and "I usually use my home language when I read/tell stories to children in the day care centre". This has been a composite variable for *parent involvement* that was defined as activities "in which the parents and educators jointly read and tell stories when the parents come to the day care centre (thereafter joint activities)" in home languages (Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023, p. 2). Furthermore, a set of items asked the parents to indicate their views on factors that influence collaboration: "The existing collaboration between educators and parents depends largely on: (a) *material resources* (e.g., rooms, books; thus our variable *material resources*), (b) *human resources* (e.g., translators, mediators), (c) *the educators' professional attitudes towards parents*, (d) *the parents' socio-economic background*, (e) the educators' language competence, (f) the parents' time" and so forth.

Educators. The online questionnaire on collaboration (*Cronbach alpha* = 0.85), developed by the third author, is similar to the parent questionnaire and composed of five sections that contain 118 questions in total. The first two parts are about the educators' professional and personal situations. The third part includes the educators' reasons for collaborating, their aims and expectations as well as the importance they attribute to collaboration (24 questions). Part 4 includes the same questions on satisfaction with collaboration as the parent questionnaire and explores their views on the following factors that influence the collaboration: *the educators' professional attitudes towards parents*, *material resources* (e.g., rooms, books), *human resources* (e.g., translators, mediators), and *parents' socio-economic background* (12 items). This fourth part also contains 10 questions on the frequency of current events involving educators and parents (e.g., passing conversations, personal meetings, parent cafés, and activities offered by parents) as well as 6 questions on the language use in joint events and the frequency thereof (Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021, p. 539). The last part is about the desirable collaboration between educators and parents (35 questions; e.g. 'How often do you wish that, in the future, parents/ family members read/ tell stories with children in the day care centre').

3.4.2. Interviews

Parents and educators. We conducted semi-structured interviews with the educators and the parents and asked them to report their experiences of collaboration and describe highlights and challenges. In January 2021 we interviewed the managers and in May 2021 and we spoke to an educator in each centre. The interviews, conducted in Luxembourgish in *Earth* and in French in *Air*, lasted on average 1 hour and 51 min. We interviewed four mothers and one father in November/December 2020 and July 2021 in the preferred language of the parents, for instance in Luxembourgish with Etienne's mother and in French with Cécilia's mother.

3.4.3. Observations

We regularly observed the educators and made video-recordings and thick descriptions. The present article zooms in on the moments when the parents came to the centres and when the educators and parents jointly engaged children in joint literacy activities (Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023), referred to hereafter as parent involvement. We video-recorded five parents who come to the centre to read and sing in *Earth*. Four others came to sing, and one wrote with the children. In *Air*, seven parents read a story and two also sang a song. Etienne's and Cécilia's mother came both twice.

3.5. Analyses

Questionnaires. To identify the predictors of the outcome goal-oriented communication and thus answer our first research question, we conducted a multiple regression analysis, which included parent satisfaction, parent involvement (joint activities in home languages led by parents), educators' attitudes, parent socio-economic status, and material and human resources, the factors identified in the literature review.

Interviews. All interviews were transcribed and analysed with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The initial codes related to the educators' and parents' motivation for collaboration and goals, their experiences, perceived benefits of collaboration, the role of the centre, and ways of communication. A more fine-grained analysis focused on the parents' and educators' attitudes towards collaboration in general, parents and language use as well as the parents' satisfaction. The second and third authors analysed the data separately, shared their analysis, and held subsequent meetings on the dynamic interplay of the attitudes, satisfaction, and parent involvement.

Observations. All 24 video-recordings of parent involvement in joint literacy activities led by the parents were transcribed. The thematic analysis focused on the language use, the attitudes of the actors (e.g., openness to languages) as well as their pedagogical roles (e.g., partner, leader, expert, listener). Further details are presented in Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin (2023).

4. Results

4.1. Factors in the quantitative data: questionnaires

The aim of the quantitative analysis was to identify the most significant factors that influence goal-oriented communication considering the factors identified in the literature. We first start with the analysis that involves the parents and then move on to the

analysis that involves the educators.

4.1.1. Parents

A regression analysis investigating the predictors of goal-oriented communication was conducted. In this analysis, goal-oriented communication was composed of the child's cultural, social and religious background, including parents in the daily life of the day care centres, contributing to children's well-being at home and ensuring continuity between the home and the centre.

The data met the assumption of independent errors (*Durbin-Watson value* = 2.09) and multicollinearity was not found (*VIF* = 1.41). The only significant variable was satisfaction with collaboration in the centre ($\beta = 0.42, p < .001$; 95 % CI [.87, 1.87]) controlling for parent involvement, educators' professional attitudes towards parents, parents' socio-economic background and material and human resources (Table 1). Satisfaction with collaboration in the centre explained 24 % of the goal-oriented communication variance ($R^2 = 0.24, F(6, 147) = 7.39, p < .001$).

4.1.2. Educators

Another regression analysis investigating the predictors of goal-oriented communication was conducted, this time for the educators. The outcome, goal-oriented communication, was composed of the child's cultural, social and religious background, including parents in the daily life of the day care centre, contributing to children's well-being at home and ensuring continuity between the home and the centre.

The data met the assumption of independent errors (*Durbin-Watson value* = 1.98) and multicollinearity was not found (*VIF* = 1.21). The significant variables were educators' professional attitudes towards parents ($\beta = 0.17, p < .050$; 95 % CI [.08, 0.65]) and parent involvement ($\beta = 0.18, p < .010$; 95 % CI [.05, 0.31]) controlling for satisfaction with collaboration, parents' socio-economic background and material and human resources (Table 2). Educators' professional attitudes towards parents and parent involvement explained 8 % ($R^2 = 0.08, F(6, 256) = 3.42, p < .010$), each predictor contributing a half, of the outcome's variance (Table 2).

4.2. Factors in the qualitative data: interviews and observations

With the significant factors identified, we proceeded with the qualitative analysis to respond to the second research question. The aim was to show the dynamic interplay between the most significant factors found in the regression analyses, which are parent satisfaction, parent involvement in activities in children's home languages and educator's attitudes. How do these factors interact in practice? We will now showcase the interplay of these three factors by drawing on the qualitative data in *Earth* and *Air*.

4.3. Educator's attitudes towards collaboration and multilingualism in joint activities

The organisation of several joint activities in *Earth* and *Air* and of two larger events in *Earth* which were attended by all parents, testifies to the educators' willingness to collaborate with parents and their positive attitudes in general. They invited parents to the centres and were flexible with dates and time slots. Nevertheless, the parents in *Earth* came more frequently, stayed several hours, and engaged in a wider range of activities than the parents of *Air* who tended to stay a quarter of an hour and tell stories. This was the result of the centres' different pedagogies and aims of collaboration.

The educators in *Earth* focused on communal values and wished to increase the children's and parents' participation in meaningful ways (Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023). They perceived the parents as equal partners, knew them well, and approached them when they felt parents could contribute, for instance by helping them harvest apples and plants, make a fire, cook, tell a story, or sing in a particular language. Ms Dominique explained that "we go up to them and ask them if they would like to do this jointly" and commented "how happy their children were when they came." The educators in *Air* were similarly aware of the benefits of collaboration for the children and mentioned "the wonder, the pride of a child" when a parent was present (Ms Angélique, manager of *Air*). Compared to the more holistic approach of *Earth*, the educators in *Air* deployed a more formal approach to develop children's knowledge and skills. Their goal of collaboration seemed highly influenced by the national framework which requests educators to value children's languages and cultures. As the educators were not knowledgeable of all languages spoken by the children, they invited parents to the centre to tell stories in their home languages and felt that parents who spoke languages other than French made a "huge contribution".

Table 1

Regression results for goal-oriented communication.

| Variable | 95 % CI for B | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|---------------|-------|--------------|
| | B | LL | UL | SE B | β | R^2 | ΔR^2 |
| Constant | 10.96*** | 7.80 | 14.13 | 1.60 | | .24 | .24*** |
| Satisfaction | 1.37*** | 0.87 | 1.87 | .19 | .42*** | | |
| Parent involvement | 0.00 | -0.09 | 0.10 | .05 | .02 | | |
| Educators' attitudes | 0.28 | 0.11 | -0.19 | .74 | .09 | | |
| Parents SES | 0.11 | -0.11 | -0.13 | .36 | .07 | | |
| Material resources | 0.31 | -0.04 | 0.66 | .18 | .19 | | |
| Human resources | -0.24 | -0.46 | -1.43 | .15 | -0.15 | | |

Note. CI = Confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; * $p > .05$. ** $p > .01$. *** $p > .001$.

Table 2
Regression results for goal-oriented communication.

| Variable | 95 % CI for B | | | | | R ² | ΔR ² |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | B | LL | UL | SE B | β | | |
| Constant | 17.71*** | 15.79 | 19.62 | .97 | | .08 | .08** |
| Satisfaction | −0.76 | −0.36 | 0.21 | .14 | −0.03 | | |
| Parent involvement | 0.18** | 0.05 | 0.30 | .06 | .18 | .03 | .03** |
| Educators' attitudes | 0.37* | 0.08 | 0.65 | .15 | .17 | .03 | .03** |
| Parents SES | 0.03 | −0.16 | 0.22 | .10 | .02 | | |
| Material resources | 0.17 | −0.06 | 0.39 | .11 | .11 | | |
| Human resources | −0.01 | −0.20 | 0.19 | .10 | −0.01 | | |

Note. CI = Confidence interval; LL= lower limit; UL = upper limit; * $p > .05$. ** $p > .01$. *** $p > .001$.

According to Ms Angélique, the educators “are taking the input directly from the parents where they feel less comfortable in the languages.” Parents were perceived as experts in their home language and culture who visit to share their knowledge. The educators even referred to them as “interventionist educators.” The parents in *Earth* similarly communicated in their home language but sharing a language appeared to be an organic by-product of engaging in common activities with other members of this multilingual community.

The educators' perceptions of the role of the parents and their attitudes towards them influenced the interactions between the educators and the parents during the joint activities. A good relationship with the parents was essential for the educators in *Earth* as it made collaborative events possible. At the same time, collaboration improved the relationships and brought the educational actors closer. “There is no longer that distance”, reported Ms Joana. In her words: “You know the parents better (...) you know exactly what to tell them, and they know you better and we see them more” (Ms Joana). All parents attended the events organised for Carnival and Easter, and many came to the centre to engage in joint activities. The relationships between the parents and the educators of *Air* were less close. Ms Laura, the vice manager, explained that they did not expect all parents to come owing to their lack of time, motivation, and reservations:

You have the parents who clearly don't care and (...) those who are ready, but still a bit reserved because they're shy because they're afraid of doing the wrong thing because it's not their job (Ms Laura).

At the same time, Ms Laura referred to the “educational triangle”, and insisted that parents were indispensable and that they intended to further develop collaboration.

To illustrate the ways the educators' attitudes towards collaboration and their openness towards languages shape joint activities, we have selected two representative examples, one of each centre.

4.4. Parent involvement in joint activities in home languages

The vignettes below show two activities led by mothers in October 2020. Both were observed and interviewed several times in the project; they came across as very invested in their child's development, open to collaboration, and showed leadership skills.

4.4.1. Vignette 1: apple song in earth

Etienne's mother came to the centre to join the group to the orchard and pick some apples. She had brought a story about apples as well as a French song about a farmer who went to the market and carried apples in a basket on her head. She asked her bilingual two-year-old in French to help her teach the song. Etienne was the youngest child in the group and spoke Luxembourgish least well. While she communicated in French with Etienne, she addressed the group in Luxembourgish to ensure all children understood her. She sang the song and explained what the children were supposed to do with their basket and how they were supposed to move. She realized immediately that the range of movements combined with the language of the song was too difficult for the (on average) three-year-olds and mentioned this to the Ms Dominique. Ms Dominique did not stop the complicated activity, rather, together with the mother, they decided upon the children's request to perform the song a second time. As Ms Dominique was now familiar with the song, she was able to support the children. She showed the movements and explained them. Altogether, the group sang the song five times, with the adults adapting it each time to make it easier for the children to participate. The mother suggested singing without the basket and Ms Dominique holding hands and making a round, which made it easier for the children to understand when to move forward and sideways. The mother and Ms Dominique worked well in a team, feeding from each other's suggestions. The children eventually managed to make the appropriate movements at the right moments while the adults sang. Etienne was observed singing a few words along while also playing with the apples. The children's cheers and requests for “encores” testified to their enjoyment. The laughter from the mother was a sign of her pleasure as well.

The analysis of this observation shows the natural way in which the educator and the mother worked together. They were both open to the use of two languages, perceived each other as partners, and build on each other's suggestions to adapt the activity to suit the children's needs. They were also open to children's requests to sing the song multiple times and they accommodated Etienne's playful behaviour. The mother, who spent several hours in the centre, visibly enjoyed the activity. She came back in December to read a story. The event is typical of others observed in *Earth* (Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023).

4.4.2. Vignette 2: little red riding hood in air

Cécilia's mother narrated the *Little Red Riding Hood* in Italian which the children had previously heard in the centre in French. She had prepared a little theatre with figurines for the characters to visualize the story and brought some fitting music. She sat in front of the children who sat in a semi-circle while the educators sat at the back of the room. The mother asked a few questions in Italian which three Italian-speaking children understood, before she began to narrate in Italian with rhythm and changes of volume which caught the children's attention for a few minutes. Soon, the first children began to get restless and moved away. One of the educators intervened twice to move the children back into the circle. The mother was able to get the attention of most children back by asking them to enact parts of the story, for instance, by putting stones into a box representing the wolf. Cécilia was unhappy as she was not always picked by her mother and started crying. She moved closer to her mother, regained her calm and smiles, and browsed through the book of Little Red Riding Hood. The mother seemed comfortable in her role. Having finished the story, she asked a few questions in Italian, which the children could not answer, and encouraged them to look at the figurines and the book. While most children took an interest in the figurines, the two educators chatted at the back of the room.

The brief analysis of this thirty-minute activity shows that the educators were open to the mother telling a story in Italian and playing a leading role. They became the listeners and left the floor to the "interventionist" who worked on her own. The educators neither reminded the children that they had narrated the same fairy tale in French nor engaged them in a conversation about it. While the educators and the mother had spoken about this activity before the event, there were hardly any exchanges between them when the mother was present. The roles of the educator and the parent were typical and also observed in other joint activities observed in *Air*.

Parents' satisfaction. While the mothers of Etienne and Cécilia, representative of other parents, played different roles in the activities mentioned in the vignettes and while their relationships with the educators seemed to differ, both expressed their satisfaction with the event itself. Furthermore, both were very satisfied with the educators' efforts to promote collaboration. Both also saw their respective centres as open and inclusive towards parents. Etienne's mother commented "it is awesome, it is a great crèche, I am absolutely impressed" while Cécilia's mother shared a similar feeling. She "adored" the centre and stated: "I think that it is good that they open their door in relation to [collaboration]."

All parents in the centres *Earth* and *Air* seemed satisfied with the joint activities if they perceived that the educators had made some efforts. This effort motivated them to come and lead or participate in different types of activities. As shown in the interviews, the educators were perceived as open and interested and this seemed enough for the parents to be satisfied. In the case of *Air*, however, the attitudes of the educators were not positive enough to truly engage educators and parents in relationship-building. By contrast, in *Earth*, the educators' positive attitudes and their understanding of parents as equal partners resulted in frequent and meaningful joint events that propelled the educator-parent relationship to a new level. Commenting on the relationship, Ms Joana reported:

It is a completely different exchange and I think that we need to keep this going as it is so much easier to work like this. (...) They [the parents] also feel better to leave their child here and we also know that we can tell the mother if it was not a good day.

In summary, the analysis of the qualitative data shows that the attitudes of the educators played a significant role in their collaboration with the parents and the parents' offer of activities in the centre. More positive attitudes resulted in more frequent and longer visits by the parents. The parents, who had spoken to the educators about the activity and thereafter invested time and effort, were satisfied with the activity as well as with collaboration in general. The ongoing exchanges contributed to relationship-building, which in turn, reinforced collaboration.

5. Discussion

The aim of the present study was twofold: (1) to identify the significant predictors that influence goal-oriented communication between parents and educators in multilingual ECEC centres in Luxembourg, and (2) to showcase a dynamic interplay between these factors in practice through observations and interviews. We started with the literature review on factors that influence collaboration between parents and educators, which showed significant positive effects on children's development, their well-being, higher pre-literacy skills, overall school readiness, cooperative behaviour and learning (e.g., Arnold et al., 2008; Barnard, 2004; Hemmerich et al., 2021; and many others). We identified that the studies that explore collaboration in early education in multilingual contexts are scarce (e.g., Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023; Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016; Leong et al., 2019) possibly due to the limited involvement of parents with multiple cultural and language backgrounds, which may be due to educators' ideologies and attitudes (e.g., Aghallaj et al., 2020). Communication, a key to collaboration, was found to be influenced by parent satisfaction, parent involvement and the educators' attitudes. Respect and empathy as well as the feeling to be recognized (Almendingen et al., 2022; Bezcioglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2018) contribute to collaboration and are particularly important for parents of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016) who may not share the expectations of the ECEC educators (Einarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir, 2019). Authentic dialogue (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014), open and attentive communication, daily interactions, as well as the development of mutual understanding (Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016) positively influence collaboration, which, in turn, contributes to children's development and learning.

Given the scarcity of research on collaboration in multilingual contexts, we were interested in identifying factors that influence what we call "goal-oriented communication" that goes beyond exchanging basic information and focuses on child development and learning (e.g., Hemmerich et al., 2021; Norheim & Moser, 2020). We proposed that it should relate to children's language, cultural, social, and religious background; contribute to their well-being (e.g., needs or emotions), help create home-centre continuity, and focus on parent involvement in the centre. We assumed that good communication would provide opportunities for collaboration and facilitate the implementation of the multilingual education programme that focuses on developing and respecting children's languages

and cultures. All these factors interact; there is a continuity that ultimately positively influences children's development, well-being, and learning (e.g., [Formosinho & Passos, 2019](#)).

To answer the first research question, regarding the significant factors that influence goal-oriented communication, a key element of collaboration, we conducted two regression analyses, one involving parents ($N = 323$) and the other educators ($N = 289$). The regression analysis with parents showed that the most significant factor that influenced goal-oriented communication was parent satisfaction ($\beta = 0.42, p < .001$; 95 % CI [.87, 1.87]), controlling for parent involvement, educators' professional attitudes towards parents, parents' socio-economic background and material and human resources. This factor explained 24 % of goal-oriented communication variance. Studies show that parent satisfaction is an important element for collaboration as it determines parental school choice for their children later on ([Friedman et al., 2007](#)). Although [Fantuzzo et al. \(2006\)](#) identified three most important dimensions of parent satisfaction, which are teacher contact (e.g., communication with preschool teachers), classroom contact (e.g., involvement in the classroom activities), and overall school contact, this factor remains complex ([Leong et al., 2019](#)) and multidimensional ([Aghallaj et al., 2020](#)).

Furthermore, the regression analysis with the educators showed that the significant variables were educators' professional attitudes towards parents ($\beta = 0.17, p < .050$; 95 % CI [.08, 0.65]) and parent involvement ($\beta = 0.18, p < .010$; 95 % CI [.05, 0.31]) controlling for satisfaction with collaboration, parents' socio-economic background and material and human resources. Educators' professional attitudes towards parents and parent involvement explained 8 % of the goal-oriented communication variance. These factors have been well explored in the literature showing the importance for the collaboration. The ECEC is the parents' first point of interaction with children's educational system, and it is particularly important for immigrant and multilingual families ([Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016](#)). It is also important for the educators' deficit-oriented view towards them ([Kim, 2009](#)), which brings us to the importance of educators' attitudes. For example, [Aghallaj et al. \(2020\)](#) showed that linguistic and cultural ideologies play a significant role in the collaboration between parents and educators, which could be overcome by the educators' openness and efforts. [Licardo and Leite \(2022\)](#) also found that when educators have deficit view of parent capabilities, this hindered their collaboration.

To answer our second research question, regarding the dynamic interplay between the most significant factors identified in the regression analyses: parent satisfaction, parent involvement, and educators' attitudes, we opted for describing the results from interviews and observations of parent involvement in literacy activities in two multilingual centres. This analysis is closely linked to the previous work where one of the centres had been described ([Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023](#)). The analysis of the qualitative data shows that the attitudes of the educators played a significant role in their collaboration with the parents. More positive attitudes were related to more frequent and longer visits of the parents. The educators' attitudes cannot be disentangled from their pedagogical stances. The educators and parents tended to work in a team in *Earth* and use languages flexibly to help children participate. In *Air*, the educators tended to let the parents lead the activities in their home language without facilitating the children's understanding. As such, the educators' and the parents' roles and the understanding thereof influenced the children's experiences. Depending on the language use and the interactions with the parents and between the parents and the educators, children could or could not understand the activity. The children's participation did not seem to influence parent satisfaction. The parents involved were satisfied both with the activity in the centre and collaboration in general whatever the degree of the children's involvement.

This analysis not only shows the dynamic interplay between the significant factors: parent satisfaction, involvement, and educators' attitudes but it also shows that the factors are closely linked (e.g., [Fantuzzo et al., 2006](#)). When educators have positive attitudes, they will communicate more frequently and purposefully, and offer opportunities for parents to be involved, which will then lead to parent satisfaction, as observed in our study. In the observed centres, purposeful communication tended to focus on the content of the activity and more rarely on the use of the languages and the possible impact on children's engagement. The parents of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds seemed to assume that their home languages were welcome and, thus, communicated frequently in their home languages with their own child and the whole group. The parents' feeling of being accepted and respected testifies to the educators' positive attitudes to multilingualism and may indicate that educators and parents paid attention to linguistic and cultural ideologies ([Aghallaj et al., 2020](#); [Betz & Bischoff, 2018](#)). It may also be related to the parents' understanding that all centres must implement a multilingual education programme that values home languages ([Kirsch & Aleksić, 2021](#)). Daily communication, authentic dialogues, and respect drive communication ([Almendingen et al., 2022](#); [Goodall & Montgomery, 2014](#); [Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016](#)). Nevertheless, not all parents communicated or participated equally in events, which is a reminder of the hierarchical relationships which underpin collaboration ([Sollars, 2020](#)). Good communication is particularly important for parents of migrant backgrounds and low SES. If these parents do not feel recognized or respected, they will stop communicating ([Bezcioglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2018](#)) and avoid contact with educators ([Schock & Jeon, 2021](#)). This may result in them showing little involvement with their children's work at home or being rarely present in educational settings ([Leong et al., 2019](#)), which, in turn, will influence their children's development and learning.

5.1. Limitations

One of the study limitations is the low number of day care centres presented in this paper and involved in the whole study. Qualitative studies, however, typically include few settings as the aim is to develop an in-depth understanding through the collection of rich data. In our case, we collected data over one academic year during the COVID-19 pandemic ([Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023](#)). Moreover, given that questionnaires are based on self-reports and could present biased information, especially on the topic of attitudes, satisfaction and involvement, other sources of information could be useful such for example information from diaries for both parents and educators or more frequent videos made by parents and educators. This could add to the validity of the results and show the actual process of goal-oriented communication that can have a changing component.

Another limitation is the fact that most parents observed in centres had a middle or high socio-economic status. It would have been

interesting to examine the involvement of parents of low SES and those speaking lesser-known languages. Further studies could focus on parents of diverse backgrounds to help us understand their experiences with educators in multilingual contexts (e.g., [Bezcioglu-Göktolga & Yagmur, 2018](#); [Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016](#)). However, the range of sources of information, questionnaires with both parents and educators and interviews and observations with educators, parents, and children in joint literacy activities, showcased the importance of study's findings. These can help educators, managers of centres and policymakers develop more frequent collaborative practices that will positively influence children's development, well-being, and learning.

6. Conclusion

Our study identified the important factors that influence goal-oriented communication, a key element for collaboration between parents and educators in multilingual contexts, both through quantitative and qualitative analyses. The factors we identified are parent satisfaction, parent involvement, and educators' attitudes, and their importance is supported by a plethora of studies. Given the tremendous importance that collaboration between parents and educators has on children's development and learning in early education, our study's findings are important and address the gap in research on collaboration between parents and educators in multilingual contexts such as Luxembourg. The previous study ([Kirsch & Bergeron-Morin, 2023](#)) confirmed that collaboration is not a regular practice in multilingual centres where our study took place, even in those in which educators are open for collaboration and have positive attitudes, and where a national programme that calls for collaboration is implemented. The study indicates that parent involvement, in this case joint literacy activities, goes hand in hand with purposeful communication.

6.1. Future directions

The study has several implications. It is interesting to note that the educators identified their attitudes toward parents as a key factor in developing educator-parent communication. This finding is a sign of reflection and may indicate an openness to professional development (PD) where attitudes and deficit views can be discussed and challenged. We therefore call for long-term and enquiry-based PD both for educators and whole centres as training can contribute to changing attitudes, knowledge, and practices ([Kirsch et al., 2020](#)). Recently, a study in Belgium has shown that professionals who participated in PD (regardless of their monolingual or multilingual backgrounds) increased their engagement in dialogue with multilingual parents ([Peleman et al., 2022](#)). Through such training and reflection of their practices, educators could also develop their understanding of culturally specific values and expectations related to child rearing and development, which, in turn, may help them develop mutual understanding of the child's resources and needs ([Einarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir, 2019](#); [Lastikka & Lipponen, 2016](#)). Educational values and norms are, however, never neutral and, thus, a reflection of the power that underpins the hierarchical educator-parent relationships, may help educators involve all parents, particularly those of lower socio-economic status and migration background ([Aghallaj et al., 2020](#); [Licardo & Leite, 2022](#); [Sollars, 2020](#)) whose children may benefit most from the collaboration ([Hemmerich et al., 2021](#)). Because of the scarcity of research on both collaboration and the effects of PD on partnerships in multilingual contexts, more research is needed. A final implication relates to policymakers. While the implementation of the 2017 policy has shown an effect on parent collaboration, there needs to be more guidance in official documents such as the national framework. Guidelines could help educators involve parents of all social, cultural, and economic backgrounds and better prepare joint activities with them, which, in turn, ensures that parent involvement is beneficial to all participants.

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Intellectual property

We confirm that we have given due consideration to the protection of intellectual property associated with this work and that there are no impediments to publication, including the timing of publication, with respect to intellectual property. In so doing we confirm that we have followed the regulations of our institutions concerning intellectual property.

Research ethics

We further confirm that any aspect of the work covered in this manuscript that has involved human patients has been conducted with the ethical approval of all relevant bodies and that such approvals are acknowledged within the manuscript.

IRB approval was obtained (required for studies and series of 3 or more cases)

Written consent to publish potentially identifying information, such as details or the case and photographs, was obtained from the patient(s) or their legal guardian(s).

CReditorship contribution statement

The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) recommends that authorship be based on the following four criteria: 1. Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND 2. Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND 3. Final approval of the version to be published; AND 4. Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved. All those designated as authors should meet all four criteria for authorship, and all who meet the four criteria should be identified as authors. For more information on authorship, please see <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html#two>. All listed authors meet the ICMJE criteria. We attest that all authors contributed significantly to the creation of this manuscript, each having fulfilled criteria as established by the ICMJE. We confirm that the manuscript has been read and approved by all named authors. We confirm that the order of authors listed in the manuscript has been approved by all named authors.

Declaration of competing interest

We wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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