A significant error in number recognition due to multilingualism

It occasionally happens that what we mean is not what we say. Indeed, mistakes do happen. Concretely, if you learned German, most likely you will have made at some point the typical mistake with reversing numbers, namely saying 24 (four and twenty) to mean 42 (two and forty), or conversely. This is because digits are read in a different way in English and German and occasionally in German the digits are read from right to left.

However, I have recently experienced a more surprising mistake related to the above-mentioned difficulty. Namely, a Luxembourgish six-years old without any difficulties with numerical skills was comparing numbers with four digits, for example correctly identifying that 3,300 is smaller than 4,800. However, when the numbers happened to be 2,400 and 4,200, the answer was that the two numbers were the same.

To make a comparison: we may happen to say apple instead of pear, however it is much more astonishing that, given an apple and a pear side-by-side we say that they are the same thing.