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# Language policy and practices in early childhood education and care (ECEC) : a case study of an english-french bilingual crèche in Strasbourg

Eloise Caporal-Ebersold

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**ÉCOLE DOCTORALE DES HUMANITES**  
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# THÈSE

présentée par :

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Discipline/ Spécialité : SCIENCES DU LANGAGE

## **LANGUAGE POLICY AND PRACTICES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC):**

**A Case Study of an English-French Bilingual Crèche in  
Strasbourg**

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To my dear family

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# List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATSEM : Agents territoriaux spécialisés des écoles maternelles

BAC : Baccalauréat is a national diploma certifying the completion of secondary education

BAFA : Le brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur

CAF : Caisses d'allocations familiales

CNAF : Caisse nationale d'allocations familiales

CoE: Council of Europe

DEC: Diplôme d'Etat d'infirmier

DEEJE: Diplôme d'Etat d'éducateur de jeunes enfants

DPAP: diplôme professionnel d'auxiliaire de puériculture

DREES : Direction de la recherche, des études, de l'évaluation et des statistiques

ECEC: Early Childhood Education and Care

EJE: éducateurs de jeunes enfants

ESPE : École supérieure du professorat et de l'éducation

EU: European Union

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

LAPE: lieu d'accueil parents-enfants

LP: Language Policy

LPP: Language Planning and Policy; Language Policy and Planning

MEN: ministère de l'éducation nationale

MLT: Migrant Language Teaching

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OPOL: One Person, One Language

PMI: protection maternelle et infantile

# Chapter 1 From Family Language Policy (FLP) to Language Policy (LP) in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Settings

## 1.1 Introduction

I am originally from the Philippines. As a Filipino who comes from the third largest island of an archipelago with more than a hundred languages, a typical day involves continuous linguistic contact and use of at least three languages. My move to the United States to teach English to high school students changed my language practices. As I dealt with mainly monolingual English speakers throughout class hours, there was no space for my Filipino languages, except for occasional chats with fellow Filipino teachers along the corridors or at the cafeteria. These quick verbal exchanges in our first or second languages were sometimes met with curious stares or an obvious gaze of disapproval from American students and teachers, clearly an indication that these language practices were not welcomed. Not having the capacity to understand what we were talking about made them uncomfortable. A curious question was even raised: “Are you talking about us?” From then on, I became more careful with my language practice when around my American colleagues and students and my multilingual Filipino peers.

My language journey took a more challenging turn, and quite frankly an emotionally painful one when I settled in France to be with my French husband whose family primarily spoke Alsatian with each other. With “bonjour” as the only French word I knew when I arrived and with nobody in the family who could speak English except my husband, I had to resort to gesturing. However, I learned to listen better and gather clues from tones and facial expressions. I learned to communicate beyond words and realised the power of non-verbal communication. However, this was not sufficient to take part in meaningful interactions or to create relationships.

My lack of proficiency in French was so stressful that even daily functioning was not easy. Obtaining the right information, shopping, sending mails, finding health care professionals, processing papers, etc. proved to be difficult. A lack of mastery in the French language led to feelings of frustration and anger during my first few months in the new country. My confidence in myself and in my abilities eroded with every disappointing situation where my

linguistic “handicap” was magnified. I felt that my knowledge of three other languages was of no value. In the eyes of a monolingual French person, my linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991) was reduced and my multilingualism disabled. I had no other choice but to learn the language of the country in which I was living.

It was my membership of an international community that helped me during those difficult first months. While forging relationships in English with my international friends, I engaged in intensive French language learning during my first year in France. My intense desire to learn the target language as quickly as possible was what led me to ask my husband to modify our language practice. Instead of using English at home, we shifted to French. This proved to be effective for a few months, until we had children and the issue of language transmission (Lambert, 2008) arose. As multilingual parents each speaking three to four different languages, the language ecology (Gregory, 1971) of our family was so complex we chose to speak English at home.

Interestingly, this decision was met with a lot of scepticism by professionals around us, from doctors to nursery workers who felt we should support the acquisition of French for our children by speaking French at home, thus, according to them, facilitating their integration into French society. Such advice was all the more disturbing as I came to realise that these professionals had no knowledge of the vast body of research on bilingualism which has been published these past 50 years in many different countries.

My personal language journey and my questions regarding our language practices with our children were the powerful motivating factors that led me to this doctoral inquiry. Not wishing to investigate my personal situation of family bilingualism, I decided to investigate a context that has not received much attention until now, the context of early childhood education and care (ECEC). I chose to study one institution, which was a newly opened English/ French bilingual parental crèche attended by children who for the most part live in multilingual families similar to mine.

The aforementioned experiences constitute the intertwining backdrop on which this research is founded. My own experiences as a multilingual speaker and my struggles as a mother, raising bilingual, if not multilingual children, in a country where multilingualism is indeed widespread but not always supported and at times misunderstood, motivated this research endeavour.

## 1.2 Language Practices in Multilingual Settings

Language choice and language practice patterns in family settings and in educational institutions have been studied by researchers interested in language policy (LP) (Ricento, 2006; Schiffman, 1996, 2006; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 2002) or language policy and planning (LPP) as other scholars prefer to call it (Hornberger, 2006; Johnson, 2013; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). This is the field I have chosen to investigate because it involves understanding how several languages are managed in a particular context, why particular languages are chosen rather than others, and how actors in complex language situations conceptualise bi- or multilingualism (Aronin & Laoire, 2012; Baker, 2011; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Garcia, 2009b; Grosjean, 2010; Romaine, 1995a; Weber & Horner, 2013; Wei, 2012). As an area of study, it falls under the broad field of sociolinguistics. For decades now, researchers have been interested in language policy studies and language policy studies in education.

In relation to children and language policy in the family, (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008; Schwartz, 2010; Spolsky, 2012), the implementation of the “one person, one language” (OPOL) policy tends to be the one preferred by parents in the body of studies relating to this subject. However, the prevalence of the OPOL policy in family (Leopold, 1949; Ronjat, 1913) and school settings (Hélot & Fialais, 2014) has hidden the real practices of interlocutors who do not always adhere strictly to these language choices. As research has shown, bilinguals have their own way of *linguaging*, using two language codes at their disposal. In other words, bilinguals do not language like monolinguals and are not two monolinguals in one person (Garcia, 2009b; Grosjean, 2001, 2010; Grosjean, 2008).

With the strong desire of parents to raise children as “balanced bilinguals” (see Chapter 7 for a discussion on balanced bilinguals), OPOL has been considered the most widely used approach towards bilingual language acquisition in families for several decades up to the present. As Piller (2001, p. 60) puts it, “...‘one person-one language’ has become axiomatic in recommendations for bilingual parents and bilingual parents themselves regard it as ‘the best strategy.’ A number of studies conducted in families with parents from different language backgrounds reported successful results, most prominently Ronjat’s (1913) assessment of his son’s bilingualism. However, there are also studies that have presented contrary claims (Döpke, 1992; Harding & Riley, 1986; Yamamota, 1995). A lack of language input from either one of the parents has been cited as one of the possible reasons why a child does not become bilingual. More recently, Gupta (2009, pp. 116-117) has questioned the effectiveness of OPOL using the evidence from “the cosmopolis,” cities that are



characterised by high levels of multilingualism and multiculturalism, such as New York, Singapore or Sydney. Furthermore, the impact of migration and globalisation on children's language practices and bilingualism have remained under-researched (Piller, 2001).

Although other alternative language approaches have been documented (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; De Houwer, 2009; Döpke, 1992b; Juan-Garau & Pérez-Vidal, 2001; Lanza, 1997), OPOL's popularity persists. In fact, it has often been adapted in formal educational settings around the world where language teaching and learning are concerned.

In Alsace, the German-French bilingual program adheres to the principle of language separation which is one of OPOL's important features (Hélot & Fialais, 2014; Young, 2014b). As a general rule in these settings, people are given language assignments that they are expected to maintain as they interact with children or students. Language separation takes other forms aside from language distinction based on person. These include the use of languages according to space (classroom, playground) and the management of languages according to time (e.g. morning/French, afternoon/English). These practices have trickled down to other bilingual settings, even those for very young children such as crèches (Caporal-Ebersold & Young, 2016). However, with the rapid movement of people resulting in unprecedented language and cultural diversity in urban settings in Europe (King & Carson, 2016), it is rather pertinent to understand how the policy of language separation works, what its effects are on language practices and its conceptualisation or vision of bilingualism.

The term super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007), which has been coined to describe the significantly higher levels of population diversity, is palpable in modern Europe as elsewhere in the world. Super-diversity is also about the perceived increasing complexity of diversity. It is a result of economic and social upheaval and political unrest within the European Union and its neighbouring countries. More than ever, the major cities of Europe, including Strasbourg, the site of this study are increasingly multilingual (Duarte & Gogolin, 2013; Hélot, Caporal-Ebersold, & Young, 2015). This is a reality that policy makers, city officials and inhabitants may acknowledge, valorise or ignore. Whatever the case, the fact remains: multilingual situations have become more complex and more complicated to manage. The act of enacting or putting in place a language policy has been considered a solution to manage multilingual complexities and challenges (Tollefson, 1991, 2001, 2001).

Through the years, language policy has been conceptualised in different ways to respond to divergent concerns. Moreover, it has been researched in different contexts, focusing on a variety of different issues. At the macro-level, nations turn to education where it is easier to regulate the use of language to promote social, political and economic agendas (Ager, 1996;

Ricento, 2006; Shohamy, 2006), which results in the conception and setting out of the declared language policy. Meanwhile, language practices of educational practitioners have also been subject to language policy studies. These bottom-up language approaches are undoubtedly influencing how language policy processes are conceptualised (Garcia, 2009a; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Hornberger, 2006; Menken & Garcia, 2010; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

In the macro and micro settings of education, although there has been a growing body of research on language policy studies conducted, one setting has remained under-researched: early childhood education and care (ECEC). In France, where ECEC is aimed at two main groups of children: older children, aged 3-6 years old and younger children, aged 0-3 years old; most of the research has looked into the older group, which is under the supervision of the National Education system. It is this research gap that I aim to address in this thesis: to conduct a language policy study in the context of early years setting for very young children, aged 0-3 years old. Over the past ten years, evidence of the beneficial effects of early childhood education and care services has abounded. For instance, Burger's (2010) findings indicate some positive short-term and long-term effects on the cognitive development of socially disadvantaged children (see Burger for more details on the study). Hence, the need to understand the language planning and policy (LPP) processes in a crèche is imperative. Children at this stage are acquiring language and understanding their place in society through their interactions with the people who care for them (Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke, 2000). Thus, the implications of a study conducted in these early years are far-reaching.

Present European discourses identify the necessity to provide quality education and care services for young children. This is consistent with the economic and social development program known as Strategy 2020<sup>1</sup> that considers young children as human capital and an investment towards economic progress. Although, the importance of preparing children to become future citizens of Europe is a valid goal, I argue that the focus should be on equipping well-rounded individuals who will find their place in this highly complex, multilingual and multicultural society in which language plays a central role. Young children's welfare and services are to be given primordial attention as they are caught in the middle of high population mobility and super-diversity. The impact of language policies that are either overt or covert (Shohamy, 2006) should not be underestimated which is why a study such as this is important.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en)

By studying a bilingual English-French parental crèche, a deeper understanding of the motivations and intricate processes of language policymaking is feasible. With an expanded version of Bonacina language policy model (2012), which incorporates Spolsky's language policy model and Shohamy's language conceptualisation, I propose to analyse the tri-partite language policy of this setting, which consists of the following: the declared language policy, the perceived language policy and the practiced language policy. Ultimately, it is also my principal goal to extensively examine the overlapping roles and influences of the different actors in creating, interpreting, appropriating and negotiating the language policy and practices (Johnson, 2013) of this bilingual English-French crèche. An in-depth study conducted in a small-scale setting provides opportunities to gain a deeper and more detailed understanding of the issues relating to cases of this nature.

To provide the children with the opportunity to experience the linguistic realities of the modern world on a daily basis by creating a pedagogical model that promotes two different cultures and languages is one of the goals of this early childhood setting. As this crèche was created within the context of a monolingual nation-state and in a region (Alsace) whose linguistic history is complex, looking into its socio-political context is not only interesting but also beneficial.

### 1.3 Language Policy (LP) Defined

As previously mentioned, this language policy research is relevant within the field of sociolinguistics. Language policy proves to be a challenge to define. Many available readings on language policy do not provide a direct definition. Instead, what are extensively discussed are the different conceptualisations, aims and models (Johnson, 2013). Concretely, Ricento (2006) identifies the topics under the scope of language policy such as linguistic human rights, language shift and educating linguistic minorities. However, he does not state a clear-cut definition of the term. Adding to the complexity is the fact that sometimes it is associated with the term language planning. Although the two are related, there is a consensus among scholars that both undertake different endeavours. However, Kaplan and Bauldauf (1997) claim that language planning is a broader process including language policy. On the other hand, Tollefson (1991, p. 17) uses a combination of the two terms, "language planning-policy," while there are claims that language policy is much broader than it comprises language planning (Johnson, 2013). Bonacina (2010) writes that most often scholars do not render any form of elaboration of how they understand language policy. More recently, Johnson (2013) entitled his book, but also used the term language planning and policy or

LPP for the most part of his writing. Throughout this thesis, I will be using the terms language policy and planning (LPP) and language policy interchangeably.

An in-depth discussion of the different theories and conceptualisations of language policy is discussed in Chapter 2. However, for the purpose of providing a clear guideline for this research, I refer to Spolsky's tripartite conceptualisation of language policy (2004). His definition provides a complete view of the complicated yet discernable aspects of language policy (Seele, 2015).

*“A useful first step is to distinguish between the three components of the language policy of a speech community: its **language practices** – the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its **language beliefs or ideology** – the beliefs about language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of **language intervention, planning, or management**” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5).*

Spolsky (2004) further elaborates on these three elements: language practices refer to “*what people actually do*” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 14); language beliefs or ideology refers to “*what people think should be done*” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 14); and language management refers to “*direct efforts to manipulate a language situation*” (Spolsky, 2004, p. 8). It is also relevant to mention that Spolsky argues that “language practices, beliefs and management are not necessarily congruent, each may reveal a different language policy” (2004, p. 217). In this thesis, I use this tri-partite conceptualisation in understanding the language policy of an ECEC setting and have modified some of the key terms. Instead of using the term language practices, I employ “**practiced language policy**,” a term suggested by Bonacina (2010). To refer to language beliefs or ideology, I opt for “**perceived language policy**” (Shohamy, 2006). For the final component that refers to language management, I will use the term “**declared language policy**” (Shohamy, 2006).

## 1.4 Focus of the Study

As a flourishing field of study in the last decades, language policy has been studied in many different contexts. Within the models developed by Kloss (1969) and Cooper (1989), language policy is concerned with the status of languages and includes status planning, corpus planning and language acquisition. Meanwhile, Spolsky (2008) later calls it “language education policy” or “language-in-education policy. In this sense, education is very strategic in executing a national language policy. Moreover, it is strategic to introduce top-down language policies. More recently, teachers have also been recognised as policy makers,

enacting bottom-up language policies (Menken & Garcia, 2010). This partly explains the interest in studying language policies in education.

While it is true that there is persistent enthusiasm in understanding language policy in education, there have been very few studies conducted in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings for 0-3 years old. This is the research gap that I attempt to address in this study. Young children in ECEC centres are at a crucial stage of development, more specifically in language. It is therefore in the best interest of children, families, schools and societies to have a better understanding of language policy processes taking place in collective settings such as crèches.

## 1.5 The Case Study

The specific case is that of a bilingual English-French parental crèche in Strasbourg. Initiated by a parent, it is the first bilingual early years structure in the city for 0-3 years old, which uses English in addition to French. The backbone behind this structure is the association of parents who also manages its daily operation and hires staff members who will work with the children.

Influenced and inspired by other bilingual settings for children in the city, the association president, identified one person, one language as its approach in managing the languages in the crèche. The study was conducted during its first year of functioning.

## 1.6 Research Questions

Using an ethnographic approach, this research carried out in a crèche looks into the relationship of its language policy with social factors. It is important to emphasise that this research is interdisciplinary and multi-layered. An intersection of research domains is tackled. As the title points out, this academic undertaking falls under the complex research domain of language policy. However, as this research is conducted in an early years setting, it is imperative to understand the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services at the European, national and local levels. As parents manage this crèche, I also consider their family language policies and examine the interactions between family language maintenance efforts, the concerted efforts of all the actors in the crèche to promote English and French and the language policies at city, regional and nationwide levels.

Since most parents of this crèche are transnational migrants, this research is also a story of their migration and their desire to integrate into the new society, while maintaining ties with

their cultures of origin. Furthermore, as the context of this research is in an early year's collective setting that is subsidised by the French government, it has to abide by the linguistic, cultural and legal requirements of establishing a childcare structure in France. There is therefore a need to examine the political and legal underpinnings of the French and European societies in relation to ECEC.

Thus, the main research question reads: ***How does a bilingual educational structure for early childhood work from the point of view of language policies? What are the implications of the choice of the one person, one language (OPOL) policy on the practices of educational actors and families within the crèche in question? What is the link between the declared bilingualism of the structure and the multilingualism of families? Finally, does the study of language choices in a context such as early childhood bring a new understanding of the concept of language education policy?***

To delve deeper into understanding the language policy and practices of the crèche the following questions have been adapted from McCarthy (2011):

1. How does OPOL manifest itself in a multilingual parental crèche? Who enacts does it, with what purposes, to and for whom, and with what consequences?
2. Are there gaps between intended policy and what is possible to implement? If so, how do parents and professionals understand the gaps between their choice of policy and their practices?
3. What model of LP analysis can be used to understand a multilingual ECEC institution? Do the models described in the scientific literature offer a clear analysis of their language practices?
4. How do the LP actors understand their multilingual reality? How do they act on their multilingual reality? What do they want for the children in their care as far as language competences are concerned? How about the workers and the parents?
5. How are the language users and practices "disciplined" or regulated through explicit and implicit policies? How are the members of the crèche defined through these policy processes? Whose interests do these policy-making processes serve?
6. From a methodological perspective, how does one conduct a study involving small children in a parental ECEC setting?

## 1.7 Outline of the Thesis

To put into light the different issues around the one person, one language (OPOL) policy as it is created, interpreted, implemented and appropriated in this parental bilingual crèche (Johnson, 2013), I have organised this thesis into ten chapters.

In this chapter (Chapter 1), I present my personal trajectory that led me to this doctoral inquiry; the research gap that I hope to bridge and engage in; the rationale and the research questions that I attempt to answer through the empirical data collected in the ECEC setting.

In Chapter 2, I start with a clarification of the following terminologies: language planning, language policy (LP) and language planning and policy (LPP), which have evolved and are continuously changing. Then, I provide a literature review to explore the different ways language policy (LP) is conceptualised.

In the third chapter, I outline the ECEC context from the macro to the micro levels, starting from the European context, then the French context and finally the city context. I close this chapter with a short review of ECEC studies that examines questions relating to language and multilingualism. This serves as a transition for the next chapter on LP in ECEC.

In Chapter 4, following the deductive approach of the previous chapter, I describe in detail European language policy (LP), French LP and Strasbourg city policy in ECEC for the younger group of children, aged 0-3 years old. For the Strasbourg ECEC language policy, I highlight interview extracts with the founder of the crèche under investigation and a city official.

In Chapter 5, I present the case study of the first English-French bilingual crèche in Strasbourg. This chapter has two main parts: the first covers some basic information about the crèche; and the second includes relevant information about the actors of the crèche. I emphasise the fact that although it is officially identified as bilingual, in reality, considering the language backgrounds of the professionals and parents, it is multilingual.

In Chapter 6, I discuss the research approach and methods I employed that I thought best suited to the context and the questions of this doctoral inquiry. I also provide justifications for my choices taking into account the practical and ethical issues in conducting research involving very young children.

Chapters 7 to 9 cover the core of this doctoral research. In this chapter, I present and analyse the empirical data collected. I discuss the language policy of the crèche by

presenting the declared language policy (Chapter 7), the perceived language policy (Chapter 8) and the practiced language policy (Chapter 9). This chapter elaborates on the complexity of the language policy in question.

In the last chapter (Chapter 10), I draw some more general conclusions that answer the primary research questions. Finally, I identify the limitations of the study and provide suggestions on possible directions for future research.



# Chapter 2 Understanding the Different Conceptualisations of Language Policy

## 2.1 Introduction

Language policy (LP) or language policy and planning (LPP) studies have gained momentum in the last decades and have been approached from diverse points of view (Hornberger, 2006; Johnson, 2013; Ricento, 2006; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Ricento, 2000; Schiffman, 1996; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991). Since language is closely linked with political, ideological, social and economic agendas (Schiffman, 1996; Schiffman, 1996; Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 1991), researchers are interested in understanding its relationship with society, politics, economy, religion and education.

Although language policy studies have grown and expanded, examining macro and micro cases, Cooper (1989) believes that it is impossible to come up with a model that will capture the intricate issues involved in language planning. Thus, he sees the necessity of examining the language planning processes of specific or micro cases from which important theories could be generated. Along the same line of thought, Ricento (2006) claims that there is still no all-encompassing theory for language policy. Meanwhile, Johnson (2013) places more emphasis on the collection of empirical data in language policy studies, which he considers lacking compared to its theoretical and conceptual dynamism. He supports efforts to examine the micro-level of language policy studies using texts and discourses that focus on those areas that LPP has not yet explored.

Taking into account Cooper's (1989) and Johnson's (2013) insights, this research focuses on understanding the language policy of the specific case of an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centre. However, providing an overview of how studies of language policy have evolved throughout the years is imperative and constitutes the primary objective of this chapter. While this account is not exhaustive and does not cover all the authors implicated in LPP research, it includes those that are pivotal in the development of this field of study. The choices were made to help situate this current study in the context of ECEC whilst examining a micro-context that has not yet been thoroughly explored in LPP studies. As language policy studies have advanced a lot in the English-speaking world more recently, the need to review

these studies in this section is necessary in order to explain the methodological choices for the investigation of LPP in a multilingual crèche in Strasbourg.

More specifically, the following are the three-fold objectives of chapter 2. First, it provides a clarification of language policy as a term. Second, it presents a brief review of how language policy has been regarded, studied, and approached from the mid-1900s up to the present. Third, it presents ECEC, more specifically for children aged 0-3 years old, as a promising space for language policy studies.

## 2.2 Different Terms, Different Connotations

The use of varied terms in the field of language policy can be traced to how language policy has been viewed since it was first considered as a promising research field in the mid-1900s. Being multidisciplinary, researchers in education and experts dealing with questions pertinent to understanding the roles of language/s in society have analysed language policy in many different contexts each leading to a different understanding and categorisation (Johnson, 2013; Ricento, 2006; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004). This renders it difficult to define. In fact, the term “policy” itself is polysemic and has been problematic for researchers. Analysts have failed to provide a conceptual explanation of the term (Ball, 1990, 1993). While Ball (1993) does not present a definitive definition of policy, he outlines his conceptualisation that serves as a guideline for other researchers: policy as text and policy as discourse. He further mentions the importance of looking into “processes, outcomes and effects” (p. 11). In French, the term *politique* is even more ambiguous encompassing two distinct terms of *policy* and *politics* in English.

Regarding the terms language planning and language policy, there is a clear consensus amongst researchers that the two are related but have distinct and well-defined activities. However, agreement as to whether language planning is an overarching concept that encompasses language policy or vice versa is a continuing discussion. The term *language planning* flourished in the 1960s and 1970s with academics examining how nations could deliberately advocate for linguistic change. It is consistent with Cooper’s (1989) definition that language planning is a determined attempt to affect ways in which language is acquired, structured, and used. More recently, Shohamy (2006) has argued that language planning depicts the interventionist views of policy makers in the 1950s and 1960s, through which efforts were directed toward prescribing language behaviour. In contrast, she considers language policy as a set of principles on language use, which does not prescribe or go into the details of controlling language behaviour.

For Ricento (2006), language policy is an umbrella term, which “is interested in addressing social problems which often involve language... and proposing realistic remedies” (p. 11). He considers LP studies as a vehicle through which individuals can realise that varied environments and contexts contribute to differences in language use. Moreover, he underlines “how policies – explicit or implicit – may reinforce or oppose, social and economic inequalities related to gender, ethnic, racial, tribal, religious, cultural, regional and political differences” (p. 18). Two important realities about language policy need to be emphasised based on this statement. First, that language policy can either be explicit or implicit, which Spolsky (2004) previously clarified, “...language policy exists even where it has not been made explicit or established by authority... Even where there is a formal written language policy, its effect on language practices is neither guaranteed nor consistent” (p. 8). Secondly, language policy can either have favourable or unfavourable consequences on diverse societal issues. Furthermore, this highlights the potent influence it has on one’s day-to-day life whether one acknowledges or not.

On the other hand, Ricento (2006) regards language planning as a series of processes that include the “development, implementation, and evaluation of specific language policies” (p.8). Given this premise, it can be deduced that for a language policy to be successful, language planning should be effective.

As the field of language policy evolves, new terms are proposed. The abbreviated form, LPP can either stand for language policy and planning (LPP) (Hornberger, 2006a) and Ricento (2000) or language planning and policy, also LPP, as employed by Johnson (2013). Some scholars associate LPP with language planning as it carries over the same line of conceptualisation. For instance, Canagarajah (2006) considers LPP as a study that typically depicts the perspectives of policy makers and specialists, characterising it as programmatic and prescriptive. Its goal is to show how language should be used, thus operating from the macro-level of state. Meanwhile, Hornberger (2006) believes that the term language policy and planning (LPP) is helpful in understanding that it is impossible to disentangle the two terms and that they are interrelated.

Recently, Johnson (2013) has embraced the term LPP to highlight the processes of “creation, interpretation, and appropriation” which he emphasises can be present at every level of policy making. Meanwhile, McCarty (2011b: p. 8), using the sociocultural approach, is interested in “human interactions, negotiations, and production mediated by relations of power”. This is related to Johnson’s (2009) language policy definition that has multiple layers of processes involving multiple language policy agents.

However, Bonacina considers (2010, 2012) Spolsky's (2009) conceptualisation of language policy as the most elaborate. Determining the three elements comprising a language policy is essential for comprehensive understanding.

*“A useful first step is to distinguish between the three components of language policy of a speech community: its language practices - the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its language beliefs or ideology – the beliefs about language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management (Spolsky, 2004: p. 5).*

Additionally, Spolsky (2004) claims that there is policy at each of the three levels, which may not be consistent. “Language practices, beliefs and management are not necessarily congruent, [each] may reveal a different language policy” (Spolsky, 2004: p. 217). It is therefore interesting to closely examine and differentiate the three conceptualizations: *practiced language policy* (Bonacina, 2010, 2012) used to refer to the language policy found in language practice, more specifically in what Spolsky refers to as language pattern and language choice patterns; *perceived language policy*, used to refer to the language policy found in beliefs and ideologies (Shohamy, 2006), and *declared language policy*, which is a concept proposed by Shohamy (2006: p. 68) to refer to the language policy found in the management decisions of a community.

As for the title of this research, instead of using the umbrella term, *language policy* to include all three components elaborated by Spolsky (2004; 2008, 2009) and restated by Bonacina (2012), I settled on the use of the term *language policy and practice* to emphasise the significant part of my research, which is the observation of the actual language practices in the crèche.

## 2.3 Literature Review on Language Policy

This next section presents how language policy has evolved through the years. The varied ways in which this field has been considered shows the relevance of this field in sociolinguistics or the sociology of language.

### 2.3.1 Early Language Planning (1950-1960): Towards “Nation-building”

Language planning as an emerging field in the 1960s was traditionally viewed as a “solution to the problem of language diversity in post-colonial countries” (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996:

p. 145). During this time, scholars were assigned to the task of studying the language situation of post-colonial countries, also called “new developing nations” and (Fishman, Ferguson, & Dasgupta, 1968, p. 491) imposing necessary modifications for language implementation (Das Gupta & Ferguson, 1977). Multilingualism was seen then as a hindrance towards achieving a national identity and a national language (Jernudd & Das Gupta, 1971). The book, *Language Problems of Developing Countries* (Fishman et al., 1968) outlines the language issues of previously colonised nations, which “perhaps could be considered the first formal text in the field of language policy” (Garcia, 2015).

As a term, it was Haugen (1959, p. 8) who formally used the term *language planning* and defined it as “an activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in non-homogenous speech communities.” Although this definition acknowledged the presence of linguistic diversity, the goal was to attain linguistic homogeneity towards attaining the ideology of ‘one-language-one-nation’ (Bonacina, 2010: p.20). Thus, this approach is also known as “the traditional approach” (Ricento, 2006: p.12; Tollefson, 2002: p. 5, 2006: p.3) that supported the idea that monolingualism fosters national unity. In other words, language planning was thought to play an important role in nation building. Studied at the macro-level, it was considered as a top-down process that required close monitoring during its implementation. Considered an “objective science” (Johnson: 2013), it distanced itself from subjective issues such as questions of ideologies, socio-cultural and socio-political realities.

Language planning involves developing language planning models at the national level with the goal of identifying efficient methods and strategies for languages (Bonacina-Pugh, 2012). During its earlier stages, language planning involved “corpus planning” and “status planning,” terms credited to Kloss (1969). Trudgill (2003) explains that while corpus planning involves the development of language variety with all its linguistic characteristics, status planning includes the role of the language variety in the society, more specifically in the choice of an official language for a country or for an institution. Despite the effort in distinguishing the two processes, in reality and in practice, corpus and status planning are jointly engaged (Garcia, 2015). These language planning processes are translated into written or verbal language policies (Bonacina, 2010).

### 2.3.2 Models in Language Planning

Following the naming of corpus and status planning (Kloss, 1969), early language planning studies yielded several important theoretical frameworks or models for looking at language

planning processes. In this section, I briefly discuss the contributions of Rubin (1971) and Fishman (1979).

Rubin (1971) uses imposing and strong terms as he describes language planning. He defines language planning as “decision making about language” and “as an activity whereby goals are established, means are selected and outcomes predicted in a systematic and explicit manner” (p. 218). Furthermore, planning in this sense implies “a conscious choice between alternative ways of solving a problem - a choice that is made on the basis of a conscious effort to predict the consequences of the proposed alternatives” (p. 254). From his perspective, planning is top-down and directive. In his ideal language policy program, there are four stages that need to be satisfied. The first stage is problem identification. The second stage is the actual planning, which includes conceptualising strategies and predicting outcomes. The third stage is the implementation of the identified course of action. The fourth and final stage is the feedback on either the success or the failure of the plan. With the input from feedback, modifications can be made to the program at any of the stages, which renders planning a continuous process.

Fishman (Fishman et al., 1968; 1974a, 1974b, 1979), an influential researcher in this field, developed his model of the language planning processes and presented it in the form of a flow chart (1979a). This model (1979: 13-18) includes the following six stages: “decision-making,” “codification”, “elaboration”, “implementation”, “evaluation” and “iteration”. Additionally, he provided a definition for each of the stages and emphasised the dynamic and cyclical nature of the model.

“Decision-making,” the first stage identified, is very crucial. According to Fishman, this process involves several other very important sub-processes.

*“negotiations, compromises, trade offs, bargaining...Issues have to be clarified, alternatives considered, cost reckoned, consequences weighed, alliances fashioned, fears assuaged, doubts confirmed or disconfirmed before this process (decision-making) runs its course and the final decision is adopted” (Fishman1979: p.13).*

Once, a decision is made, there are two further processes before its implementation, “codification” and “elaboration.” Codification is a “succinct statement of purposes, procedures and resources,” while elaboration, “goes beyond the letter of codification in order to capture intents expressed in the decision-making stage” (1979: p.14). Implementation is the stage in which theory is put into actual practice. This is followed by “evaluation,” which “is very far from being a purely objective and dispassionate affair and contending forces seek to

tendentiously influence when it should be done, by whom it should be done, how it should be done and by means of all the foregoing, what it should find” (1979: p.17). The last stage completes the cycle, “iteration,” which is “a return to...to earlier decision-making” (Fishman, 1979: p.18).

Although the terms used by Rubin and Fishman differ, the goal is the same: that is to find the best language planning solution to regulate or to improve existing languages or even to create new languages. Rubin (1971: p.196) clarified that “the logic of language planning is dictated by the recognition of language as a societal resource”.

### 2.3.3 Language Policy and Language-in-Education Policy (LIEP)

Using the traditional approach, researchers focus on top-down processes, concerned with issues of national language planning in post-colonial countries or emerging nation-states. Fishman (1974a: p.79) considers this approach as an “organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level”. As already mentioned, language planning at the national level includes the following activities: “corpus planning”, “status planning” (Kloss, 1969: p.81-83) and “acquisition planning”, (Cooper 1989: p.33), the latter which other researchers including Spolsky (2008a: p.27) called “language education policy”.

Bonacina (2010), in her language policy review, outlines two important developments in the late 1960’s and the 1970’s. On one hand, researchers during this period were devising models to meet the language planning needs of developing nations. From these efforts the works of Rubin (1971), Haugen (1966, 1983) and Fishman (1974a, 1974b, 1979; 1968) were known. On the other hand, this period also marked a growing interest in educational language policy issues as shown in the work of Spolsky (1972) on the language education of minority children and Fishman’s (1979a) interest in bilingual education programmes.

As the field of language policy have expanded, educational settings have become more interesting research sites. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) use the term “language-in-education planning” (p. 122) to refer to a “key implementation procedure for language policy planning”. Garcia and Menken (2010) point out that although Cooper’s (1989) acquisition planning highlights the important role that education plays in societal language planning, it has not taken into account the roles of the educators. Following Shohamy’s (2006) reasoning, Garcia and Menken (2010) distinguish the use of the terms “language-in-education policy” and “language education policy.” According to them, “whereas language-in-education policy is concerned with decisions only about languages and their uses in school, language education policy refers to decisions made in schools beyond those made explicitly about language

itself" (p. 254). Thus in language education policy, educators are at the centre of the processes of language policy "creation, interpretation, appropriation and instantiation" (Johnson, 2013).

#### 2.3.4 Language Planning and Policy (1970-1980): Towards Expanding the Framework

Research that emerged during this era went beyond the prescribed models that were produced in the 1960s. Ricento (2000) considers this period as the intermediary stage in the intellectual history of the field. During this time, scholars started to question the assumptions provided by earlier language planning research that separated planning from the ideological and socio-political realities. Meanwhile, Hymes (1972) looked into the relationship of structure and the sociocultural environment, which is in direct opposition to structural linguistics that only considers linguistic forms and does not look into links with context. Although this is a research in linguistics, specifically sociolinguistics and not language policy, it influences research in LP.

Indispensable in the field of language planning and policy are the conceptualisations of the two notions Hymes introduces as communicative competence (1972a) and the theory of ethnography of speaking (1962, 1964) which derive influences from linguistics and anthropology. Communicative competence is his response to Chomsky's "linguistic competence" theory (1965) that does not take into account the sociolinguistic competence of language users and the multilingual realities of the societies studied. Moreover, he considers the "ethnography of speaking" (1962) later known as "ethnography of communication" (1964) as the best method for studying communicative competence, as it relies heavily on participant-observation in understanding other sociocultural factors that affect how language is used in a particular speech community. The principles of "communicative competence" are the basis for sociolinguistics, which consequently informs language policy and its relationship to society (Hymes 1972; Johnson, 2013; Mc Carthy 2011b). The current notions of ethnographic studies of language policy are based on "ethnography of speaking" (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011; Hymes 1968; Johnson, 2009, 2013).

##### Notable Research of this Period

*The American Bilingual Tradition* (1998) written by Heinz Kloss is an important publication that attempts to study language considering sociohistorical, sociocultural and ideological issues. Focusing on European languages such as French and German, he claims that throughout the years, the policy has been "tolerance oriented" towards non-English



languages although Johnson (2013: p.34) points out that most probably his German background might have caused him not to see the American experience in its full scale, thus, “he tends to underestimate the impact of societal discrimination towards non-European minorities,” which is the case of the American Indian languages (Wiley, 2002) for example.

Worth mentioning is the fact that Kloss (1998) proposed his policy orientations framework, which was slightly modified and expanded by Wiley in 2002 (pp. 48-49) providing clear policy characteristics for each orientation. Kloss’ original policy orientations framework included: “promotion-oriented”, characterised by the allocation of “resources to support the official use of minority languages; “expediency-oriented policy”, somewhat similar to the “promotion-oriented” framework but with a “weaker version of promotion laws not intended to expand the use of minority languages, but typically used for only short-term allocations”; “tolerance-oriented”, “characterised by the noticeable absence of state intervention in the linguistic life of the language minority community”; “restrictive-oriented”, the “legal prohibitions or curtailments on the use of minority languages”; “repression-oriented”, the active efforts to eradicate minority languages”. “Null policies,” characterised by “the significant absence of policy recognising minority languages or language varieties, was added to the framework by Wiley in 2002. Furthermore, Wiley (2004: p. 324-328) explains that these policy classifications are “based on their intended purposes” with emphasis on their consequences which at times are unintentional.

Ruiz (1984) offers an alternative language planning orientation guide: (1) language-as-a-problem, in which linguistic diversity is viewed as a constraint or problem to be overcome and solutions need to be proposed; (2) language-as-a-right, in which opportunities to negotiate language rights are available, often in contested contexts; and (3) language-as-a-resource, in which language diversity is seen positively and in practice there is promotion of linguistic democracy.

Kloss’ and Ruiz’s orientations approach to language have undoubtedly broadened the scope of the study of language in society and how we view language planning and policy to include political issues such as power and social control (Johnson: 2013). In the late 1980s, Cooper’s book, *Language Planning and Social Change*, which considers the socio-political elements of language planning, was pivotal as it related language planning to social change. He presents four diverse cases from different places and periods of history and argues that language planning is embarked upon to achieve much greater purposes such as fostering national unity, promoting economic viability, or changing opinions and discourses. If language planning is a decision-making process, he proposes a way to examine it with a

simple question: *Who plans what for whom and how* (Cooper 1989: p. 31). As opposed to the macro sociological focus of earlier scholars, Cooper points out that,

*“micro-level, face-to-face interactional circles can both implement decisions initiated from above and initiate language planning which snowballs to the societal or government level. In short, I believe it is an error to define language planning in terms of macro sociological activities alone”* (Cooper 1989: p.38).

### 2.3.5 Language Policy and Planning (1990): Towards a More Critical Approach

The shift to the “critical language policy approach” in the 1990s is a direct response to the shortcomings of the traditional approach (Tollefson, 2006: pp. 42-44; Tollefson, 2002: p. 4-5). With the objective to effect social change, scholars adhering to the critical approach emphasise that the language planning process is much more intricate, and that discourses influenced by the people’s history and politics have effects on the choices of form and the use of languages (Pennycook, 2002).

Moreover, the claim of earlier scholars promoting the traditional approach that language planning helps modernise developing countries is dismissed by many during this period. Tollefson (1991) points out that language policies are instead used as instruments to maintain the economic and political sovereignty of already dominant countries. Bonacina (2012: p.24) argues that the one nation, one language principle is out of touch with the realities of nations with increased migration, which has resulted in linguistically and culturally diverse populations.

Tollefson (2006: p. 42) clarifies the three interrelated meanings of the term “critical” in language-policy research: “ (1) it refers to the work that is critical of traditional, mainstream approaches to language policy research (2) it includes research aimed at social change; (3) it refers to research that is influenced by critical theory.” Within the critical approach, the following subjects are explored: issues of inequality, promotion of social change, links between language policy and notions of power, and ideologies (Blommaert, 1999; Freeman, 1998; Grove, 1999; Hornberger, 2006; Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Kroskrity, 2000, 2001, 2004; Ricento, 2000; Tollefson, 2002).

#### 2.3.5.1 Influence of the Critical Theory (CT) in Critical Language Policy (CLP)

Key personalities have contributed to the understanding of Critical Theory are the following: Bourdieu (1991), Foucault (1971, 1991), Gramsci (1971), Habermas (1979; 1985), and other philosophers and sociologists. In general, although not exclusively, research interests in

critical theory are two-fold: (1) a desire to understand how inequality is created and perpetuated, and (2) a continuous effort to find ways to fight against exploitation eventually with the goal towards reducing social injustice (Tollefson: 2006: p.44).

According to Tollefson (2006: p.44), there are important “assumptions” adhered to in critical language policy (CLP) that has directly descended from critical theory (CT). CLP has embraced the following: First, in investigating social realities, it is pertinent to consider class, race, and gender. CLP researchers later extend these categories to include culture and discourse. Second, in critically examining epistemology and research methodology, it is pertinent to consider ethical standards and political commitments to social justice, which are concerns that are associated. This second assumption requires a researcher to rethink his/her position and relationship with the participants. Thus, it implies methodology that establishes equality between the researcher and the researched and reflection on the validity and legitimacy of the research questions investigated in the study.

### **2.3.5.2 Critical Approaches to CLP Research**

Tollefson (2006) identifies two critical approaches to CLP research: the historical-structural approach and governmentality, which is based on Foucault’s work. In both, language policy is not neutral but political.

In the historical-structural approach, researchers study the influence of sociohistorical and socioeconomic factors that influence language policy and language use. William (1992) as cited by Tollefson (2006) evokes the need to consider sociohistorical issues such as political conflicts, state formation, and migration in language policy studies. With the political nature elicited, it is the researcher’s “role to shape the discussion of policy alternatives” (Tollefson 2006: p. 49). Most researches embracing this approach are working towards social justice.

A representative work that draws inspiration from the historical-structural approach is the work of McCarty (2004), “Dangerous Difference: A Critical-Historical Analysis of Language Education Policies in the United States”, in which key episodes that shaped the language-in-education policies in the U.S. were analysed to show the government’s action to eradicate marginalised indigenous languages to promote English-only as medium of education. In this work, McCarty argues that “language has become a proxy for class and race” (p. 72). Instead of talking about race and class, they talk about language thus avoiding more polemic topics.

The governmentality approach draws its inspiration from Foucault’s (1991: p.790) notion of governmentality, by which he defines “government not as a sovereign, singular power, but as an ensemble of multiple, interconnected practices, including government of oneself,

government within social institutions and communities, as well as government of the state...the focus is on how power circulates across various contexts, within micro-level practices and discourses.” Following this view, CLP researchers scrutinise strategies, techniques, practices and micro-social processes such as discourses and educational processes and language use that shape culture and knowledge.

Tollefson (2006) considers the approach of governmentality in CLP research enriching because it “offers great promise for extending research” as it goes beyond “static concepts” of state and covers the interaction of discourses within the framework of historical and structural contexts, thus providing more “dynamic theories” (p. 50). This critical approach in the study of language policy includes indirect acts of the state including those of politicians, bureaucrats, educators, and state authorities to shape the behaviour of individuals and groups regarding language.

A policy such as mother-tongue medium of instruction may show promises and advantages, but as Pennycook (2002) argues, it could be instrumental in promoting a cultural policy of political passivity as in the case of colonial Hong Kong, as he points out: “conservation of Chinese education was the colonial route of making docile bodies” (p. 108). The social practice of permitting one language and prohibiting another in an educational setting, the choice of language in interactions, social gatherings, in congress and conventions, in curricula is an act of language policy making (Pennycook, 2001: p. 215).

David Corson’s book (1999), *Language Policy in Schools: A Resource for Teachers and Administrators* is based on research conducted in a linguistically and culturally diverse school setting with a large population of linguistic minority students. It is an example of research using the critical approach. Instead of studying top-down language policies, it focuses on the school as a centre for language policy making with school administrators, teachers, and parents who are in a crucial position to minimize if not to eliminate school practices that “can routinely repress, dominate, and disempower diverse groups whose practices differ from the norms” (Corson, 1999: p.14). He defines language policy in some detail as “a document compiled by the staff of a school, . . . [that] identifies areas in the school's scope of operations and programs where language problems exist that need the commonly agreed approach offered by a policy . . . It is a dynamic action statement that changes along with the dynamic context of a school” (Ibid: p. ix).

*Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues*, a volume edited by Tollefson (2002: pp. 13-14) explores different roles language policy plays in education around the world, which attempt to answer the following questions: “(1) What are the major forces affecting language

policies in education and how do these forces constrain policies and the public discussion of policy alternatives? (2) How do state authorities use educational language policies to manage access to language rights and language education? (3) How do state authorities use language policy for the purposes of political and cultural governance? (4) How do language policies in education help to create, sustain, or reduce political conflict among different ethnolinguistic groups? (5) How are local policies and programs in language education affected by global processes such as colonization, decolonization, the spread of English, and the growth of the integrated capitalist economy? (6) How can indigenous peoples and other language minorities develop educational policies and programs that serve their social and linguistic needs, in the face of significant pressures exerted by more powerful social and ethnolinguistic groups?"

Another interesting example of the Critical Approach to LP is Baugh's volume on Ebonics (2000) which addresses the intertwined issues of race, language, educational policies and classroom practices in response to the Oakland, California school board's resolution that named Ebonics, which is prejudicially characterised "broken inner-city English", "street English", or "black English", as the official language of African Americans within the district. Providing an accessible historical outline of how Ebonics is a linguistic heritage of slavery, this scholarly work aims to provide a logical perspective on how to work with language learners who do not speak Standard English and a much greater goal of promoting greater linguistic tolerance.

### 2.3.6 Language Policy and Planning: Towards Understanding Speech Communities

Using the ethnographic approach in the study of language policy is not recent (Johnson: 2013). In fact, it is closely related to the "Ethnography of Speaking," later named as the "Ethnography of Communication" that Hymes (Gumperz & Hymes, 1964; Hymes, 1972, p. 19) introduced. It is an approach towards understanding and analysing the language use and behaviour of speech communities. However, it should be noted that the ethnographic approach questions the traditionalist LPP perspectives. In fact, Canagarajah (2006) challenges Cooper's (1989, p. 45) LLP definition, which reads, "deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes."

The contribution of Hornberger and Johnson (2011, 2013), known as ethnography of language policy (ELP), merges the critical approach and ethnography, which has seen the advantages of LPP being informed by the principles of critical theory and ethnography. As

Johnson (2013: p. 44) puts it, ethnography of language policy, “offers a way to resolve this tension by marrying a critical focus on the power of marginalizing policy (discourses) with a focus on agency, and by the recognizing the power of both societal and local policy texts, discourses, and discourses” (Johnson 2003: p. 44).

Johnson (2013: p. 44) enumerated the different possible ways in which language education policy (LEP) can inform researchers (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011). ELP has the capacity to do the following:

*“illuminate and inform various types of language planning – official and unofficial, de jure and de facto, macro and micro, corpus/status/acquisition planning, national and local language policy; illuminate and inform language policy processes – creation, interpretation, and appropriation; marry a critical approach with a focus on agency, recognizing the power of both societal and local policy texts, discourses, and discourses; illuminate the links across multiple LPP layers, from the macro to the micro, from policy to practice; and open up dialogical spaces that allow for egalitarian dialogue and discourses that promote social justice and sound educational practice.”*

#### 2.3.6.1 Differences Between Traditional LPP and Ethnography

Canagarajah (2006) further provides an elaborate explanation of the differences between LPP from ethnography. Following Cooper’s (1989) definition, he sees LPP as a top-down process in which policy makers attempt to control linguistic behaviour. In contrast, ethnography seeks to understand and formulates informed assumptions as to how language is used in specific contexts. LPP deals with macro-level of state and international institutions, on the other hand, ethnographic studies focus on the micro-level and are interested in the participants interpersonal relationships, their verbal and non-verbal exchanges, and the trivial details of daily life. LPP scholars are interested in describing the language behaviour and language relationships from an outsider point-of-view, whereas within an ethnographic approach, the language relationships of the participants are described from the insider’s perspective. Finally, LPP is considered very procedural and systematic. As such it is carefully or purposely designed and planned, whereas ethnography seeks to explain the way of thinking and doing of a group of people with common interests.

The stark differences in orientation between the traditional LPP approach and ethnography are evident. However, through the years a growing consensus has emerged among researchers and scholars that greater advantages can be drawn in adopting ethnographic methods in studying languages and communities. Canagarajah (2006) believes that

ethnography bridges the methodological dilemma in LPP in describing language behaviour and relationships, characterised by irrationality and unpredictability. He further asserts that ethnography has the capacity to explore realities that cannot be made possible using the traditional and positivist tradition because of the following realities: politicians and authorities do not have the sole power to create policies. Local communities and individuals have their ways to formalise, accept, and normalise a language policy handed to them. With ethnographic methods, one can observe the relationships of participants and their informal exchanges, how they either defy, reframe, or establish “other preferred policies”, create new ones “in parallel with the recognised policies, and initiate changes that affect relationships and change the dynamics of the community”.

### 2.3.6.2 Ethnographic Case Studies

In this section, I review relevant ethnographic case studies of language planning and educational policy. I attempt to provide representative works for each decade starting from the 1990s to the most recent ones. The first three cases explicitly analyse the relationship of the national language and educational policy to the micro-level patterns of language use and learning in schools and communities.

Davis (1994) in her book, entitled, “Language Planning in Multilingual Contexts: Policies, communities, and schools in Luxembourg,” analyses the link between sociocultural factors and language practice in multilingual Luxembourg by highlighting a period in its recent history that has impacted the society and brought about changes in language and education policy. To further understand patterns of language use, Davis identified three important aspects namely: language policy intent, implementation and experience. Moreover, he studied their interconnections in different cases involving lower, middle and upper class families, using varied methodologies such as classroom observation of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools and interviews with teachers and school officials.

Freeman (1998) employing the ethnographic, discourse analysis approach investigated the process through which the US Bilingual Education Act of 1988 was transformed into a language plan and implemented in the James F. Oyster Bilingual School, two-way Spanish-English plan. Her study highlights the joint efforts of the language majority and language minority members of the Oyster community to come up with a language plan that clearly defined bilingualism and outlined how cultural pluralism could be developed as resources. Furthermore, Freeman characterised this collaborative work of the language majority and language minority members of the Oyster community as dynamic, multilevel, and multidirectional. Similarly, Hornberger (1988) in her doctoral dissertation, “Bilingual Education

and Language Maintenance: A Southern Peruvian Quechua Case, using ethnographic research principles, explored the following relevant subjects: bilingual education practice in local contexts, language attitudes, and language maintenance looking into the role of schools.

### 2.3.7 Language Policy and Planning: Towards Language Preservation and Multilingualism

The term, ecology of language was first used by Haugen (1971) to emphasise a richer description when studying languages that goes beyond information of where a language is spoken or how many speakers use the language or the common strands that linguists look into such as phonology, morphology, grammar to include investigation of the “social status” and “function” of languages. However, he strongly believed that “there is a strong linguistic component in language ecology” (Haugen, 1971: p. 325).

At present, the terms language ecology, ecology of language, and ecolinguistics have appeared side by side in other fields of interest such as maintenance and survival of languages, the promotion of linguistic diversity, language policy and planning, language acquisition, language evolution, language ideology, the ecology of (multilingual) classroom interaction, etc. In the volume, entitled *Ecology of Language: Encyclopedia of Language and Education* edited by Creese, Martin and Hornberger (2010), the language ecologies of different countries and regions were analysed and different theoretical perspectives were explored with the goal of showing their relationships with language ecology. In the same volume, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2010) considered a human rights perspective on language ecology; Blackledge (2008) explored the relationship of language ecology and language ideology; and van Lier (2010) studied the sociocultural theory and its link with ecology of language learning.

More recently, Johnson (2013: p.51) has tackled the concept of ecology of language in one of the sections allotted for the discussion of theories, concepts, and frameworks of language policy. He considers a “conceptualization of multilingualism,” which serves “as a means to investigate the interactions between languages and their environments”. Using this approach as a rule of thumb in investigating languages, researchers consider each language as a resource of equal importance in the ecosystem (Hornberger, 2002; Johnson, 2013). Thus, it is primordially concerned with the “preservation of all languages” (Johnson, 2013: p.51) and “opening up ideological and implementational spaces for as many languages as possible” (Hornberger, 2002: p.30), which can be done for example in schools.



Baldauf and Kaplan (2006) in their research conducted in Japan show links between the ecological approach, language study and language planning. They also believe that using the ecological perspective provides a way to see language policy and planning much more broadly and that moves away from the traditional approach.

### 2.3.8 Language Policy: Towards a Holistic Approach

As previously mentioned, Bonacina (2012) considers Spolsky's conceptualisation of language policy as the most comprehensive. Spolsky defines language policy as "all the language practices, beliefs and management decisions of a community or polity" (2004: p.9). Thus, one can determine or identify a community's language policy by observing its members' linguistic behaviour, understanding their ideologies about language, most explicitly their formal language management. Furthermore, he believes that it encompasses the complex issues regarding language choices and beliefs about choices. In his conceptualisation, language policy is an interconnected process generated and negotiated through texts, discourses and practices (Spolsky: 2008).

*"Language policy exists even where it has not been made explicit or established by authority.... Even where there is a formal written language policy, its effect on language practices is neither guaranteed nor consistent" (Spolsky: 2008, p.8).*

Shohamy (2006), on the same note, sees the necessity of observing language policies to a much greater extent through different mechanisms and devices, including practices. This means examining the processes of negotiations and conversations and not only studying the "declared language policies" but also the "covert and implicit ways" (p. xv). Furthermore, she elaborates on the possible inconsistencies and even incongruence of an explicit policy and its implementation. In her own words, she has this to say:

*"Language policies are mostly manifestations of intentions while less attention is given to the implementation of policy in practice. It is often the case that even when policies are stated explicitly it still does not guarantee that the language policy will in fact turn into practice and there are situations when the use of languages are in opposition to declared policies." (Shohamy 2006: p.51)*

More holistically, Johnson's (2009) LPP process is multi-layered and further elaborates that the following processes: *creation*, *interpretation* and *appropriation* happen at every level of policy making. He argues that the top-down/bottom-up language policy distinction, which has been used perpetually to portray the link between the "state-authored policy and the

community affected by the language policy” does not show the intricate and highly complex processes of language policy such as the varying allocation of policy-making power even with members of a “community” (Johnson 2013: p.108). Furthermore, he explains that the terms *top-down* and *bottom-up* are not absolute as it all depends on who the agents responsible for creating, interpreting and appropriating are. “There is an overlap within and across categories; that is, a policy can be both top-down and bottom-up: top-down and covert; bottom-up and explicit, etc.” (Johnson 2013: p.10).

### 2.3.9 Family Language Policy

Interest on how bilingual or multilingual families manage languages has long intrigued researchers. Related to this subject are concerns about heritage language transmission and language maintenance. The emergence of the field of discipline presently known Family language policy (FLP) covers these complex social processes. King et al. (2008: p.907) defines FLP as “an integrated overview of research on how languages are managed, learned and negotiated within families. In other words, he considers FLP as “explicit” and less a conscious language planning in which decisions of language use are within the confines of home (King et al., 2008: p. 907). Meanwhile, Schwartz and Verschik (2013) expand the scope of FLP. They consider FLP as an interdisciplinary field of study. They examine FLP through different lenses by bringing together diverse research areas such as educational linguistics, educational ethnography, language policy, language planning, and parenting from a sociological perspective. Palviainen and Boyd (2013) support this expanded view of FLP. They see the importance of considering the sociolinguistic context of the child’s bilingual or multilingual development, which includes the following:

*“The status of different languages in the national and local area where the child is growing up, the language policy (in the broad sense) of various institutional contexts in which the child may spend time (e.g. day care, public play environments, religious contexts) and family and private interactions outside the nuclear family, including both grandparents and other relatives, adult interlocutors, siblings and age peers.”*  
(Palviainen and Boyd, 2013: p. 225)

Meanwhile, Curdt-Christiansen (2009) clarifies the focus of family language policy as distinguished from the broader scope of language policy, “while language policies at macro-level tend to be established and implemented to change or influence social structures and social changes, FLP tends to be based on the individual family’s perception of social structures and social changes” (p. 352). Thus, FLP is based on the family’s beliefs and

ideologies; it differs greatly from one family to another because of the varying goals of each family and its members. In this sense, FLP is instrumental to a family's specific objectives such as to strengthen its social standing, to maintain cultural and social ties with other members of the family who speak other languages or to entirely change the course of their lives by embracing a new language, identity and culture. Thus in this light, FLP can be a means through which parents' broader societal attitudes and ideologies not just about languages but about other more practical concerns such as parenting (Curd-Christian, 2009; King, et al, 2008) can be examined.

Although FLP has recently evolved as a novel and distinct field, studies on parental strategies in raising children in two languages are abundant. The scientific research of Dopke (1998), Lanza (1997), Juan-Garau and Pérez Vidal (2001), Barron-Hauwert and De Houwer (2009) seeks to examine parents' explicit and implicit manoeuvres for children to become bilinguals. In addition, Saunders (1982; 1988), Arnberg (1987), Baker (2000; 2007), Harding-Esch and Riley (1986; 2003) and Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson (2004) have produced parental guides on raising children bilingually.

## 2.4 ECEC as a Space for Study of Language Policy and Practices

As I mentioned at the onset of this chapter, language policy studies have covered interesting and diverse settings, in which terms such as macro and micro, top-down/bottom-up and agency have been used. In its pioneering years, language planning was thought of as the solution to language problems, more specifically as regards multilingualism, and the models that were generated were geared towards creating what was the acceptable norm in colonial contexts. Considering the social and economic inequalities that resulted from the more traditional approach, scholars have resorted to and embraced more critical approaches to examine the language policy processes that are occurring at the national, macro, meso and micro levels in varied contexts. In both processes, the educational arena has been an interesting locale of study. The ethnographic approach has paved the way for the investigation of smaller-scale settings such as schools and classrooms.

However, a rapid literature research reveals that in the broad field of education one age group remains under-researched: the early years settings, better known as Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), catering to children 0-6 outside compulsory schooling. Since most countries in Europe use the split system, in which different ministries take charge of the two age groups, namely the 0-3 and the 3-6 year olds, these two age groups are regarded differently in terms of importance and priority. This has also been the case with regards to language policy research. Within in this field, there are studies that have looked into

language policy processes and impact for older children, aged 3-6, but there is scarce to almost nothing for the younger group, 0-3 except in family settings.

Young children attending crèches are at a crucial stage of language acquisition (Hélot & Rubio, 2013). Thus, an LPP study in ECEC is beneficial and has important implications in learning and can have a wide-ranging impact in the broader context of education. An analysis of language policy in ECEC structures can bring a new perspective to this field of research. The present study considers the recommendations of Cooper (1989) to investigate smaller, more specific cases and put forward theories of “smaller scope” and that of Johnson (2013), which encourages empirical data collection especially at the micro-level.

In the English-speaking world, studies focusing on bilingual learners in the nursery school have proliferated since the 1960s. A discussion of studies on ECEC and multilingualism are discussed on Section 3.8 in the next chapter. Moreover, an in-depth discussion of language policy in ECEC is covered in Chapter 4.

# Chapter 3 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): Macro to Micro Contexts

## 3.1 Introduction

Employing the deductive approach, this chapter introduces the ECEC context considering the European perspective, the French context then the city level of Strasbourg. It consists of four main parts with several subsections. First, I describe the European Union's stance on early childhood education and care and its existing systems that are implemented in Europe. Second, I discuss the French position and the available services for children under three years old. Third, I examine the city context and the associations that focus on early childhood education and care issues. Fourth, I summarise two recent studies conducted in this field, more specifically dealing with questions on language and multilingualism and present a newly published volume that promotes ECEC as a potential and promising research domain.

## 3.2 ECEC: A European Priority

In recent years, Europe and its member states have identified ECEC as a policy priority. Its implications towards the socio-economic future of Europe, its potential in lessening social and cultural inequalities and its crucial role in children's development are acknowledged. In point of fact, ECEC is evoked alongside discussions pertaining to equal opportunities between men and women, economic sustainability and children's welfare. It is widely recognised that the issues surrounding childcare and early education are linked to wider social and economic concerns (European Commission, 2011, 2014b). Thus more concretely, in response to the high demand for ECEC places and the low participation in ECEC for children under 3, European countries have agreed on what has come to be known as the Barcelona Objectives (European Commission, 2013), which set out the priorities for improving accessibility and high quality ECEC services. Under this agreement, member states aimed to increase the number of facilities to accommodate 33% of children under 3 by 2010. These figures identified in 2002 are continuously mentioned in recent publications such as *The Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care* (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014) and the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the

Committee of the Regions (2013) as a basis or groundwork for future improvements on account of non-compliance of a considerable number of countries.

In 2012, the European Commission acknowledged that although increasing the number of ECEC places for children was essential, the need for high-quality services should be included in the discourse. This resulted in the expansion of the ECEC objectives. With the new EU strategy coined as *Europe 2020* (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014), quality childcare and early childhood education are identified as viable strategies towards ensuring Europe's sustainable growth aimed at securing the future of Europe (EACEA/Eurydice, 2009; European Commission, 2011, 2014a). On the occasion of the conference on "Multilingualism in Early Childhood and Care," hosted by Luxembourg Presidency, Commissioner Tibor Navracsics (2015) for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport emphasised the crucial role of ECEC in addressing the major problems that confront Europe: social exclusion, inequality and poverty. Concretely, he pointed out that employment promotes social inclusiveness and that it is only through high quality education starting from a very early age that individuals can be certain to find jobs as adults (European Commission, 2014b). In line with this new strategy, the European Commission through the Directorate for Education, Audiovisual and Culture finalised the proposal, entitled, "Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care" (European Commission, 2014a). A working group composed of representatives of Member States within the Europe 2020 Education and Training Program drafted this document.

This Quality Framework is a primary document in Europe that contains discourses on the promotion of quality ECEC systems. It serves as a guideline to member states to better their policies and practices with the aim to provide high quality services, which are "child-centred, family responsive and participatory" (Ionescu, 2015). In this framework, quality encompasses three important aspects: structure, process and outcome. *Quality in structure* is defined by the following: organization and design of ECEC system; regulations pertaining to the number of trained professionals; staff-to-child ratios; treatment of children and practical provisions promoting health and safety. Meanwhile, *quality in process* pertains to the relationships between ECEC staff and children's families, and among the children themselves, incorporating play in the curriculum, the manner in which care and education are integrated and provided and the daily pedagogical process of the professionals and staff in the ECEC setting. Finally, *quality in outcome* considers the advantages and implications of ECEC settings for children, families, communities and society.

There are two pervading points of view to how children are regarded in European ECEC discourses: first, children are viewed as "human capital" (Navracsics, 2015) to ensure the

future of Europe. In this perspective, quality ECEC is considered a profitable investment towards achieving smart and sustainable growth for Europe, in other words, the focus of the policy is on economic development. The second point of view considers quality ECEC as a matter of right. In other words, every child should have access to ECEC. Regardless of social background, every child should be given the opportunity to reach his/her fullest potential (Council of the European Union, 2010; European Commission, 2006).

*Opening children's minds to multilingualism and different cultures is a valuable exercise in itself that enhances individual and social development and increases their capacity to empathize with others. [...] As young children also become aware of their own identity and cultural values, ELL [Early Language Learning] can shape the way they develop their attitudes towards other languages and cultures by raising awareness of diversity and of cultural variety, hence fostering understanding and respect. (European Commission, 2011, p. 7)*

The European Commission further claims that exposure to other languages and early language learning provides enormous potential for the development of children's identity, values and empathy. Although the two perspectives have different ideological motivations, the common denominator is the need for quality ECEC services. Investing in this educational space as a new project to further the economic sustainability of Europe is considered beneficial.

### 3.3 ECEC in Europe: Different Structures

In Europe, ECEC services cover children outside the compulsory age of schooling, which is usually from 0 to 6 years old. Two systems are practiced by the member states: a unitary system, in which one ministry or a major government agency takes charge of the ECEC services for children aged 0-6 years old; and the split system, in which two ministries or different government agencies are responsible for the ECEC services. In this system, a ministry or a government agency is responsible for the services directed to the younger children from 0-3 years old and another one (usually the Ministry of Education) is in-charge for the older children from 3-6 years old. Most European countries, including France use the split system. In this research, my focal points of interest are the services provided for the younger group of children, aged 0-3 years old.

In most countries, ECEC personnel should meet minimum qualifications. Education staff members working with children from 3 to 6 are usually required to have a Bachelor's degree

as minimum qualifications. Staff members for the younger children are classified into different types depending on their function. For each type of work, each country determines the educational and training requirements. Moreover, their salary is based on their function/title in each setting and relevant work experience. The differences in the ECEC systems of European countries show varied visions of young children based on each country's culture and politics. In split system institutions, settings for children below three years old are focused on the welfare of the children rather than their preparation for school success (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014).

### 3.4 ECEC in France

France has a long tradition of ECEC services since the 1800s (OECD, 2004). Childcare services are at the core of French family policy and allotted significant funding. In 2006, this sector received a budget of 10.2 billion euros, while more recently in 2013 ECEC received a 15.1 billion budget, which is 1% of the country's GDP. In France, "la petite enfance" or ECEC covers services directed to children from 0 up to 6 years old, before they start compulsory schooling (Observatoire National de la Petite Enfance, 2015). However, it has to be clarified that similar to many other European countries, France employs the "split system," in which separate ministries are responsible for the services provided for children aged 0-3 and for the 3-6 year olds. Since this study focuses on the ECEC provisions for the younger group, specific details and information for the 0-3 will be discussed in this section.

At the national level, there are centralised government agencies that take charge of the policies, funding, and general organisation of the ECEC system including the training and licensing of its personnel. The non-school ECEC services, which are directed at children under 3, are under the auspices of the Ministry for Families, Childhood and Women's Rights (le Ministère des Familles, de l'Enfance et des Droits des Femme, 2016). This ministry develops the regulations for the different forms of ECEC services. There are three main actors involved in the funding of ECEC institutions. The Ministry for families and the National Family Allowance Fund (la Caisse nationale des allocations familiales, CNAF) define the goals, budget and funding of family allowance funds at the regional level. The local family allowance fund (CAF) is a key actor in supporting local policy development together with the city administration that also provides funding to ECEC services in their respective municipalities. Meanwhile, the child and maternal health services (protection maternelle et infantile, PMI) oversees the licensing and monitoring services. Any ECEC setting, such as a crèche, needs the PMI's approval to begin its operation (Borderies, 2014; Boyer, 2014; Villaume & Legendre, 2014).



France's family and childcare policies include three important components, namely: infant protection, childcare services and the distribution and payment of family allowances. The law clearly stipulates the duration of maternal and parental leave and the provisions regarding the allowances received according to the salary level of the family. Compared to other big European countries, France ECEC services are institutionalised. The government provides diversified childcare services and a wide range of care options, in which families can choose the setting that suits their needs (Ministère de la Santé et des Solidarités, 2000). Additionally, it provides an extensive and clearly defined allowance system for families, which makes childcare affordable for everyone. As clearly stated in official documents related to ECEC, the country's primary purpose is to help parents to balance professional life with family life and to provide options to parents regarding childcare.

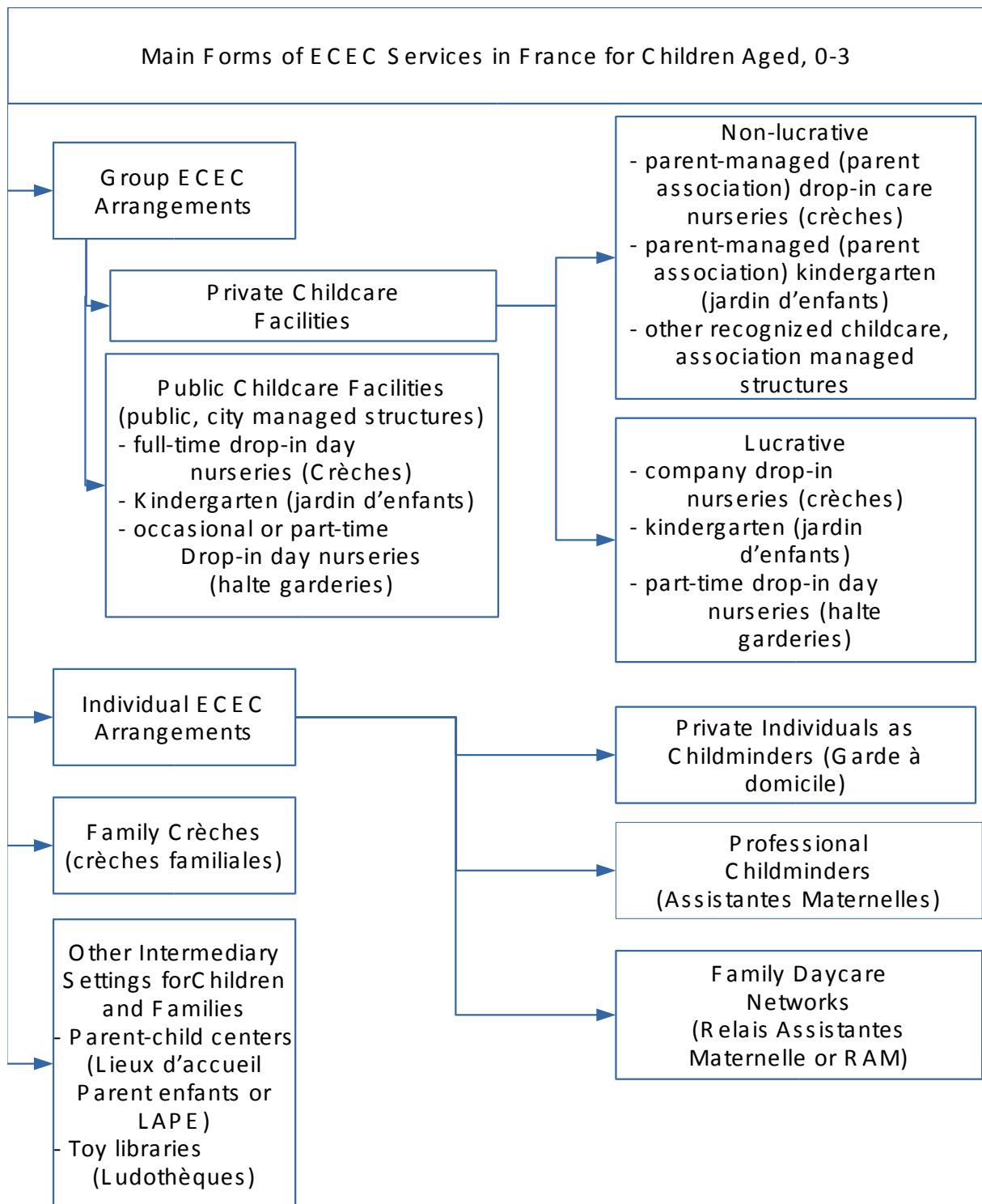
Consistent with the European goal of accessibility and the provision of having more places for children, the French government in 2006 drafted a five-year project that identified more specific targets. One important goal was to increase the places available to 350 000 slots in 2008 consequently promoting other forms of childcare services such as *micro-crèches and crèches d'entreprise* (see Table 2 for a description of the French terms), which have the same function as regular crèches but accommodate the children of parents employed by business establishments located in the area.

Childcare services in France are heavily subsidised, which makes services affordable to families. The hourly rate is calculated based on salary and the family situation, i.e. number of dependent children. This payment formula is within the guideline provided by the CAF.

### 3.5 ECEC Services for Children Under Three Years of Age

In France, families have a wide array of choices when it comes to childcare options (Villaume & Legendre, 2014). These ECEC settings differ in the arrangements and the services provided (OECD, 2004). The table that follows summarises the main forms of ECEC services available for children between 0 to 3 years old in France.

Figure 1 Main Forms of ECEC Services in France for Children Below 3 Years Old



It is surprising that in a centralised state such as France so many different types of institutions exist. Some of these varying denominations are difficult to translate into English. To provide a clearer understanding of the ECEC provisions available in the country, I employ the same general classification given by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2004) as follows: (1) centre-based arrangements, (2) individual arrangements and (3) leave arrangements for parents.

### 3.5.1 Centre-based Arrangements or Group ECEC Arrangements

Centre-based arrangements as the name suggests are settings in which professionals care for children in collective contexts. Although the centres can either be managed publicly for instance by city administrations or privately through associations<sup>2</sup>, the government has put in place a monitoring and regulating system for both public and private structures.

The table below lists the different provisions classified under centre-based arrangements. It has to be clarified that most of the terms and settings are specific to the French context, thus, the need to provide short descriptions or equivalent English terms when available.

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<sup>2</sup> In France, associations are esteemed to play an important part of the society. In 2016, there were 1.3 million active associations in France. An association is a legal identity that is recognised by the French government, which has defined vision, mission and goals. It applies to different ministries, regions, departments or cities for subsidies.

Table 1 Centre-based Arrangements

Name of Setting	Description
<i>Multi-accueil</i>	A setting, usually in a building that puts together different childcare solutions. Generally, it houses a <i>crèche collective</i> , <i>halte-garderie</i> , <i>jardin d'enfants</i> and sometimes a <i>halte éveil</i> .
<i>Crèche collective</i>	A child-care setting for young children between 0-3 years old who are cared for on regular, daily basis. These are public settings managed by a local municipality or city administration where the crèche is located.
<i>Crèche parentale</i>	Similar to the crèche collective, children attend this setting on a regular basis. What distinguishes this setting is the fact that an association of parents manages the daily operation.
<i>Crèche d'entreprise</i>	A childcare centre created and managed by private business companies for the young children of their employees.
<i>Jardin d'enfants</i>	It is also called a kindergarten. A childcare setting mostly for 3 to 6 year old children although sometimes it may welcome children who are 2 and a half years old.
<i>Halte-garderie</i>	A setting where children are cared for occasionally. The parents stipulate in the contract the days and hours they need to leave their child/children.
<i>Halte-éveil</i>	A setting that exist experimentally in some municipalities where children only come for one half a day during the whole week. It serves to introduce children to living in collective settings such as crèches.
<i>Micro-crèche</i>	This is a facility that can accommodate a maximum of 10 children. Its authorisation to operate is issued by PMI.

In recent years, there has been a rise in the number of establishments called *Multi-accueil structures*. These are structures that are found in the bigger cities of France, which house *haltes-garderies*, *haltes-éveils*, *jardin d'enfants*, and *crèches collectives* in one site or building. Most of these structures are government subsidised and provide regular and occasional care to children from four months to three years.

Managed by municipalities or associations, the *crèches collectives* (Bouve, 2001) are government-subsidised structures known as "*établissements d'accueil collectif régulier*," they welcome children from 16 weeks to three years. Most often the places are limited to working parents or children with special educational or social needs. Each family determines the time of arrival and departure in the contract (Direction de l'éducation et de la petite enfance, Service famille et petite enfance, 2015). Most of the children leave at 18:30, although there are crèches that are open until 19:30. In highly urbanised areas, there are settings that

accommodate children exceptionally at night for mothers who work night shifts. Moreover, a study in the Paris region shows that parents highly regard this form of ECEC for their children (Direction de l'éducation et de la petite enfance, Service famille et petite enfance, 2015).

To obtain a place for their children, parents contact the crèche director as soon as the pregnancy is officially declared to reserve a place. Between May and June, ECEC centres draw up the list of children who are staying for the next school year. This also allows the director to know the places that are available and consequently determine how many more children they can welcome.

*Crèches parentales*, as the name indicates are parent-run ECEC structures also called “*établissement à gestion parentale*.” These structures are legally acknowledged in France through parent associations, which serve as employers and decision-makers. Parental involvement varies and is determined by the parents themselves. Thus, parents invest time and effort in such institutions but can also exert their agency to implement a specific philosophy to the crèche. Usually, they serve or work in the crèche for a couple of hours a week. Responsibilities include decisions regarding the pedagogical approach of the crèche, management, representation, housekeeping, purchase of materials, security and maintenance of the vicinity, etc. Moreover, the parent association hires trained and licensed ECEC professionals to provide the care services, educational framework and activities. As these structures are small, they usually accommodate up to 20 children. The hourly childcare rate is still based on the parents' salary and family situation. A membership fee is also collected from members of the parent association.

*Crèches d'entreprise* are structures that employers have created to accommodate the young children of their employees, which are usually located near or within the company's premises. These workplace *crèches* are usually affiliated to hospitals and public institutions, however, with new family policies in place that encourage employers to take on more active roles in providing ECEC arrangements for their staff, there has been a rise in the establishment of these structures even in the private business sector.

*Haltes-garderies*, which are also known as “*établissements d'accueil occasionnel*, ” are structures that accommodate children with more flexibility depending on the needs of the family. Thus, these settings also cater to non-working mothers who need respite care for their children and also to parents who are working part-time, occasional and irregular hours. Parents may leave their children in these structures for 20 hours maximum each week. There are available contracts for parents who wish to leave their children for determined hours and days a week, and there are also occasional contracts for a maximum of three

afternoons or mornings a week. In the second case, parents can call a week before to set the schedules for the following week, thus giving the management the time to ascertain the available slots. *Haltes-garderies* are managed either by the city administration or associations.

*Jardins d'enfants* or kindergartens are day care structures, which cater to mostly three to six-year-olds although they can occasionally accept two-year-olds, which explains why they are included in this section. These structures could either be publicly or privately subsidised. Trained professionals, *éducateurs de jeunes enfants (EJE)* work with the children. Operating hours are either similar to the hours of *crèches* or *écoles maternelles*. They cater for parents who feel their children are not ready for more formal pre-primary schooling.

### 3.5.2 Alternative Settings for Children

Table 2 Alternative Settings in ECEC

LAPE ou lieux d'accueil parents-enfants	Strategically located in urban neighbourhoods, this context is conducive for stay-at-home parents to meet with other parents while children play together in a safe and learning adaptable environment.
Ludothèque	Literally translated into English as toy library, children through a membership system can borrow playthings for a certain period of time.

These contexts are put in place to allow parents and their children to meet and socialise with other families. Initially, the *LAPE*, which stands for *lieux d'accueil parents-enfants* was a result of the initiatives of local social workers, inspired by Françoise Dolto, a well-known child psychoanalyst in the 1960s in France (Neyrand, 1995). In these settings, parents with their children have the freedom to use the facilities and the resources of the centre. It is also envisioned as a place where parents can have informal discussions while their children play, thus creating a convivial atmosphere. This can also be considered as an alternate setting so that stay-at-home parents, usually mothers, are not isolated and can mingle with other parents.

These settings may be funded and supported by associations, municipalities and the CAF since 1995 if an agreement has been signed stating a clear project, thus entitling them to a public subsidy to employ qualified staff. Children from 0-6 years, accompanied by a parent

or a designated adult, are welcomed in the structures. Attendance is voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

*Ludothèques* (toy libraries) are managed by the municipality, and are part of the *Association des Ludothèques Françaises (ALF)*. These are settings that provide children with the opportunity for organised play. As the name suggests, these places provide a mechanism to lend toys from their stock. Moreover, cultural activities are also organised that allow for intergenerational exchanges between adults and children. Similar to LAPE, a parent or a responsible adult is required to accompany the child.

### 3.5.3 Individual Arrangements

The second category provides families with more flexibility as they can decide on their own childcare arrangements and hire childcare personnel. In this case, the parents use government tax breaks to directly employ their childcare providers. The following are the services available in this category: *Assistante maternelle*, *crèches familiales*, *Relais Assistante Maternelles (RAM)* and a *garde à domicile*.

Table 3 Individual Arrangements

Name/Setting	Description
Assistant Maternelle	An assistant maternelle or a family day care provider is a certified ECEC professional who can open her home to up to 4 children from 0 to less than 6 years old.
Crèche Familiale	A family crèche has the combined features of the centre-based setting and the more individualised care provided by an <i>assistante maternelle</i> .
Relais Assistante Maternelle (RAM)	RAM is a network of certified childcare providers.
Garde à domicile	In English, a <i>garde à domicile</i> is an in-home caregiver or nanny

Family day care providers (*Assistantes Maternelles*) are licensed (*agrées*) childcare providers, who work and take care of children under six years old, although usually below three years old in the providers' own homes. Families and carers agree on the details of the services such as meals, vacation schedules and other specific care concerns. All families benefit from a special subsidy called *Aide à la famille pour l'emploi d'une assistante maternelle* or AFEAMA and a tax reduction (Blanpain, 2007).

*Crèches familiales*, officially called *service d'accueil familial*, is another option for families. It is an intermediate between the putting children in a centre-based *crèche* and directly hiring an *assistante maternelle*. In this setting, the *assistantes maternelles* are affiliated with the centre. Thus, the director is responsible for the administrative concerns, such as hiring, salary, training and professional support. Contracts are made with the centre director, however practical concerns, i.e. food, the child's routine and other individualised needs are discussed with the care provider, who welcomes the child into her/his home. Once or twice a week, depending on the designated meeting dates of the centre, children can play with other children who are taken care of by other *assistantes maternelles* (Blanpain, 2007).

Family day care networks (*Relais Assistantes Maternelles* or RAM) are organised networks of *assistantes maternelles* created by CNAF to help coordinate families with licensed child caregivers. RAM provides a venue for *assistantes maternelles* to meet other care providers, thus lessening their feeling of isolation. The CNAF (National Family Allowance Fund) provides a venue for family day care providers, children and parents to meet. These places serve as locales for organised activities.

Parents also have the option to directly employ someone to care for their child or children in their own homes through an in-home caregiver (*garde à domicile*). These workers do not need a license or training requirements and are not monitored by public entities. The families that choose this alternative care can benefit from *allocation de garde d'enfants à domicile* (AGED) and *emplois familiaux*, a special tax reduction (Albérola & Jauneau, 2012).

#### 3.5.4 Leave Entitlements for Parents

France's extensive parental leave policy provides entitlements for parents to care for their children in the following forms: maternity leave (*congé de maternité*), parental leave (*congé parental*) and paternity leave (*congé de paternité*).

For the first child, a mother is entitled to 16 weeks of paid, job-secured maternity leave. Before birth, the first six weeks is usually taken and the other 10 weeks after birth. With the second and the third child, the leave period is 26 weeks, which are divided into 8 weeks



before birth and 18 weeks after birth. In the case of multiple births, there is an extended period of at least 8 weeks. The maternity benefits are calculated based on the mother's salary. Since 2001, fathers have had the right to 11 days of paid paternal leave, which can be prolonged to 18 days for multiple births. Parents, either the mother or the father, also have the option to take a prolonged leave of one year, which is renewable two times until their child turns three. Unlike maternity leave, this is an unpaid leave. This provision also allows a parent to work part-time for a maximum of 16 hours a week.

### 3.5.5 Early Childcare Professionals Working with Children Below Three

Since ECEC in France is highly institutionalised, the educational qualifications and job descriptions of professionals are clearly stipulated in legal documents pertaining to ECEC services. The educational requirements determine the role that the professional assumes in a particular setting and its corresponding salary. Table 4 summarises the educational level for professionals who work with children from ages, 0-6 years old:

Table 4 ECEC Workforce Qualifications

Type of provision	Staff title	Pre-service education required	Qualification level
Child-minding	Assistante maternelle (Child carer)	120 hours of training	CAP Petite Enfance (Certificate)
Crèche	Puéricultrice (Child nurse)	Nurse or mid-wife diploma (*Bac + 3) + 1 year specialisation  *The baccalauréat or bac is a national diploma certifying the completion of secondary education	Diplôme d'Etat d'infirmier or DEI  (State diploma)
Crèche (and other structures of children 0-7)	Éducateur de jeunes enfants (Educator)	Bac + 3 years of further education	Le diplôme d'Etat d'éducateur de jeunes enfants or DEEJE (State diploma)
Crèche	Auxiliaire de puériculture (Auxiliary staff)	A one year formation with on-the-job training	
Ecole maternelle (pre-school, 3-5 years old)	Professeur des écoles (primary school teacher)	Bac + 3-year university degree + 2 years Masters degree course  In the first year of Masters, they are 2X2.5 weeks in the classroom with the teacher, and if they pass the 'concours' (national competitive examination), on the second year, they spend half of their time in the classroom on their own.	Masters degree
Ecole maternelle (pre-school, 3-5 years old)	agents territoriaux spécialisés des écoles maternelles ou ATSEM (classroom assistants)	Secondary vocational level certificate in early childhood studies	Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (CAP) Petite Enfance (Certificate)

Based on Moss and Bennett, 2010

As shown, educational and training requirements for professionals who are responsible for the educational aspect of a crèche are more stringent and demanding compared with those whose primary task is to care for the children. An educator (EJE) who works in a crèche is required to complete three years of post secondary school studies in a professional school whereas, an *assistante maternelle* is only required to complete 120 hours of training to earn

a certificate and an auxiliary staff for example needs to complete a one-year training programme with on-the-job experience. In Europe, including France, the workforce in early childhood services is a pressing issue when quality of service is evoked. (2015) presents this in the context of continued discussion on improving and expanding ECEC provision for young children. In fact, there is a wide disparity of educational requirements between professionals who work in with the 0-3 years old and the teachers in pre-schools for children 3-6 years old. As Table 5 illustrates, for one to be a recognised and licenced French pre-school teacher in the public education system, higher education is required. Whereas, the preparation requisites to work with younger children are variable, sometimes weak and inferior, which Oberhuemer, Schreyer and Neuman (2010) point out is the same case with other European countries. The difference in educational qualifications of the two groups of workers in early childhood education affects the way in which the general public regard teachers and staff working with younger children.

I briefly explain below the educational pathways and roles of the following ECEC professionals who work with children, 0-3 years old (Albérola & Jauneau, 2012; Boyer, 2014; Observatoire National de la Petite Enfance, 2015; Villaume & Legendre, 2014).

*L'éducatrice (trice) de jeunes enfants* (EJE) primarily works in centre-based structures for young children although it is likely for them to be employed in other settings such as health and social services. To work as an EJE, one has to earn the diploma named as *diplôme d'Etat d'éducatrice(trice) de jeunes enfants (DEEJE)*. There are specialised professional schools that prepare candidates to take the competitive examination that qualifies them to enrol at these schools. Training includes classroom instruction and a practicum, all of which can be completed in 27 months. For prospective students to be eligible to take the competitive exam for these professional schools, they need to successfully hold any of the following: a *baccalauréat*, a state diploma for social work or paramedic training requiring two years or a certificate for *auxiliaire de puériculture* with three years of experience in this profession. Another possible career-path to acquire the EJE diploma is to have one's professional experience validated. The job description of EJE is to foster the growth and development of the children by stimulating them intellectually, emotionally and artistically by coming up with an educational plan for the centre or any setting they work for. He or she has an understanding that play and educational activities facilitate the acquisition of language, hygiene and safety practices, and understanding the rules of social interaction with the goals of learning socialisation and independence. In other words, an EJE professional's responsibility is mainly the creation of an educational program for the children in the ECEC setting where s/he serves.

An *assistante maternelle* can be employed by an association or organization, a family crèche or by a family and can work from her home accommodating a maximum of four children from 0-6 years old. A person who is interested to work as an *assistante maternelle* needs the approval of the president of the *Conseil Général* after receiving a recommendation from the *protection maternelle et infantile* (PMI). This accreditation, which must be renewed every five years, gives her/him professional status to work with children. To demand for approval to work in this capacity, the following requirements need to be met: completed form from the *Conseil Général* of the department, participation in information seminars and meetings to learn about the job, medical examination and appropriate vaccinations, a visit from a representative of the PMI to ensure that the home is conducive to accommodate a child. After the approval of the application, the person needs to comply with 120 hours of training. The first 60 hours need to be completed before accommodating a child at home and the remaining hours can be accomplished over the next two years. The primary responsibilities include taking care of the children, ensuring their safety and development.

A *puériculteur (trice)* is a specialist who has an in-depth knowledge of the development of children from birth to adolescence. They are either nurses or midwives who hold a special certification to work with children from 0-15 years old from specialised schools that hold a competition recruitment examination to determine successful candidates. His or her mission is to contribute to the development of children, promoting independence and socialisation by monitoring and supporting parents. This professional works with multidisciplinary teams and operates primarily in health care institutions for children from birth to adolescence, health and protection services, health facilities, socio-medical services, childcare facilities such as crèches, day care facilities, etc. When working in childcare facilities, a *puéricultrice/ puériculteur* occupies the position of director or assistant director whose role is to implement the educational program, supervising a multidisciplinary team and managing daily administrative and financial concerns of the structure.

An *auxiliaire de puériculture* is a childcare assistant who is integrated within a multidisciplinary team composed of EJE, a *puéricultrice*, a psychologist and the director or head of the facility. To exercise this profession, one must hold a childcare degree known as *diplôme professionnel d'auxiliaire de puériculture* (DPAP). There are special professional schools that prepare students to obtain this diploma. Aspiring students, however, need to pass a competitive exam, which consists of written and oral assessments. To register for this exam, one must be at least 17 years old. While there is no necessary diploma required, holders of certain diplomas are exempted from the written test of eligibility and take the oral test directly. Once admitted to the program, a successful candidate undergoes training for a

year, which includes theory and twenty-four weeks of practical training. In a structure such as a crèche, an *auxiliaire de puériculture* accompanies and assists children in their daily activities.

The content of the curriculum for in-service and continuing education of these professionals is determined at the national level under the Ministry of Solidarity and Health (*Ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé*) (Albérola & Jauneau, 2012; Boyer, 2014; Observatoire National de la Petite Enfance, 2015; Villaume & Legendre, 2014). Although the curriculum for these training programs is exhaustive, it could be observed that there is nothing specifically mentioned about language development and language diversity. In 2013, *DREES (Direction de la recherche, des études, de l'évaluation et des statistiques)*, an important French organism responsible for research, evaluation and statistics, published a study focusing on the training and certification of ECEC professionals such as the *auxiliaire de puériculture*, *CAP petite enfance*, *assistante maternelle* and other employees that serve older children, aged 3-6. The document includes information about the competencies, subjects and contents of their training program, which focus on the following main topics: *accueil et communication* (welcoming children and strengthening interpersonal relationships, etc.), *organisation* (organisation of children's activities and work spaces), *besoins fondamentaux et soins l'enfant* (understanding the needs of the child and his/her well-being), *développement éducatifs et loisirs* (developing educational activities and leisure), *vie de la structure* (participation in the life of the centre) *et veille* (awareness of ECEC legislations, continuing education, etc.) It has to be emphasised that the content of the educational program does not include issues related to language diversity or intercultural awareness. The fact that many young children today live in multilingual, multicultural families (Lanza & Wei, 2016) and are attending ECEC institutions from around 3 months old seems to show a gap between the language(s) used at home and the language used in the crèche. Since this present day reality is not acknowledged in the documents studied, this thesis is going to bring to the fore the challenges of contemporary multilingualism in ECEC institutions.

### 3.6 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Strasbourg

At the city level, there are three important organisms that are responsible for ECEC services: the *Caisse Allocation Familiale (CAF) du Bas-Rhin* that works in partnership with the city administration of Strasbourg and the *Protection Maternelle et Infantile (PMI)*. The CAF, together with the city administration, help parents balance their professional lives with their family life (Guide, 2013). Through the pre-determined computation system of the CAF,

families based on their specific economic and social situation, receive childcare allowances, tax breaks or tax deductions. The same entity allocates funds to support ECEC settings.

The city administration, on the other hand, is responsible for ECEC provision in the city through the “service famille et petite enfance” (family and young children service), which is under the direction of an appointed deputy. This office determines city policies, directives and projects in early childhood education for a period of six years, which is the term of office of the elected official. Proposals generated at this level are then presented to the municipal council for approval. Although most of the employees in the service are non-elected or non-appointed, the ECEC city service objectives somewhat harmonise with the administration’s priorities and strategies. While services in this sector are maintained regardless of the political party in power, policies are influenced by the convictions and persuasions of the administration. Lastly, the PMI’s role is indispensable. It determines whether an ECEC setting meets the necessary requirements to merit a license to operate and welcome children in its premises.

In recent years, ECEC has been identified as one of Strasbourg’s priorities. Consistent with the European objectives, the city has taken strides in improving the quality of ECEC services and in increasing the places and care options available to families. As of 2014, sixty-six collective establishments were city-managed, while 25 establishments were privately managed with a total of 3100 places available for children. In the same year, five early childhood education and care settings were opened (see Appendix F). These efforts made at the city level to a certain degree reflect the influence of the European Commission on its nation-states and on European cities. Located in the heart of Europe and host to a significant number of European and international institutions, the early childhood policies seem to resonate with the goals and aspirations of the European institutions. The same observation was echoed by the crèche founder of the bilingual parental crèche under study, “the politics today are very Euro-centred . . .” (Appendix C.3, p. 42).

In many respects, the discourses at the city level parallel the ECEC discourses at the European level emphasizing quantity and quality. Equal attention is given to *quantity*, reflected in the creation of more ECEC centres and care options for families, and to *quality*. In fact on June 21, 2011 the municipal council unanimously approved the drafted quality charter that serves as a guideline for the operation of ECEC centres to ensure effective and efficient service, which came much earlier than the drafted Quality Framework (2015) at the European level. It could easily be said that Strasbourg is taking strides in improving and institutionalising its early childhood education and care services. However, in both cases (at the European and city levels) the Quality Charter only serves as a guide for individual

childcare settings in the city. In other words, the implementation and interpretation of the main points of action outlined in the framework are highly dependent on the professionals and parents, in the case of parental day care settings.

### 3.7 Associations Dealing with Early Childhood Education

Although it is true, as previously discussed, that official discourses in the ECEC context do not discuss issues associated with linguistic diversity, there are associations that address this shortcoming. One prominent association in France is *Le Furet*<sup>3</sup>, whose work is directed towards *la petite enfance et diversité* (ECEC and diversity). This association has spearheaded a number of collaborative research undertakings, publications, seminars and conferences with academic institutions, local administrations and other local associations on topics concerning the exclusion and discrimination of young children. More specifically, it has included concerns related to language diversity, the general well-being of these children, and the continued education and training of professionals, including language awareness education. Another more recently created association in Strasbourg that aims to promote multilingualism is *Familangues*<sup>4</sup>. One of its goals is to support families' desires to pass on their languages and cultures to their children by organising informal coffee discussions around these topics. The association also organises playgroups and after-school activities for children in pre-school settings and schools. Additionally, it works with other organisations in sponsoring events where childcare professionals are educated about language issues. These initiatives indicate how private individuals and associations have filled the gaps left by the authorities. Where there is lack of official action, parents themselves have taken strides to support the protection and transmission of home languages as in the case of *Familangues*. Where there was inadequate provision of continuing education directed towards understanding discrimination and ensuring children's well-being, *Le Furet* stepped in.

### 3.8 Studies of Early Childhood Education and Care and Multilingualism

While there is continued interest in language policy studies in educational settings, there is scarcity in studies carried out in the context of collective settings for young children under three-years old. A possible reason is that studies conducted on children from 0-3 years old

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<sup>3</sup> [www.lefuret.org](http://www.lefuret.org)

<sup>4</sup> <http://familangues.org/>

are interested in bilingual or multilingual language acquisition and approached from a psycholinguistic perspective. Thus, many of the earlier studies were conducted in family settings, where parents themselves could systematically observe their children’s language development. More recently, using a sociolinguistic approach, family language policy studies have been on the rise. Conducted by researchers with the permission of parents, the goals of these studies are to understand the language management, ideologies and actual practices of family members. By examining the interplay of social factors, I argue that one can have a much richer insight into children’s language development and the language practices in early childhood centres and formal educational settings. It is on this premise that research over the last 30 years has been conducted (Bruck, Shultz, & Rodriguez-Brown, 1972; Heller, 1982; Thompson, 2000).

In this section, I review two research undertakings that seek to understand language use, or language policy in ECEC settings. Although there are a number of studies of children’s language use as outlined by Thompson (2000), I decided to present the studies of Seele (2015) and Thomauske (2015) for a number of reasons. First, both studies were conducted in childcare settings for children, aged 0 to 3 years old. Second, both studies deal with the different aspects of language policy in multilingual contexts, although the term “language policy” is not employed. Third, there are elements that overlap with my own research.

Table 5 Language Policy Studies in ECEC

Author	Year	Age of Subjects	Setting	Language of the ECEC Setting	Focus
Seele	2015	0-3	Crèches (Luxembourg)	Lux-Fr Monolingual (Lux) (with multilingual children)	Language use by professionals and children (using an ethnographic approach)
Thomauske	2015	Pre-school 3-6	Kindergarten (outside compulsory education, German system)	German (with multilingual children of migration background)	Language ideologies (using focus group discussions)

Seele (2015) examines the language practices of three state-funded day care centres over the course of three years in Luxembourg to understand how these contribute to processes of institutionalisation in ECEC. Her analysis is based on the caregivers and children’s actual language practices as compared to the official language policies in Luxembourg and the



pedagogical programmes of the crèches. Using the reflexive and constructivist Grounded Theory approach, her analysis proffers the following:

*“First, language serves to constitute institutional boundaries and to differentiate the pedagogical social space from the ‘outside’ or ‘everyday’ world. Second, language also contributes to the creation of an institutional order ‘inside’ this pedagogical space and helps to position actors within this order. Third, language is part of processes of routinisation and incorporation that serve to stabilise the institutional practice. Finally, language is also involved in representing the early educational practice vis-à-vis its constitutive outside, such as the family and the school, thus supporting its claims to legitimacy. These processes, however, are not as straightforward as it may seem, because language also plays a part in destabilising processes of institutionalisation and bringing forward institutional changes. For example, language practices also transcend and fracture the monolingual imaginings of pedagogical space. They may not only constitute and support but also challenge and resist the institutional order as well as question its legitimacy.” (Seele, 2015, p.ii)*

Her study overlaps with this research in that one among the three daycare settings included in the study is a bilingual crèche. Another important similarity is the emphasis on actual language practice.

Thomauske’s (2015) inquiry is relevant to many European countries whose pre-school settings are confronted with the challenges of welcoming children from immigrant families. Her study is part of an international research project that aims to understand how early childhood education and care settings function in five countries (England, France, Germany, Italy and the United States). Focusing on the ECEC settings of Berlin, she explores the social relations of power in childcare centres where the general accepted discourse is that speaking the language of the country cultivates unity and integration on the part of the newcomers. Employing the grounded theory approach in analysing the focus group discussions with the practitioners and parents, she presents how the discrimination of multilingual children is “constructed and legitimized” in the daily operation of the childcare centres. It further shows how the “other” languages of the children and their parents are “silenced” in these settings and are consigned to private contexts. This research looks into the de facto language policy of the nation-state of Germany and its implementation in the pre-school settings in the capital city. Moreover, she outlines the underlying ideological underpinnings of this policy through a historical approach.

The first study focuses on language use or language implementation, or practiced language policy (the expression I use in this research, based on Bonacina's research, 2010) towards institutionalisation. On the other hand, the second study examines power relations, ideologies and beliefs, similar to how I conceptualise the term, perceived language policy.

More recently, Schwartz (2018) has published an edited volume that seeks to examine "the contemporary perspectives on early bilingual education in light of the threefold theoretical framework of child's, teachers', and parents' agencies" (p.vii). Although the studies that are featured in this book consider much older children, Schwartz has called for the need to give attention to pre-school bilingual education as a "distinct research domain" (p.2). This same petition is put forward in my study. Early childhood education and care (ECEC) needs to be taken as a distinct research area. Schwartz (2018) further offers two justifications. First, the diverse nature of this setting and its dynamic interactions calls for "more theorizing" (p.4). Her second reason has to do with implications for language learning.

# Chapter 4 Language Policy in Early Childhood Education and Care

## 4.1 Introduction

I have analysed the different ways language policy has been studied and examined through the past 50 years (see Chapter 2). I have also identified Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) more specifically the younger age group, from 0–3, as an area in the broad field of education that is under-researched in terms of language policy studies (see Chapter 3). Following Johnson (2013), the aim of my thesis is to investigate the multi-layered and overlapping nature of language policy as I examine the case of a bilingual English-French parental crèche. Thus, it is imperative to study the influences of the macro-contexts in order to understand the intricate language policy processes of the case under study. It is based on this premise that I provide this context by providing an overview of the general setting to the specific case of the first English-French bilingual crèche.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the European language policies as outlined by the European Union and the Council of Europe. I deem it necessary to elaborate on the European context because of the following significant factors: first, the influence of European language policies in the education sphere is significant on its member states, including France; second, the bilingual crèche investigated in this study is located in Strasbourg, an international and metropolitan city that holds an important role on the European scene because it is the seat of several important European institutions, international organizations and businesses; third, the city of Strasbourg is on the border with the city of Kehl in Germany thus, the regional language policy favours Franco-German projects; fourth, this bilingual crèche received financial funding from the European Union through its program, *l'Europe s'engage en France*<sup>5</sup>; and finally, the members of the crèche have close ties with several European institutions as a significant number of the parents either work or know people who work in these institutions.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.europe-en-france.gouv.fr/L-Europe-s-engage>

The second section briefly presents the language policy (LP) in education in early childhood education and care (ECEC) in France. As a nation-state, French national language policy influences the choices made in the educational sphere.

The third section discusses LP in education in France for children from 3 to 6 years old. Although the core of this chapter is the analysis of LP for children from 0 to 3 years old, the influence of LP in education for older children is reflected in the discourse of the professionals who work with younger children. Next, the linguistic diversity in ECEC settings of Strasbourg is tackled. Finally, the evolution of the LP of the city of Strasbourg as a result of research is presented. This pertains to the impact resulting from contact between researchers and policy makers at the level of the city of Strasbourg.

## 4.2 European Language Policy in ECEC

As Europe faces the realities of increasing diversity and migration, which includes the early childhood education and care sector, specific concerns need to be addressed at the European level. In response to these latest developments the Council of the European Union through the Presidency of Luxembourg organised a conference on Diversity and Multilingualism in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in September 2015<sup>6</sup>. The conference addressed very important issues covered in the proposal that presented key principles of a Quality Framework for ECEC<sup>7</sup> with emphasis on young children's language development and the valorisation of diversity in early childhood education and care. Moreover, discussions between experts, researchers and representatives of member states on the improvement and elaboration of the aforementioned quality framework were held. Meanwhile, the introductory keynote speeches of Luxembourg's Minister for Education, Children and Youth, Claude Meisch and Luxembourg's Minister for Family Affairs and Integration, Corrine Cahen (2015), clearly illustrated positive attitudes towards multilingualism. During the same event, Commissioner Navracsis (2015) of the European Commission emphasised the importance of young children acquiring the necessary language competencies to prepare them for formal education and developing their creativity in relation to multilingualism.

Language policy in early childhood education in Europe is influenced by how languages, language diversity, language learning and teaching are regarded by two significant

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/agenda/2015/09/10-11-conf-education-petite-enfance/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/ecec/ecec-quality-framework\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/ecec/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf)

supranational entities: the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (CoE), either directly or indirectly. Both organisations consider language diversity in Europe as a resource to provide children with a better understanding of different cultures. Some of these institutions' work on LP is relevant to the conceptualization of multilingualism in ECEC settings.

More concretely, the European Union has this to say about, multilingualism:

*“As part of its efforts to promote mobility and intercultural understanding, the EU has designated language learning as an important priority, and funds numerous programmes and projects in this area. Multilingualism, in the EU’s view, is an important element in Europe’s competitiveness. One of the objectives of the EU’s language policy is therefore that every European citizen should master two other languages in addition to their mother tongue” (“Language policy | EU fact sheets | European Parliament,” last consulted on 15 June 2016).*

The legal and historical bases of this European Union statement on language policy are coherent to the EU’s fundamental understanding that language diversity is an indispensable part of European identity, which is pronounced in its motto, “United in Diversity.” This position is founded on the legal frameworks earlier promulgated in Europe such as Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), Article 165 (2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, two important articles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU<sup>9</sup> also tackle the non-discrimination of a person on the basis of language (Article 21) and respect of diversity in language (Article 22). Following these legal frameworks, the EU declared September 26 as the European Day of Languages starting in 2001. Another important development that needs to be mentioned is the EU Parliament’s adoption of a full multilingual language policy. The implications of this policy are extensive in that all languages of the EU are regarded equal in importance at least at the level of the discourse. Thus, all documents of the parliament are translated in all the EU languages, and every member of the Parliament is given the right to speak in the language of his or her choice. However, a lot of research has shown that despite such good intentions, English dominates largely in exchanges taking place at meetings in Brussels and Strasbourg. These developments on a much larger scale have to a certain extent somehow influenced decisions in every aspect of European governance, including the educational sphere and ECEC.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

<sup>9</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/your-rights-eu/eu-charter-fundamental-rights_en)

Consequently, they have influenced the general public who wants their children to be in contact with as many languages as possible at the earliest age.

The efforts of the Council of Europe (CoE) also merit acknowledgement in this section as it champions linguistic diversity and language learning in the field of education within the framework of Article 2 of the European Cultural Convention (1954), ratified by 49 states. The Council's Language Policy Unit in Strasbourg<sup>10</sup>, France and the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz<sup>11</sup>, Austria implements intergovernmental programs to encourage innovative language teaching tools and activities and support the execution of language policies. The CoE is also responsible for addressing the distinction between societal multilingualism and individual plurilingualism. Furthermore, it has developed the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Council of Europe, 2001)<sup>12</sup> considered at present as an important evaluation document in the teaching and learning of languages. This document serves as a reference to describe the progress of learners of foreign languages across Europe, with six levels of language proficiency description. As reference for its member states, the Council published a guide entitled, "From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: A Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe" in 2007<sup>13</sup>.

The position of the European Union and the Council of Europe is the same on multilingualism and how European languages are valued. Both acknowledge the existence of many languages and promote their teaching in mainstream classrooms. Additionally, both institutions regard language diversity as an important resource in modern Europe in order to build a European identity. However, it is notable to mention that the CoE seems to have taken a more integrated position concerning linguistic and cultural competences to intentionally respond to criticisms on how multilingualism has been conceptualised by the EU, which is somewhat focused on the economic advantages of being multilingual.

All these discourses, one way or another, influenced the drafting of the Quality Framework for ECEC (2015)<sup>14</sup> that contains a section on linguistic diversity. The said document was presented to the representatives of the member states during the September 2015

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ecml.at>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Guide\\_niveau3\\_EN.asp#TopOfPage](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Guide_niveau3_EN.asp#TopOfPage)

<sup>14</sup> Here is the full copy of the quality framework :  
[http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/ecec/ecec-quality-framework\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/ecec/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf)

conference in Luxemburg with the goal of gathering reflective, substantial and context-based comments and inputs towards an improved vision of language diversity in early childhood education and care systems in Europe. It has to be clarified that the said framework has five main areas, namely: access, workforce, curriculum, evaluation and monitoring; and governance and funding. For each main strand, there are 10 recommended broad actions for member states so that they can further improve the ECEC provision and services in their countries. Under the first domain, *Access and Quality*, statement 2 focuses on encouraging participation, strengthening social inclusion and embracing diversity. The following are the salient statements under this heading:

*“ ... children’s identities need to be nurtured by feelings of belonging that are developed through meaningful relationships with adults and peers and through the interaction with a welcoming environment that values their languages and cultural backgrounds. This requires the ECEC setting to develop a set of practices with children’s families in order to create a smooth transition from the home environment to the ECEC setting.” (p. 25)*

While the discourses at the top level are based on the beliefs that diversity is Europe’s wealth and that it should find the right tools to work through cultural and linguistic diversity, the ideological climate at the level of individual member states may be contradictory.

### 4.3 Language Policy in Education in France

It is clearly stated in the French Constitution that the language of the republic is French (article 2 of the Constitution, National Assembly, 1958<sup>15</sup>). However, with the growing influence of English in many aspects of French life, the former Minister of Culture, Jacques Toubon, proposed a law to the National Assembly of France obliging the use of French in five domains: employment, audio visual media, commerce, public meetings such as conferences and congresses, and most importantly, in education. According to Ager (1999) this law, which is known as the Toubon Act of 1994<sup>16</sup> reveals three underlying motives, which can be summarised as, “insecurity or fear of others, identity or pride in one’s own community,

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<sup>15</sup> Full online copy of October 4, 1958 : Constitution : [http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/root/bank\\_mm/anglais/constiution\\_anglais\\_juillet2008.pdf](http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/root/bank_mm/anglais/constiution_anglais_juillet2008.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> See the text of the Toubon Law in English at La Délégation Générale à la Langue Française: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Thematiques/Langue-francaise-et-langues-de-France>

and the creation and projection of an image, or the desire to ensure that others adopt or at least recognise the force of that identity.”

While France’s protectionist stance is in place, it has to negotiate its position considering its membership and obligations to supranational organisations such as the EU and the Council of Europe. Since the European top-down policies recommend the promotion of plurilingual and intercultural education (Cavalli, Coste, Crişan, & van de Ven, 2009), recently, the Ministry of Education (M.E.N.) specifically clarified the need to reconsider the actual language practices of professionals in the educational sphere. Hence, according to the National Education Inspectors’ annual report of 2009 published by the MEN in 2010 and reiterated in 2015, although French is the official language of the state, this should not prevent teachers or educators “from taking into account nor from working with the languages spoken by the children in their charge” (Caporal-Ebersold & Young, 2016: p.8).

*“En France, le plurilinguisme n’est pas effectif. La Constitution dispose que, sur l’ensemble du territoire, la seule langue officielle est le français. Pour autant, ce principe indéfectible de la République française n’interdit pas sur le plan pédagogique, de développer des pratiques de valorisation de la langue et de la culture d’origine.”*

*In France, plurilingualism has not taken effect. According to the Constitution, throughout the whole of France, the sole official language is French. This steadfast principle of the French Republic does not forbid, however, the development of the pedagogical practices which value home languages and cultures.*

*(MEN, 2015, p. 8, translation by Caporal-Ebersold & Young, 2016)*

Although officially it seems that the position regarding the use of languages other than French has somewhat softened, there is still a persisting reluctance on the part of professionals working in education to acknowledge, let alone embrace multilingualism as an integral part of French society. This is noticeably the case for minority languages that are mostly undervalued and associated with poverty (Hélot & Mejía, 2008). In general, this hesitation towards policies of linguistic and cultural inclusion can be traced to historical, political, social and economic factors (Ager, 1999; Kremnitz, 2013). For one, the French language is regarded as a symbol of the Republic. As a unifying element of its people, it needs nurturing for the French concept of the nation-state to endure (Ager, 1999). The belief of most people displayed regularly in the media is that not mastering French and using languages other than French, leads to “communautarisme,” which is seen as a form of disloyalty to the state. These beliefs are some of the possible reasons that render educators



uncomfortable in welcoming other languages, most especially in the school setting (Young, 2014a). Moreover, there are bilingual myths (Grosjean, 2010), such as the myth of the native speaker, that have persisted. These beliefs render it difficult to move away from a monolingual mindset that sees monolingualism as the norm although in reality there are more bilingual and multilinguals in the world (Clyne, 2005).

#### 4.4 Language Policy in Education for Children, 3 to 6 years old

As previously clarified, in a split ECEC system as practiced in France, educational services for children from 3 to 6 years old at the *école maternelle* are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. While attendance at *école maternelle* (pre-schools or nursery schools) is not mandatory, it is very strongly encouraged to prepare children for their further schooling experience. *L'école maternelle* is considered beneficial as it prepares young children for primary schooling with a curriculum that includes reading, writing, numeracy and possibly a foreign language. For expats, children of foreigners and migrants, the *maternelle* is considered the best environment for a child to acquire French. For most French teachers, the priority is the “mastery” of the French language. However, for children, whose home language is not French, teacher’s interactions with them are lesser compared to children whose home languages include French. Such is the case for the children whose dominant home language is Turkish. Meanwhile, adult interaction in the classroom with children whose home languages include French with Turkish are richer (Hamurcu Suverdem, 2015).

Regarding language learning, even at this very early stage, there is provision to learn languages other than French. In Alsace, consistent with the language policy of the region, children as early as 3 years old can enrol in a bilingual German and French program. Based on the partial immersion program, children in these settings have equal amount of exposure to both languages. Moreover, the program is conceptualised from a monolingual perspective in which the two languages are constantly separated according to people with the goal of developing proficiency in the two languages. Perpetuating the family practice of “one person, one language” or OPOL, schools usually manage the languages by having one teacher speak French only and the second teacher in German only. In Alsace, the usual way bilingual classes are organised is according to time. In other words, the languages used in activities or content subjects are clearly specified to provide equal amounts of time for both languages, which is part of the regional policy.

The aforementioned approaches towards bilingualism have ideological roots. A significant number of parents desire their children to have a linguistic advantage by learning German. Furthermore, the persistent use of OPOL even in formal educational settings provides

evidence that the adherence to bilingual myths (see Grosjean, 2010) should be challenged. Some teachers in fact do challenge the OPOL policy and have managed to teach both languages to their class (Hélot & Fialais, 2014).

There are other settings in which the learning of the foreign languages is supported using the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) model, where school subjects are taught through a foreign language. In Strasbourg, CLIL is available through the international school classes, where children have the possibility to learn through one of the following languages: English, German, Spanish or Polish, taught by “native speakers.” It should be emphasised that the selection procedure to enrol in this school is very stringent. Parents are required to provide proof of the imperativeness of having their children in the said school settings. Additionally, there are very few children that enter these programs because there are very few places.

Evidently, the language policy in education for 3–6 year olds in France shows a double vision of bilingualism. Socially acceptable and prestigious languages such as those offered at the international school are worthy of investment, while minoritised languages of immigration do not merit recognition and are thus rendered “invisible (Hélot & Mejía, 2008)”. Although linguistic and cultural diversity in France was recognised as early as 2002, which is the case in other European countries (Gogolin, 2002), it was not until the recently published ministerial curriculum for pre-school education (M.E.N., 2015) that concrete pedagogical approaches were mentioned to raise awareness of linguistic diversity. Under the heading “Éveil à la diversité linguistique,” the children in the *maternelle* should be able to

*“découvrir l’existence de langues, parfois très différentes de celle qu’ils connaissent. Dans des situations ludiques (jeux, comptines...) ou auxquelles ils peuvent donner du sens (DVD d’histoires connues par exemple), ils prennent conscience que la communication peut passer par d’autres langues que le français.”*

*discover the existence of languages, some of which may be very different from those with which they are familiar. In playful activities (games, rhymes...) or to which they can make meaning (DVD of well-known stories for example), they become aware that communication can take place in languages other than French.*

*(M.E.N. 2015, Caporal-Ebersold & Young, 2016, p.8, our translation)*

This statement in an official text may somewhat be considered a leap towards recognising that some children speak other languages than French and that they should be shared in the

class through language awareness activities. However, more concrete efforts to change deep-seated ideologies towards a viable and dynamic understanding of bilingualism and multilingualism are required if the state is serious about recognising the value of minority languages and doing away with persisting monolingual views. Since interpretation of the above statement may vary, teachers need training and resources on how to design activities to meaningfully introduce children to awareness of linguistic diversity. For the most part they are not educated to implement language awareness but instructed to teach one foreign language.

#### 4.5 Language Policy in Education for Children, 0–3 Years Old

High cultural and linguistic diversity characterise the city of Strasbourg (Hélot, Caporal-Ebersold, & Young, 2015), which is the case in other European cities (Gogolin, 2002). In fact regarding its linguistic landscape, there are a substantial number of multilingual signs, showing increasing diversity in the city in an area close in proximity to the city centre (Bogatto & Hélot, 2010). Primarily, this could be attributed to the nature and the composition of the city itself. Strasbourg is an interesting city to study in the context of multilingualism as both internal and external factors contribute to its linguistic and cultural heterogeneity. In the case of German, its presence can be traced to Strasbourg's geographical and historical contexts. Like the rest of the Alsace region, it was annexed to Germany on two occasions in history. Additionally, Alsatian, a Germanic dialect, is still spoken and visible in the linguistic landscape of the city (Hélot et al., 2015). The city also welcomes a significant number of foreigners and migrants, which are terms that INSEE (Institut National de la Statistique et des études économiques) has clearly distinguished.

*“Under the terms of the definition adopted by the High Council for Integration, an immigrant is a person who is born a foreigner and abroad, and resides in France. Persons who were born abroad and of French nationality and live in France are therefore not counted. Conversely, certain immigrants may have become French while others remain foreign. The foreign and immigrant populations are therefore not quite the same: an immigrant is not necessarily foreign and certain foreigners were born in France (mainly minors). Immigrant status is permanent: an individual will continue to belong to the immigrant population even if they acquire French nationality. It is the country of birth, and not nationality at birth that defines the geographical origin of an immigrant” (INSEE, 2016).*

It should further be explained that according to the definition provided by INSEE, foreigners are those with permanent residence, specifically those who work and study in France.

According to the census figures of 2014 (INSEE, 2017), out of a total population of 276,170, there were 57,101 immigrants in Strasbourg, which is 20.6% of the city's population. Meanwhile, foreigners number 40,824 or 14.8% of the population. These figures could be attributed to a number of factors. One reason is the presence of a significant number of European institutions and international organisations and businesses.

Equally important to mention is the fact that Strasbourg is home to the second largest university in France. The city welcomes a wave of foreign students from different parts of the world. More concretely, 9477 or 19.7% of the student population of 48,011 of the University of Strasbourg for the school year 2015–2016 were foreigners from over 150 countries (UNISTRA, 2017)<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, with the unrest in some parts of the world, the city, as with the rest of France, has welcomed migrants and more recently refugees from Syria. In fact, the city of Strasbourg through a dedicated page on its website has specified the different modalities for citizens to help the newcomers<sup>18</sup>. The aforementioned reasons explain the presence of both affluent and also less privileged migrants. Consequently, the coming of people from different parts of the globe has resulted in the presence of a variety of languages in the city. This is observed by people working in public service of Strasbourg, who on daily basis deal with people who speak languages other than French (Hélot et al., 2015). The University of Strasbourg, in response to the problem of integration more recently opened a French-language class, free of charge, for economically disadvantaged student refugees ('L'université se tient prête à accueillir ses premiers étudiants-réfugiés', 2015).

With the current ECEC social policy in Strasbourg that prioritises children from socio-economically disadvantaged families, early childhood settings across the city are more likely to welcome children with migration backgrounds, who may speak "low status languages" at home (Hélot, 2008). The rules of operation of the collective settings in Strasbourg (La Petite Enfance, La Ville de Strasbourg, 2012), specifically state that children for social and health reasons are given priority. Under this category, the following situations are mentioned: first, children from families whose income is below the poverty level and whose parents are employed or actively seeking work; second, children with disabilities or chronic illnesses; third, vulnerable children identified by P.M.I. (Protection, maternelle, infantile). The

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.en.unistra.fr/index.php?id=22170>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.strasbourg.eu/solidarite-refugies>

aforementioned criteria set the stage for these collective centres to accommodate migrant children who are not only multicultural but also multilingual.

## 4.6 Linguistic Diversity in ECEC Settings of Strasbourg

While language and cultural diversity has long been present in the educational sector, it took a while for their existence to be officially acknowledged by policy makers. During a city-sponsored conference in 2014, organised in cooperation with GEPE/LILPA researchers from the University of Strasbourg and several private childcare associations, the appointed ECEC official publicly recognised the multicultural and multilingual aspects of the childcare settings. Aware of the diverse linguistic repertoires of families, the deputy officer (2014) mentioned that in one specific publicly managed childcare centre alone near the train station, there were 60 languages spoken by the children, their parents and the professionals. What is obvious from the conference organised is that the city hall is looking for answers. They do not have answers to this new challenge. Moreover, it has to be emphasised that the workers and professionals contribute to the multilingual nature of the ECEC settings as a significant number come with migration backgrounds. In fact, in the case of the first English-French bilingual crèche, each professional has her own migration story (see Chapter 5 for details).

Multilingualism in the public sphere is a challenge for the city (Hélot et al., 2015). Interviews conducted for the LUCIDE European Project in 2015 that investigated the linguistic situation of Strasbourg show that government workers, including ECEC professionals are faced with linguistic challenges as they serve a clientele from different language backgrounds (Hélot et al., 2015). The need for training, translation and people with linguistic resources were evoked during the interviews. Most civil servants resort to pragmatic solutions, which they are very much aware are at times ineffective but the best that they can do. A day care director of a publicly managed structure, expressed this sentiment in the lines that follow,

*“C’est un grand défi parce que justement il y a des gens par exemple qui viennent des pays de l’Est pour leur faire comprendre l’administration française c’est pas évident. Il faudrait avoir un traducteur tout le temps avec nous et ces gens mettent parfois du temps à apprendre la langue française et on se trouve parfois face à des problèmes de communication ou de non-compréhension. Et de non-communication après... ben... Surtout ici, à la crèche je pense que pour l’administration aussi parce qu’ils veulent chercher les papiers si eux ne parlent pas le français, si les gens qui les accueillent à la mairie ne parlent pas leur langue... ben....”*

*It's a big challenge because there are people, for example, who come from the Eastern countries. Making them understand the French administration is not easy. We need to have a translator at all times, and these people sometimes take time to learn the French language, and we sometimes face communication or comprehension problems and non-communication after ... well ... especially here in the crèche, I think for the administration as well because if they want to look for papers and if they do not speak French, if the people who welcome them in the city hall do not speak their language ... well...”(Interview 6, LUCIDE Report<sup>19</sup>: 2015, my translation).*

Regarding the issue of managing and dealing with language diversity, it is clear that the city has no declared language policy. Whether or not it is intended, the lack of an overarching explicit city language policy in this sector is due to the de facto policy that promotes French as the language of communication in public transactions, consistent with the Constitution, Article 2, “the language of the Republic is French.” Moreover, this is the case in ECEC structures, which was forthrightly expressed by an ECEC city official in Strasbourg, “Ma réponse est clairement non, il n’y a pas de directives sur l’utilisation des langues” (Appendix F, p. 148). The response clearly states that there are not directives with regards to language use. It is logical that with the national language policy for public life in France already clearly defined; a different language policy for a specific context is unlikely to merit discussion. Thus, dealing with multilingual children is not envisaged from the children’s point of view nor from their needs (Weber, 2014), but from a political point of view stressing better relations with Germany in order to serve strong European identity.

It cannot be further stressed that there is a lack of declared policy on the part of the city’s ECEC service in dealing with the multilingual situation of the city. Although the region and the city give money to associations for interpreters to help migrants or sick people of migrant backgrounds pay for interpreters, there is no clear-cut mandate for language use. This is somehow the case in publicly managed ECEC settings. What seems to be apparent though is the extent to which the city supports and finances bilingual German and French structures. One of the banner programs is the joint project between Strasbourg and Kehl, a neighbouring German city, in establishing a bilingual German-French crèche, which welcome children from the two cities. It was a major project heavily funded by Europe and the two cities. This setting, also known as a cross border crèche or *crèche transfrontalière*, opened its doors in 2014 to 30 children from Strasbourg and 30 children from Kehl. This crèche

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<sup>19</sup> LUCIDE stands for Languages in Urban Communities – Integration and Diversity for Europe. For more details about this European project consult : <http://www.urbanlanguages.eu/>

identified the dual immersion model to promote the French and German languages. This language policy adheres to the regional policy of Alsace that supports standard German (Huck, 2008, 2013; Huck, Bothorel-Witz, & Geiger-Jaillet, 2007), which has long been promoted within the education system.

Another important development to mention is the approval of the establishment of the first English-French bilingual parental crèche in Strasbourg, which is the subject of this study. Although, it could be contended that since the city is a metropolis and is the home of many international organisations and businesses, the implication and rationale of accepting English is interesting. These consistently show a trend in bilingual education that favours high status languages.

German, in the context of Alsace is highly practical because it is the language of the neighbour. It is seen to foster good relations with Germany. Moreover, the choice can be very well justified for its practicality. The economic advantages for children are seen to be the greatest consideration. Meanwhile in the case of Alsatian, some schools provide the opportunity to learn this language. However, it has to be emphasised that within the education system, the regional policy offers support for standard German. It has to be pointed out that the conceptualisation of bilingual education in Alsace, the regional policy that favours German over the local Alsatian is a result of an interplay of historical, political and social contexts (Hélot, 2003, 2008). Hélot and Fialais (2014) discuss this in detail under the section, 'The Conceptualisation of Bilingual Education in Alsace.'

Equally important to emphasise is the fact that a multidisciplinary group of professionals and parent representatives drafted a quality framework, the 'Charte Qualité' de la Ville et Eurométropole de Strasbourg (2011)<sup>20</sup>. It is a document envisioned to provide guidelines to ECEC settings that serve children from 0 to 3 years of age with the goal to ensure quality service for these young children. This charter highlights nine important commitments on the part of ECEC settings: (1) guarantee a simple and transparent process of accepting request for a place, (2) Create relationships with each child and his parents, (3) Guarantee that the routine in the collective setting is well-adapted to the individual needs of each child, (4) Encourage spontaneous play, which cultivates independence, (5) Accompany the child in his/her socialization process, (6) Adopt and maintain a professional and welcoming attitude, (7) Develop cooperation between professionals and parents, (8) meet the needs of the child, the parent and the professionals through efficient organization, (9) Implement, monitor and

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.strasbourg.eu/charte-qualite-etablissements-accueil-petite-enfance>

evaluate the quality charter commitments. The said document covers pertinent concerns imperative in settings where very young children are involved.

However, it should be mentioned that the quality charter does not include any statement about language. This omission is possibly due to the reality that in all government institutions, offices and services, the language of transaction is French. In ECEC settings, parents are welcomed in French; documents that need to be filled out and signed are all in French. Thus, perhaps the proponents of the quality charter thought there was no need to reiterate what was obviously already in place.

Below is an excerpt from the interview with the head of the service that focuses on family and early childhood. I asked him whether the city of Strasbourg took into account the nationalities and languages of its inhabitants as part of their early childhood policy.

*'Nous accueillons tous les enfants. Et la langue qu'ils parlent ne rentre en aucun cas dans un quelconque critère d'intégration, de non d'intégration ou de priorité ou de non-priorité. Après, comme je vous l'ai expliqué tout à l'heure, pour certaines langues euh nous n'avons pas d'accueillante pour parler dans cette langue, l'accueil se fait en français quoi. L'accueil se fait en français et quand on tombe sur des familles qui ne parlent pas le français, on essaye de faire au mieux. Dans tous les cas, on les accueille. En en aucun cas on va dire écoutez vous ne comprenez pas ce que je vous dis, on ne peut pas vous recevoir, ça en aucun cas euh mais l'accueil in fine il se fait en français quoi.'* (Appendix F. Transcript of Interview with the City Official)

*We welcome all children. And the language they speak is not a consideration in any way for them to fit in any criterion of integration, non-integration, priority or non-priority. As I had previously explained to you earlier, for some languages, we do not have workers/staff members to speak in the said languages. They are welcomed in French, and when we come across families who do not speak French, we try to do our best. In any case, we welcome them. There is never any case that we say, we cannot receive you, but we welcome them, it is done in French. (My translation, June 2018)*

Welcoming **all children** regardless of their language backgrounds is the core message of this excerpt. Consistent with one of the main words in the national motto of France, which is equality, all these children with or without French have the opportunity to avail of the city's ECEC services. For non-Francophone families, there is no official intervention that is mentioned to ascertain understanding of the administrative procedures that are part of the enrolment process. However, it is clear that the ECEC workers use the linguistic resources available in the structure. But once again, as repeatedly said, they are welcomed in the



language of the nation. There seems to be no reflection on the language component in the drafted quality framework because the de facto language policy (Hélot, 2003, 2007, 2008) is the expected use of the official language of the nation. Moreover, not mentioning language in the quality framework has implications as well on how language acquisition is regarded. Caporal-Ebersold and Young (2016) question this omission since the children who are served in these structures are acquiring and developing languages (Hélot, 2013; Hélot & Rubio, 2013).

On the other hand, attitudes towards languages are different. German and English are highly regarded (Hélot et al., 2015). Following the language policy of the region that favours the promotion of German and French (Hélot & Fialais, 2014) schools developed the partial immersion program for children from age 3. The city has also supported the development of Franco-German crèches. However, they are intended for French-speaking children to start learning German early on and to prepare them for the bilingual schools. Hélot (2003a) argues that this elitist approach is consistently promoted because of the foreseen economic advantages.

While there is somehow an interest in understanding language in general, the benefits of early bilingualism, awareness of the linguistic diversity in ECEC structures, bilingual ideologies and myths are deeply ingrained in the language choices of educational structures in the city (Eloise Caporal-Ebersold & Young, 2016). There is so little reflection on language, language acquisition, bilingual/multilingual acquisition. It seems that policy makers are not quite aware of the extent of the diversity in ECEC institutions. This notion of linguistic diversity has not even entered their conceptualisation of what it means to work with several languages and to move from a monolingual mindset to a multilingual one. Consequently, professionals and other workers who are dealing with young children in these welcoming structures lack training, tools and resources in facing the multilingual realities that confront them on a daily basis (Hélot et al., 2015).

#### 4.7 Evolution of language policy in the city of Strasbourg as a result of research

Another point that has to be emphasised is how language policy can evolve under the influence of research. As any other research endeavour, the questions that are asked and the encounters with agents may influence, create impact and cooperation. The interview I had with the city official culminated with an exchange of contact information, which paved the way for subsequent collaboration with the university through Dr. Christine Hélot and the city

hall's family and early childhood and care service (Service Famille et Petite Enfance). It is interesting to see that through meetings with policy actors at the city hall for a previous European Project on the multilingual situation of the city of Strasbourg and for this research on early childhood education, dialogues and collaboration were initiated that gave rise to various conferences on the topic of multilingualism, early bilingualism and language education. From 2013–2016, a series of seminars were organised through the city hall's department that facilitates and provides ECEC services (Service Famille et Petite Enfance) with the active collaboration of the University of Strasbourg and other actors in the ECEC sectors of the city. During these forums and seminars, respected researchers and language experts of France and from abroad (Dr. Jim Cummins, Dr. Ophelia Garcia, Dr. Christine Hélot, Dr. Andrea Young) were invited to speak, clarifying issues on language acquisition and presenting various means to acknowledge the linguistic diversity that is ever-present in the crèches and other modes of childcare services.. It can be safely said that city administration of Strasbourg, more specifically the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector has repositioned itself to be accepting of the multilingual situation of Strasbourg through important collaborative actions with the university. Perhaps as a result of these discussions and reflection on the part of the Deputy of the Mayor in charge of ECEC in Strasbourg, in several instances, she has publicly announced that the quality charter will be revised and will include a specific point on language(s).

# Chapter 5 The Case Study of the First English-French Bilingual Crèche of Strasbourg

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an overview of the context of the case study is presented. This is to provide an in-depth understanding of the childcare setting examined tackled in this study. It is subdivided into two main parts. For the first half, I offer some pertinent information about the crèche: its conceptualisation, its identity, its location and crucial details related to the actual research site. For the second half, I discuss its actors: the founder, parents, professionals and the children.

## 5.2 The Creation of the Bilingual Crèche

The case study focuses on a parental<sup>21</sup> early years setting for children between 0 to 3 years old, which emphasises the use of English and French. These two languages are employed within the framework of the one person, one language (OPOL) policy in which professionals are expected to work using their assigned languages. Thus, within the premises of the crèche, there is separation of language according to person although in reality the parents, personnel and children are multilingual.

Moreover, this is the first crèche in the city with English as the other language promoted alongside French. As explained in Chapter 4, other bilingual structures in the region and in the city of Strasbourg focus mainly on French and German, with emphasis on the German language. This is consistent with the regional policy of Alsace.

The bilingual project is at the heart of this crèche. However as explained by Baker (1996: p.172) quoting (Cazden & Snow, 1990), “bilingual education is a simple label for a complex phenomenon.” Adopting the term, “bilingual” is simplifying the complex reality of the linguistic

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<sup>21</sup> A parental crèche is a special type of ECEC setting in France, where parents initiated its creation. The legal backbone is an association with by-laws and documents that describe the setting’s legal functioning. In this structure, the parents are decision-makers and managers. They hire staff workers to take care of the day-to-day care and educational services of the children. Moreover, parents serve in the crèche a few hours a week and also take care of a “commission,” which are general assignments such as food planning, hygiene, security, etc.

situation of this centre for very young children. The actual situation is that this setting is multilingual considering the repertoires of parents and professionals (see Table 2 for the languages of parents and Table 5 for the languages of professionals). However, the association president clarifies on numerous occasions that the primary goal of this setting is to create an environment in which children are exposed to English and French. This choice needs to be understood from the intermingling of multifarious historical, political, economic and social influences as presented in Chapter 4. With the parity principle in place, in which each language is given balanced time allocation, the language practice, thus, is consistent with the constitutional stance of maintaining French as the language of public education (Hélot & Fialais, 2014; Hélot, 2003b).

Aside from the official languages, the association aims to take full advantage of the multilingual and multicultural situation of the crèche. “Then we have another line...another objective, which is exposing to diversity...” (Appendix C.1, p. 14). In fact, there are concrete projects that have been realised to highlight the other languages of the parents and professionals (Appendix C.3). These on the other hand do not interfere with the primary objective of the crèche to promote English and French.

To envisage an officially multilingual crèche seems to be unlikely within the restrictive nature of the national language policy that prevents “communautarisme,” or the segmentation of the nation into several ethnic, cultural, linguistic categories. Even the idea of a trilingual setting would be deemed problematic with having to choose the possible languages to promote and with having to give French less time allotment.

### 5.2.1 Other Non-linguistic Aspects of the Crèche

While not the focus of this research, I deem it necessary to clarify other essential aspects of the crèche’s identity. Managed by a non-lucrative parental association, this crèche positions parents as decision-makers who provide the vision and guidelines, which are consistent with the regulations provided by ECEC governmental agencies. Parents also serve as employers. They recruit and hire professionals who are responsible for the implementation of the educational and care aspects and the over-all functioning of the centre. Regarding the centre’s educational approach, professionals are guided by the principles of Maria Montessori. Within this philosophy, the goal is to foster children’s curiosity. Learning is based on the individual child’s pace and interests.

This setting also emphasises environmental and ecological practices. More concretely, the crèche uses energy efficient appliances, prepares food from locally produced organic

products, uses glass instead of plastic cups and cloth diapers instead of consumer-brands. It has to be mentioned that although this does not have anything to do with bilingualism, the parents considered these practices when they chose this crèche (Appendices E.2, E.6, E.7).

It is also necessary to underscore that this centre is non-profit. Thus, in order to sustain its operation, it receives funding from the CAF, the city of Strasbourg and from parents' monthly fee and membership payment. Another funding sponsor for this crèche is *l'Europe S'Engage*<sup>22</sup> en France of the European Union. As explained previously, all ECEC structures in France are heavily subsidised and the monthly fee is calculated according to parents' salary level in conformity with the CAF policies. It has to be clarified that all early childhood settings obtain direct and indirect financial support from the CAF, the "family assistance" branch of the social security in France. This explains why childcare services in France are highly affordable and accessible to families.

*"...It's a little more than a third from the CAF, and the other third is the city and the other third is the parents...it's like if the parent is not earning any money or the minimum wage, they only pay 80 euros a month for full-time care. A child costs in a structure 1286 euros...so if the parent is not making much so they are just paying 80 (euros, my clarification) out of the 1280 whatever euros it is, which means that the other 1200 is paid for by the CAF...and the city so there are calculations to do..."*  
(Appendix C.1, lines 453-469)

However, with the financial support that the ECEC settings receive, they are expected to conform to the practices or requirements of the state. While there is no explicit policy regarding how to manage the languages in early childhood education and care centres in the city, the de facto language policy is to give priority to French as the language of the nation-state. Additionally, a city official brings up the principle of equal opportunity. In the context of childcare in France, "equal opportunity" means access to ECEC services regardless of linguistic, economic, social, religious or ethnic backgrounds. Hence, even if English and French are the two languages implemented in this crèche, the children are not to be selected on the basis of their nationality and linguistic backgrounds. In an interview with the association president, she mentioned a reminder to this effect, "The city said to me very clearly, you have to give equal opportunity. You just couldn't take English speaking families, and if you are going to take English speaking families, you are not giving equal opportunities" (Appendix C.1, p.21). In compliance with this guideline, the association devised an online

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.europe-en-france.gouv.fr/L-Europe-s-engage>

recruitment form that would determine whether families qualify for a place in the crèche (Appendix C.1).

### 5.2.2 The Choice of Languages

As a parental initiative, the basic principles to which this crèche is anchored arise from the personal reflections and realisations of the crèche founder (also the association president). She questions her own implementation of bilingualism at home and her parental values.

*“With my son, when he was born, he didn’t speak any English to me. So as all parents’ first child, with your first one, **what am I doing? Am I doing it right?** He really had a hard time acquiring language, and in general. He was about three when he started speaking, and it’s at two when we expect. **There’s a lot of mumble jumble** so we worried if what we were doing was right, was it ok, is he going to be ok? So, I felt [pause] I wish he could be in a structure where he is getting both. It would have comforted me. (Appendix C.1, p.17).*

In this quote, uncertainty and worry can be perceived. As a first time parent, she questions her capacity to transmit her first language to her child, “what am I doing? Am I doing it right”. Furthermore, she attributes her child’s delayed language acquisition in English to her possibly faulty language practices. Thus, she expresses her genuine desire to provide the best conditions to facilitate the acquisition of languages. The succeeding line, “I wish he could be in a structure where he is getting both” shows her belief that the ideal environment is where her child will hear the two languages regularly, hence, a stable linguistic space or context. This is the primary motivation that paved the way to envisaging a bilingual English-French crèche that supports her language principles and practices.

### 5.2.3 Establishing the Crèche

The realisation of the project was long and circuitous. It took seven years to build this crèche from the day the idea was conceived until the day it first opened its doors to welcome children in June of 2013. To realise the project, the crèche founder contacted parents who shared the same goal of raising their children bilingually. These parents formed the core of the parental association, which became the legal backbone of the crèche and the entity acknowledged by the state. The process of establishing the crèche was long. It involved the submission of a project proposal (see Appendix H.1) that clearly stipulated the association’s goals. Therefore, a huge part of the process was coordinating with different people (city officials, CAF and PMI personnel) from various agencies responsible for ECEC services.

The biggest hurdle was the identification of the locale to set-up the crèche. Initially, the founding members considered investing in building a place that would conform to the ecological standards they had previously conceptualised. However, the city hall and CAF did not receive this proposal positively due to a conflict of interest. Consequently, they had to reconsider this plan and opted for a place, formerly used by another crèche (additional information in the next sub-section).

Meanwhile, the bilingual project of the crèche to promote English and French was accepted without any question. However, the city official responsible for the early childhood education and care service reminded the crèche founder that the crèche should not be exclusive to English speakers only. One important issue that should be pointed out here from the point of view of language policy is that in France, state-funded crèche or childcare settings, should not serve a linguistic community. This would be contradictory to the constitution. Thus, to comply with this constitutional principle, the founding parents drafted 10-point criteria to help them with the recruitment process of families (Appendix C.1, lines 611-670).

#### 5.2.4 The Research Locale

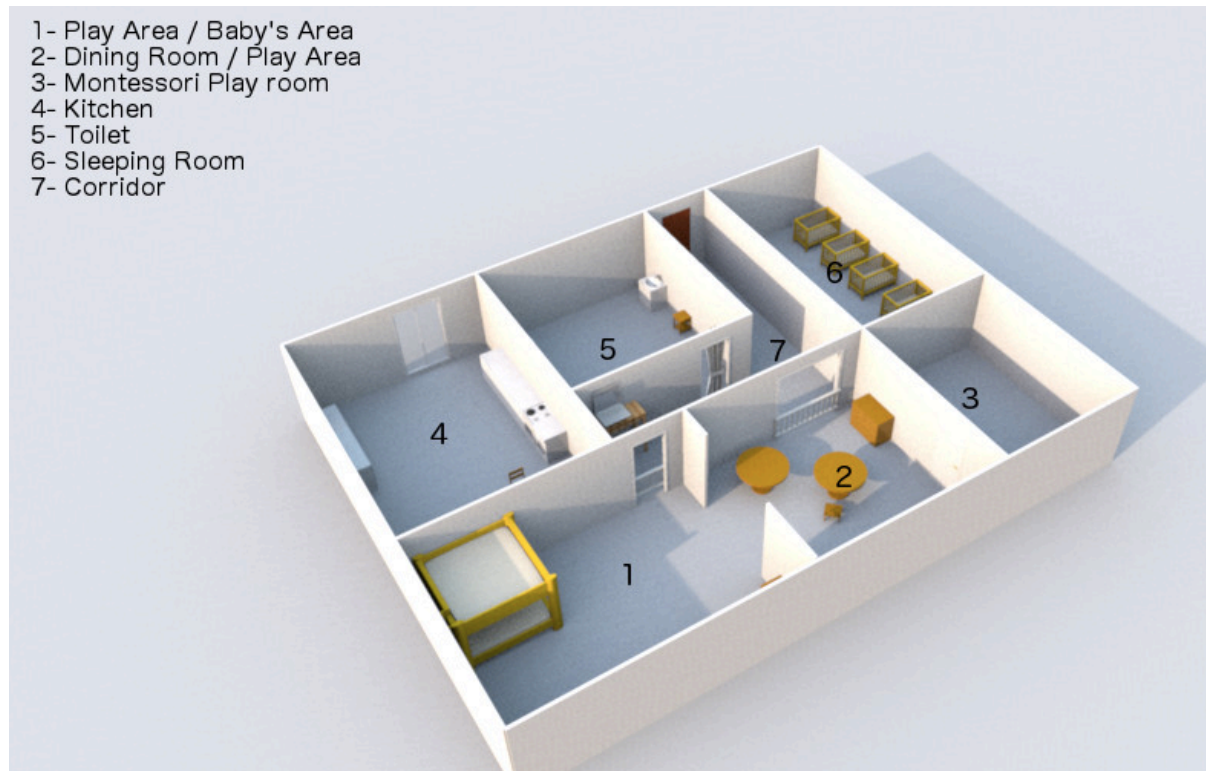
As previously stated, this research was conducted during the crèche's first year of operation. During this period, it was housed temporarily in a structure formerly occupied by a bilingual, parental German-French crèche. Although the size of the place, the floor layout and the amenities did not anymore meet the modern standards set for an ECEC structure, using the legal permission of the former crèche to operate in the said locale, PMI allowed the temporary use of the place. They were also required to relocate to a more suitable setting after a year.

This information somewhat establishes the fact that the association members have close ties with other bilingual settings in the city.

#### 5.2.5 The Setting

The crèche operates from Mondays to Fridays. In its first year, as previously mentioned, it was temporarily housed in the former locale of another bilingual crèche. With only 89 square meters, the professionals needed to maximise the floor area to accommodate the educational and care needs of children. The floor plan below shows seven different spaces of varying purposes.

Figure 2 The Floor Plan of the Bilingual English-French Crèche



It has to be mentioned that there are rooms that only professionals and children can access. Sometimes, parents who are on-duty enter these spaces, but most of the time they are closed. Room 6 serves as the children's sleeping room. This space is usually dark to help induce sleep to babies and toddlers. Meanwhile, Room 3 is also used as a bedroom or quiet area, especially on Wednesdays when Room 6 cannot contain all the children. This is also where the Montessori materials are kept, some of which are fragile. It has to be kept closed unless a professional is with the children. During activity time, a staff member ushers a batch of children to discover the different games and other educational activities prepared in this space.

Rooms 2 and 1 are the most flexible rooms in the crèche. During free play, children can freely move around these two spaces. As a matter of fact, Room 1 also serves as the children's dining place. Since the furniture is movable, the professionals can rearrange the room according to activity.



Designated as Room 2 on the floor plan, it is a multi-purpose room. It is used as a second playroom and activity room, and it is transformed into a dining room with tables that can easily be assembled to form one, two or three separate tables.

## 5.3 The Main Actors of the Crèche

### 5.3.1 Evolving Roles: from Crèche Founder to Association President

During the writing of this research, it was difficult to decide on the appropriate title that would capture the role, responsibility and function of the key person who conceptualised this bilingual English-French centre for young children. For purpose of relevance, I chose the term “association president” for the most part of the research because it is a title with legal bearing. As already previously explained, associations are organised entities in France that have legal status. However, I also used the term “crèche founder” when I felt it was more appropriate. The fact of the matter is that this person’s role evolved as the project progressed.

When the idea of opening a bilingual crèche was conceived, the founder strengthened her network of mostly bilingual and international parents, and with them set-up the association. In this context, I referred to her as crèche founder and also project manager. The task of creating an ECEC structure was not easy. It required a concerted effort with several parents involved. In the case of this crèche, it was realised through a group of parents whose desire was to pass on their languages and cultures to their children. Together, they weaved their vision of how to concretely see this in action in a childcare structure. These founding parents were also in contact with parents whose children were already enrolled in other bilingual nurseries and kindergartens. This was the reason for the similarities in language approach with the existing centres.

When the association received its legal status, the crèche founder’s responsibilities became better defined. In all the documents and correspondence with the government offices and other ECEC-related agencies, she identified herself as the president (see Appendix H for all crèche-related documents). With this position, she represented the founding parents in transactions pertaining to the setting up of the childcare centre. Also, in her capacity as association president (A.P.), she met with the ECEC main actors of the city.

It has to be stressed that creating this ECEC centre was a voluntary, non-profit initiative. Therefore, for the first few months of the crèche’s operation, A.P. took on several roles. Besides being the association president, she served as cook and self-imposed second

English speaker. Throughout the whole process of establishing this crèche, her roles were multiple and constantly changing parents and professionals were still in the process of clarifying their educational and care approach. This was the case during the early stages of operation. The kind of unwavering commitment shown was rooted in her firm conviction to the principles on which this childcare centre was founded.

### Personal Background

She is British-Canadian who grew up in the northern part of the United States. At the time of the research, she had been in France for more than 20 years. As an immigrant, she had first-hand experience of what it meant to integrate into a new culture and to learn a new language. Not mastering French when she first arrived, she understood the difficulties of having to function in a totally different linguistic environment. She learned French in her early 20s when she came to France as an exchange student who had to pass all her classes. While her experiences were not easy, she acknowledged that it was total linguistic immersion that facilitated her rapid integration into French society (Appendix C.2).

Married to a native-born French man who was employed in one of the European institutions. She had immediate access to other international people in the city. Her two children – a boy and a girl were both attending bilingual educational settings that also explained her broad network of international parents. Her work experiences included teaching English at the university and working as a government employee at the regional level. This broad professional experience in France paved the way for her to better understand the French system. Furthermore, her experience as an English teacher and as a parent who reportedly spoke to her children in English-only influenced her position on language learning.

What is striking to note was her personal engagement to the project. It illustrates how parents are invested in issues related to language and culture. The question on language matters to her because she was a bilingual and had her own experience of bilingualism. Hence, the strong desire to pass on these two languages to her children was evident. Moreover, she felt that language contact in the home was not sufficient. Influenced by her North American upbringing, she decided to act rather than to wait for a bilingual English-French structure to be opened one day.

### 5.3.2 Parents

The data for this research included 15 families or 30 parents, of which two were permanently working in this childcare structure. All the families were residents of Strasbourg, a requirement in securing a place in any ECEC structure in the city. Two families moved to

Strasbourg as part of their work obligations with the European institutions. Two fathers were working abroad and travelled regularly to Strasbourg to be with their families. One father was a Paris-based researcher and came home to Strasbourg for the weekends, while another father was US-based and had limited contact with his child.

### 5.3.2.1 Parents' Employment Background

Table 1 Employment Background of Parents

<b>Parent Code</b>	<b>Work</b>	<b>Spouse Code</b>	<b>Work</b>
1_Father	Writer/editor/journalist	2_Mother	Pursuing higher education
3_Mother	Student	4_Father	Businessman
5_Mother	Researcher (postdoctoral)	6_Father	Researcher (postdoctoral)
7_Mother	Dentist (private practice)	8_Father	Dentist (private practice)
9_Mother	Accountant	10_Father	English Teacher (owns his company)
11_Mother	Crèche founder, association president	12_Father	Computer engineer at the Council of Europe
13_Mother	Europe Peace Corps	14_Father	Europe Peace Corps
15_Mother	Crèche professional (CAP Petite Enfance)	16_Father	Air-conditioning technician
17_Mother	Founder/coordinator of a non-government organisation; marketing manager of family-owned farm	18_Father	Investment officer
19_Mother	University lecturer	20_Father	Architect
21_Father	Copy editor, Council of Europe; Broadcaster BBC (before coming to Strasbourg)	22_Mother	Contractual employee, Council of Europe
23_Father	Pharmacist	24_Mother	Pharmacist, Council of Europe
25_Mother	Geography and History teacher (teaching the subject in English)	26_Father	Geography and History Teacher (teaching the subject in English); Studying law, passing the exam to enrol at ENA
27_Mother	Former Teacher	28_Father	Government Worker (Conseil Général-local government)
29_Mother	Scientist	30_Father	Scientist

The table above shows that most parents are highly educated. They hold stable and well-paying employment. In general, the parents have high socio-economic status. Out of the 30 parents, 27 are either employees or owners of their own businesses. Considering the nature of their jobs, most of them are well travelled and have strong ties and links outside France.

Moreover, one mother was a former teacher but had decided to focus on raising her children, while two mothers were students at the university: one was pursuing her bachelor's degree while the other one was completing her second graduate degree. Meanwhile, two parents were full-time workers in this ECEC structure: one as a full-time volunteer and the other one as a paid employee.

As this childcare setting requires parents' active participation in its daily operation, it is imperative that one of the parents in each family has a flexible working hours.

### 5.3.2.2 Parents' Language Repertoires

Table 2 Parents' Language Repertoires

Parent Code	Nationality	Languages	Spouse Code	Spouse's Nationality	Spouse's Languages	Declared Home Language(s)
1	French	French Hebrew English Portuguese (a bit) Turkish (a bit)	2	French	French Hebrew German Arabic English Italian	French Hebrew for terms of endearment
3	French	French English	4 (Father of her child)	American	English	French (sing songs in English)
5	Greek	Greek English French	6	American	English Some notions of French	English
7	French	French English	8	French	French English	French
9	French	French English German	10	Canadian French	English French	French
11	British	English French	12	French	French English	English French
13	British	English	14	British	English	English
15	Algerian	Arabic French English	16	Algerian French	Arabic French	Arabic French
17	French	French English	18	Indian-French	English Punjabi Hindi French	French (some English)

19	French	French English	20	New Zealander	English	French English (when husband is around)
21	British	English Spanish French	22	Finnish	Finnish English Swedish	English Finnish (mother to child)
23	French	French English	24	French	French English Spanish	French Some English
25	French	French English	26	French	French English	French
27	American - French	English French Spanish	28	French	French English	French English
29	Austrian	German Austrian-German English	30	Austrian	German Austrian-German English	German

The families are multilingual and multicultural. There are 14 languages in the linguistic repertoire of the families, which are Arabic, Austrian German, English, French, Finnish, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish and Swedish. It has to be clarified that these are the languages that were mentioned during the formal and informal interviews. It is possible that there are still other languages that are not accounted for.

### 5.3.2.3 Parents' Home Language Practice

The table below shows essential information about the 15 families of the crèche based on the data collected in June 2014. The first column shows the three types of families: first type, parents' first language is English; second type, parents' first language is French; and the third type, both parents' first languages differ, which means a combination of English and French or any other languages. The third column shows their self reported language practices. Presently, with transnational marriages, couples with different first languages or with multiple languages between them and varying cultural backgrounds are becoming more common (Lanza & Wei, 2016).

Table 3 Parents' Home Language Practice

Type	Number of Families	Description
Both parents' first language is English	1	English is the home language
Both parents' first language is Austrian German	1	Austrian German is the home language but mixes English.
Both parents' first language is French	6	Three families speak generally in French
		One family primarily speaks French but includes some words or expressions in English
		Two families spoke French with some words in other languages (Arabic, Hebrew)
Both parents' first languages differ	7	One family speaks English
		Three families speak English and French
		Three families speak French with some English
		One family speaks English plus Finnish

Out of 15 families, seven are transnational couples. Among these international unions, English is the home language or one of the home languages. For these families, parents may have different first languages and so English is considered a practical choice. In families where the mothers are Francophone, there is greater preference for the use of French although English is still present and used. Six out of the 14 families are Francophone but have chosen to enrol their children in the bilingual English–French crèche since their language repertoires also include English.

Regarding their home language use, three families speak French, while the other three reportedly include the use of other languages. One out of the 15 families is British and speaks only English at home. Most of the Francophone parents speak English on a daily basis as their professional language.

### 5.3.3 Professionals

For purpose of consistency, all the adults or staff members working in the crèche are collectively referred to as professionals. This study includes eight professionals who were working in the crèche during the nine-month research period, from September 2013 to June 2014. The staff members' work status can be classified into the following positions: fulltime, substitute and part-time. There are five fulltime, two substitute and one part-time staff members.

Although the crèche only paid four fulltime educators, I consider the association president as a fulltime, non-paid employee. She worked regularly in the crèche as the second English speaker and as cook. Within the span of the study, there were two maternity leaves, hence

the inclusion of substitute staff members. These professionals not only took over the care and education responsibilities of the workers who were on-leave but also took on their language assignments. A part-time English speaker came to reinforce the English language component of the crèche.

### 5.3.3.1 Crèche Staff Members' Basic Information

Table 4 Basic Information About the Professionals

Codes	Work Status	Age Range	Nationality	Year of Arrival in France
1	Full-time	25-30	Algerian	2009
2	Full-time	25-30	Polish	Early 2000s
3	Full-time (on maternity leave, starting April 2014)	30-35	British	1980s (when she was only 4 years old)
4	Part-time	25-30	Canadian	2013
5	Substitute	40-45	French (Algerian descent)	1980s (came to France as a young girl)
6	Full-time	40-45	British-Canadian	Late 1990s
7	Full-time (on maternity leave, starting October 2013)	25-30	French (of Maghrebi origin)	Born and raised in France
8	Substitute (since April)	25-30	Irish	2011

The table shows that five out of the eight professionals are between the ages of 25-30, two between 40-45 and one between 30-35. Furthermore, it clearly indicates that all the professionals have migration background. Six out of eight are holders of international passports, which is another feature of superdiversity, while the two French citizens are of foreign origin. One came to France as a child, and the other was born to parents of Maghrebi origin. The nationalities of the workers do not reflect their complex cultural identities. Professional 3 whose nationality is British but who has lived in France for the most part of her life except for one year in a boarding school in England, feels more French than British. In an interview she said, "...Culturally, I'm more French. Obviously, I grew up in France..." (Appendix D.1, p. 46).

Moreover, another example of the professional's mobility is the case of professional 6 who holds British and Canadian citizenships. She was raised in Illinois, United States and as a university exchange student came to France in her 20s. Professional 4 is originally from

Canada, while Professional 8 is from Ireland. During my time at the centre, both were still adjusting to life in France while working at the crèche. The case of Professional 1 should be clarified as well since she is both a crèche staff member and a parent of one of the children in the crèche. Even before she came to France, she already had a good grasp of the French language, as her mother was a French teacher in Algeria. She came to France from Algeria in 2009 through her French husband with Algerian descent.

Meanwhile, Professional 2 who is Polish came to France because of an exchange program in the early 2000s. She learned the French language as a student at the university. Professional 5 grew up in France and has French nationality but has maintained cultural and family ties with Algeria. She regularly travels to her country of origin with her family. In fact when she was asked about her nationality, she readily answered that she is Algerian and she then clarified that she has French nationality as well. Professional 7 was born and raised in France but has good and continued links with her parents' country of origin.

### 5.3.3.2 Educational Background and Language Assignment

Table 5 Important Information About the Professionals

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Educational Background</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Declared Languages</b>	<b>Assigned Language</b>
1	French childcare certificate, (CAP Petite Enfance)  Management (university level – 2 years in Algeria)	Auxiliaire puéricultrice	French, English (B1-B2 level)	French
2	Education degree, specializing in young children  Bachelor in Education, Psychotherapy and Health (ERASMUS, Exchange student)	Educator (EJE, Educatrice de jeunes enfants)	Polish, French, English	French
3	Education degree, specializing in young children  (Le brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur, BAFA)	Educator (EJE, Educatrice de jeunes enfants)	English, French	English
4	Biology and Chemistry degree	English speaker; Facilitator of activities (animateur d'accueil)	English, French	English
5	Professional diploma  University degree in Arabic Studies	Auxiliaire puéricultrice	French, Arabic, English (A2 level)	French



6	Masters degree in International Relations	Association President Part-time English speaker; Facilitator of activities (animateur d'accueil)	English, French	English
7	French childcare certificate (by correspondence)	Auxiliaire puéricultrice	French, Arabic	French
8	Degree in childcare from Ireland	English speaker; Facilitator of activities (animateur d'accueil)	English, French	English

As already explained in the preceding chapter, the professional's educational background, certificate or diploma, which were delivered by certified and recognised governmental agencies determine the position, role in the structure and eventually the salary of the crèche staff members. In the case of the crèche, two professionals held educator status (EJE) and planned for the children's educational program and activities. Besides holding the key positions and roles in the crèche, the two EJE staff members also complemented the language project, one is assigned to English and the other is assigned as a French speaker. Choosing four French speakers and four English speakers among the staff members was a conscious effort to have a balanced presence of English and French in the structure. This is part of policy. Having equal amount time for each language through employee.

The table also shows that all of the French staff members held French-recognised early childcare and education credentials, which were legally, mandated requirements for a childcare structure to operate. Aside from the mandatory certificate and diploma to work at an ECEC facility, three out of four staff members held a university degree, with educational background not necessarily related with the ECEC. On the other hand, it should also be pointed out as well that three of the four professionals who were assigned English speakers did not have the prescribed early childhood education and care (ECEC) background acknowledged by the French system to work in the ECEC services although all had valuable experiences working with young children. Two of the three professionals, who were non-French, were highly educated and held degrees unrelated to their current positions. Staff member 4 held a university degree in Biology and Chemistry from Canada and came to France with her husband who had a job offer as a researcher at the University of Strasbourg. When she arrived in Strasbourg, she got in touch with the English-speaking community who gave her information about the job as an English-speaking facilitator at an English-French bilingual structure for children, 3-6. The said part-time job opportunity paved the way to yet another part-time position at this bilingual crèche. Meanwhile, staff member 6 was a master's degree holder in International Relations.

In France, there are job opportunities in the ECEC sector. In fact, with 785 000 babies born in 2016 (Observatoire nationale de la petite enfance, 2017), France continues to be the baby-making champion of Europe, a statistics that consequently translates into work possibilities in ECEC. This is one of the obvious reasons why many both economically advantaged and disadvantaged migrants venture into this field.

In the case of English-assigned staff members of high educational backgrounds, moving to France has changed their career prospects. To be able to practice their profession and eventually work in their respective fields, most often a French certificate/diploma or an equivalent is imperative. However this process is tedious and sometimes requires going back to school. What usually happens then is they take on whatever job opportunity is available. In the case of staff member 4, the first job opportunity when she first arrived in Strasbourg was a position as English speaker in a bilingual nursery for children from 3-6 years old. Although she did not have proper training in early childhood education and care, she had experience working with children when she was still in Canada. This is permitted in an early childhood education and care service as long as the worker categories<sup>23</sup> in the crèche are met. In this English-French childcare centre, there are two professionals with *EJE diplomas* and three with *auxiliaire puéricultrice* certificates. The French-assigned professionals mostly covered the legal staff requirements required by the French law. Meanwhile, legally, the English-assigned speakers were limited to facilitating educational activities.

### 5.3.4 The Children

As I had already clarified in the preceding chapter, although this study was conducted in a setting for young children who were at their crucial age of acquiring language, language development progress was not part of the research objectives. However, it has to be clarified that the parents' choice of linguistic policy, which I will develop and discuss in the succeeding chapters, was obviously aimed towards bilingual or multilingual language acquisition.

This study included 15 children, who at the start of the study were between 2 months and a half to three years old and frequented the crèche on daily basis. The thirteen children were a mix of babies, who were less than a year old; one year to two year olds, who were learning to walk and talk; and the two to three years old, who were already expressing themselves in either English or French or both. During the nine-month study at the crèche, I also had the

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<sup>23</sup> Worker categories refer to the employment classification of professionals according to their educational backgrounds. Depending on the number of children or the size of the ECEC structure, the number of professionals with their respective categories should meet the legal requirements.

opportunity to observe the interactions of the professionals with a much-older group of children who attended the crèche on Wednesdays only. These were children who were already enrolled at the local pre-schools or playgroups during the rest of the week except Wednesdays.

With regards to the children's language repertoires, like their parents most of them are multilingual (refer to the Language Repertoire of Parents, Table 2). Thus, the complexity of the crèche is the fact that it is bilingual while most of the children are multilingual.

### 5.3.5 Multilingual and Multicultural Actors

Examining the composition of the crèche brings us to understand that in fact this community of parents, children and ECEC professionals reflects the superdiversity of the city of Strasbourg (Hélot, Caporal-Ebersold, & Young, 2015). Many of the parents and professionals have migration backgrounds. Diversity and rich cultural heritage are two important guiding principles in the founding of the crèche. Thus, the expressions, openness to other languages and cultures are emphasised in the project concept (Appendix C.1). A clear intention to do away from the monolingual thinking and embrace a more inclusive stance to welcome families from different language and cultural backgrounds is evident. However, similar to tendencies in educational systems, the crèche responds to linguistic diversity with the construct of the monolingual habitus (Gogolin, 2002).

# Chapter 6 Conducting Ethnographic Research in a Multilingual Crèche

## 6.1 Introduction

In this study, in order to answer the research questions initially identified, crucial decisions on the methods and approach suitable to the context of the study had to be made. Conducting ethnographic research in a multilingual crèche, where young children are cared for, posed a number of challenges. Thus, a continuous critical reflection was imperative in dealing with certain methodological issues (Fargas Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010; Macnaughton, Smith, & Davis, 2007).

The aim of this chapter is to present the research methods I chose and the justifications of my choices. To provide the context, first, I present the circumstances that led me to focus on ECEC. Second, I explain why an ethnographic research approach is best suited for this academic endeavour. Third, I present my trajectory of access to this setting. Fourth, I discuss the methods I adopted to collect the data. Fifth, I present the data that I considered and the steps towards data analysis. In the sixth and the seventh sections, I talk about data treatment and data analysis. Finally, in the last section, I discuss some practical and ethical issues I encountered. These were concerns in relation to the difficulties encountered in conducting a research where young children are involved.

## 6.2 Narrowing Down the Research Topic

This case study is an offshoot of a European project, named LUCIDE, which is an acronym for Languages in Urban Communities Integration and Diversity for Europe. Funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Program 2011-2015 ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme_en)), it aimed to identify, understand and analyse the language policies and multilingual practices of cities in five broad spheres: in education, the public sphere, economic life, the private sphere and the urban space (<http://www.urbanlanguages.eu/>). The project included 16 cities, 14 of which were in Europe and two in third country partners. I was one of the members with Dr. Christine Helot and Dr. Andrea Young who composed the Strasbourg research team.

As concrete output, this project was concluded with a report on Strasbourg's multilingualism published on the LUCIDE website (<http://www.urbanlanguages.eu/images/stories/docs/city-reports/Strasbourg.pdf>) and a book (L. King & Carson, 2016) that explored the vitality of multilingualism in contemporary cities. In the case of Strasbourg, based on our survey using primary and secondary data, a number of interesting multilingual practices and policies were observed. However from a methodological point of view, because of the project's vast scope, it was not manageable and realisable for a doctoral dissertation. Delimiting the research focus to one sphere from among the five identified in the European project was imperative. The choice of the five spheres of investigation did not lend itself to an in-depth study but pointed to the need to carry out research in one specific area that caught my interest: Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

ECEC proves to be a promising research topic. Being at the core of French family policy, it involves political decisions at the macro-level of the state, of the region and of the city (see Chapters 3 and 4). It concerns parents and their choice of early education setting for their children and professionals for young children who choose to work in ECEC structures. More importantly, it concerns young children and their language development. With multilingualism as the central issue, its management at the different levels from family to ECEC structure and the various institutions are involved.

It is also important to stress that language policy and practices have been studied mostly in school settings by colleague researchers in Strasbourg but not in the context of early childhood care and education (ECEC). Belonging to a research group focusing on LP in Europe (GEPE/LiLPa) orientated me in my decision to investigate language management issues in this under-researched domain. Chapter 4 of the review of the literature reveals a research gap in LP applied to ECEC, more specifically the younger group that caters to children, aged 0 to 3 years old. Another important rationale for my choice of research topic is the emphasis on the need for quality and efficient ECEC services for the sustainability of European societies educationally, socially and economically (see Chapter 3). Given the crucial role of ECEC in a child's early education and language acquisition, I decided to focus on this context of research for my thesis.

On a more personal note, I find this research subject compelling being multilingual (Visayan, Filipino, English and French) and a mother of two children growing up bilingual in French and English (see Chapter 1 for a more in-depth discussion). While preparing to enrol my children in an ECEC setting in the city, I realised my limited knowledge and understanding of the different modalities of early childhood education and care services available in France. While the French ECEC system is government regulated, it has particularities and diversified

services. Thus, discussions with my research professors and my own personal investigation brought me to consider the case of a recently opened bilingual English-French crèche in the city of Strasbourg. It is an ideal research locale to understand how language policy processes are conceptualised, enacted and negotiated (Johnson, 2013). Furthermore, as any other childcare centre in France, it went through the complex procedure of obtaining approval from ECEC governmental agencies and the complicated processes of setting up a suitable place where very young children can thrive and at the same time be immersed in two, equally important languages.

### 6.3 The Choice of an Ethnographic Research Approach

The crèche is a small yet dynamic space of interacting individuals, with its own belief system, rules, norms, aims and expectations. Although as a community, there may be obvious factors that unite the members such as the common goal to promote bilingualism, I argue that it is likewise a venue where individuals exercise their agency. As founding members, parents, professionals and children, who came from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, intermingle and exchange, they created a new culture (Fetterman, 1998; Wolcott, 1999) and they defined and redefined their roles. These processes can only be understood and examined from the vantage point of someone who has lived and seen their experiences (*emic* view) and at the same time has maintained objectivity by taking a stance as an outsider, who is informed by the generalised patterns of language practices in other environments (*etic* view) (Canagarajah, 2006). Employing an ethnographic research approach provides these possibilities.

The choice of ethnography is likewise compatible with how I regard language policy. Following the language policy conceptualisations of Spolsky (2004, 2007, 2008) and Johnson (2013), I consider LPP processes as multi-layered, complicated and at times incongruous in the level of the beliefs, management and practices. Thus, with the complex nature of language policy itself and with differences in its interpretation from one person to another, the employment of a traditional and distinct research methodology would fail to capture the rich interplay of different factors. Ethnography provides this kind of flexibility. Its pluralistic methods, context-sensitive and continuous analytic daily repositioning on the part of the researcher in gathering ethnographic data provide strategic entry points into the multifaceted realities of the community (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), which in this case is the crèche. Furthermore, the potential inconsistencies between policy and practice also needed to be taken into account, and a study using one method cannot possibly capture these complexities. As defined by Duranti (1997, p. 85), “an ethnography is a written

description of the social organization, social activities, symbolic and material resources, and interpretative practices characteristic of a particular group of people.” In this sense, ethnography is interested in understanding the language practice(s) of a community at the micro-level, the relationships that are formed and the daily interactions in order to propose grounded theories (Charmaz, 2000, 2006).

More concretely, the crèche subscribes to a clear and explicit language policy, that of One Person, One Language, or better known as OPOL. As this is central to its identity, it is interesting to examine the values, influences and beliefs behind this declared policy. Seeing this policy at work in the daily functioning of the crèche will pave the way to knowing whether the parents’ and professionals’ language practices are congruent with their beliefs and their goals. Observing their language practices provide me with a better grasp of how their beliefs have shaped their practices or how practices have shaped their beliefs.

Within the OPOL policy, the professionals are expected to adhere to their assigned languages. In other words, the English-assigned professionals should speak in English only and the French-assigned professionals should speak in French only within the walls of the structure. While this policy should be strictly followed (see Appendices C.1, C.3), the parents and their children are exempted from this rule. As professionals deal with very young children whose language development vary, the necessity to negotiate and appropriate the policy is ever-present (Corsaro & Molinari, 2008). Thus, there is more to this overt policy than a top-down mandate that needs to be executed, and an ethnographic research approach to this kind of study is most appropriate to “unravel the largely unconscious ‘lived culture’ of a community” (Canagarajah, 2006: p.153).

Although the length of time spent doing fieldwork does not, in itself, result in better ethnography or in any way assure that the final product will be ethnographic (Goodenough, 1976), I decided at the onset to carry out field work through participant observation from September 2013 to June 2014 for a period of nine months for a total of 133 hours and 33 minutes. This timeframe allowed me to carefully observe, learn about the subjects and participate in their ordinary day-to-day activities. With the goal to examine *predictable patterns* as well as the more complex realities of their experiences, I used the three main modes of data collection, which include: observation, interviewing and archival research (Angrosino, 2007).

## 6.4 A Multi-layered Trajectory of Access

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *access* as the “permission, liberty, or ability to enter, approach, or pass to and from a place or to approach or communicate with a person or thing.” With this definition my trajectory of access can more aptly be described as multi-layered. At every stage and with every person involved in the data gathering process, I had to continuously seek “permission”, although albeit most of the time, informally. The crèche, although on the one hand a public setting where any parent who wishes to enrol his or her child can visit, is at the same time an intimate space. The structure itself has intentionally and unintentionally created rituals and rules for its members. Membership in the setting requires, although not in the rigid sense, adherence to its overt and covert practices. Moreover as a parental association, the crèche is much more than just a place where working parents leave their children to be cared for by childcare professionals, it is an environment where families bring their own unique touch. Thus on the issue of access, the first step was to gain permission to conduct the research at the ECEC centre. However, I had to gain each professional’s, each parent’s and each child’s trust and agreement to conduct research not on them but with them.

To launch my research investigation in the identified bilingual crèche of Strasbourg, I needed to be introduced to an ideal “intermediate gatekeeper” (Wanat, 2008: p.199), which in my case, was the association president. This proved to be the easiest step. Highly benefiting from the credibility and reputation of my research directors in the field of bilingualism, my “route of access” (Bruni, 2006; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) was smooth and easy. I was first introduced to the association president who immediately gave her informal verbal consent. This paved the way to a number of electronic mail exchanges with the goal to clarify the research objectives. This was followed by an interview at the crèche’s premises on August 26, 2013 (please see Appendix C.1 for the full transcription of the interview).

While my association with the university and with my research directors afforded certain advantages, it also proved to be a hindrance in gaining access to the actual language practices of some professionals. Moreover, the fact that it was the association president who introduced me to them and to some parents may have formed notions of my role in the crèche as someone who would help regulate or police their implementation of the language policy. Throughout my stay in the crèche, this pre-conceived notion had to be dispelled over and over.



#### 6.4.1.1 Presentation of the Research to the Association Members: The Parents

Fully aware that the role of the parents is essential in this crèche, I had to secure the parent's cooperation, if not at least their permission or agreement, whether formal or informal. I asked the association president if there was a need to formally convene the parents so I could present the objectives of my study and explain what an ethnographic research study entails. Although she informed me of the first general assembly and considered it as an ideal venue to present the research and myself, they already had a long list of concerns to cover. What she proposed, however, was that she would inform the parents of my research and its objectives during the said meeting. Moreover, the research objectives were presented in the "permission letter" (see Appendix B.1), written in English and French. As the president was aware of the language repertoires of the parents, she decided which version of the letter each parent or set of parents should receive. Although she mentioned my research during the said meeting, the letters were not distributed at that moment. Instead, each family received a copy of the letter, which was placed in the children's mailboxes. The issues of anonymity and confidentiality were also addressed, clarified and emphasised in the permission letters as the research setting involves children whose parents are certainly concerned with their well-being. Moreover, these two important issues were addressed repeatedly in emails sent previously to the association president.

While the aims of my research were clearly stipulated in the permission letter, at different instances, I had to clarify that I did not intend to evaluate the professionals and parents' language practices. Furthermore, it was not my aim to measure any kind of supposed efficiency but I would focus on the understanding of the complex process of language policy and practices among all the actors in the crèche. It is worth noting that none of the permission letters came back with a refusal as they served primordially to inform parents of what the research was about. It seemed that the association president's agreement was sufficient to gain official entry into the crèche although as I have previously explained, this official permission did not automatically give me access to observe or participant in the activities of the other actors in the crèche.

Generally, the following reasons may have facilitated easy access to the crèche: First, I am a bilingual mother of two young children, whose ages fall within the range of the children who are accommodated at the crèche. Second, I am a speaker of English, one of the two languages of the crèche. Third, I informed them that I am writing my research in English and that it would be available for them to read when finished. But again, it has to be emphasised that there was continuous informal explanation throughout the year as I encountered parents on different occasions.

#### 6.4.1.2 Presentation of the Research to the Educational Team: The Professionals

The first appointment for an interview with the association president also resulted in getting acquainted with some professionals. I was briefly introduced to the professionals who happened to be in the kitchen where the interview was conducted. One of them was the named educational team leader of the crèche. Because she was busy at that time, she agreed to meet me on another occasion. As a result, another schedule was identified. During this meeting, the two professions (EJEs) of the crèche were present: the educational team leader who is assigned to English and the other professional who is assigned to French. I presented a brief overview of the project and my proposed research design. This paved the way for us to discuss what was feasible and what was not possible to do in the crèche. I had briefly explained to them that since my research approach was ethnographic, I would use the principles of participant-observation. The main questions of the professionals concerned the issue of my interactions with the children and the language I would use. This set the tone for one of the central issues in the theory of my thesis: language policy and more specifically the OPOL strategy decided at the outset of the creation of the crèche. Thus, with regards to language use, I chose English rather than French for one obvious reason: fluency of the said language. Interestingly, by asking me to identify the language that I would use, the staff somewhat 'accepted' me as one of them since there were no assigned languages for the parents or for the children.

Moreover, we deliberated on the best place I should position myself, where the children, professionals and parents usually gathered. One of the suggestions was that a chair assigned to me be placed in the middle of the room. This suggestion showed their view of the relationship of a researcher and the researched: the researcher being an outsider investigator, who studies and evaluates them. I politely refused this offer and explained that my objectives were to clearly understand the daily functioning of the crèche and to be in its activities as an insider, if possible. Moreover, I explained that my research required an open interaction with them and that I was not doing research *on them* but *with them* (Cameron, 1992). At the end of the meeting, I emphasised my flexibility to adjust to the norms of the crèche and my willingness to modify my research methodology at any time to adapt to the general well-being of the children.

Ethnographic research carried out in a social setting with people who have never encountered this kind of research demands a high kind of sensitivity and respect for the actors involved in the study. First of all, most of them would have representations of the research process as synonymous with evaluating their behaviour rather than being aware

that as a human and social science researcher, I am mostly interested in understanding the complex dimension in this case of bilingual and multilingual practice.

## 6.5 Methods of Ethnographic Data Gathering

To have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of implementing OPOL in this crèche, I employed an ethnographic research approach (Gobo, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Heath & Street, 2008; Heller, 2006, 2009; Levon, 2013; McCarty, 2011; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999; Wolcott, 1999). As previously mentioned, ethnography, with its plurality of methods, provides the researcher flexibility to adapt to the rigors and constraints of the community being studied. This allows access into the linguistic practices and lived realities of the participants. This section discusses the varied methods used and the justification for the choices made. The data collection methods of ethnography were intended to grasp the ordinary activities of actors in their natural settings with their social and cultural meanings. The multiplicity of data generating mechanisms was deemed necessary to verify and substantiate the complex and multi-layered language policy realities in the crèche, which are impossible to generate through a single method.

### 6.5.1 Participant-observation

Since I considered participant observation (Kawulich, 2005) to be one of the most important data gathering tools for an in-depth understanding of the language policy practices in the crèche, time spent as a participant observer amounted to 113 hours and 33 minutes. Participant-observation side by side with extensive note taking, audio-recordings and interviews provided an extensive and in-depth glimpse into the lives and lived realities of agents. It afforded a multi-level and multi-layered understanding to how OPOL is perceived and implemented. And yet, this emic perspective is balanced by the etic view of understanding the observed phenomenon by approaching it from a distance. Moreover, it was not possible to observe everything, thus the need to focus on aspects that were relevant to my research problem. It also allowed for opportunities to write not only about the obvious and seen but to ask about the rationale behind the agents' actions, more specifically their choice of languages. I determined two phases for its realisation: the preliminary semi-participant observation and the in-depth participant observation.

#### 6.5.1.1 Preliminary Participant Observation

As the crèche was an entirely new setting for me, I realised the need to have a general understanding of how the crèche functioned in its actual setting, thus I needed to interact

with the participants, i.e. the children, the childcare professionals and the parents. More specifically, there was a need to know what a typical day in the crèche was like, to understand the various responsibilities of staff members and parents, to learn about their different roles and to determine how I should position myself whenever I was with the children. Another important point was to ascertain that I did not interfere with the day-to-day operation, to see while at the same time being able to observe and gather data, and to build a trusting relationship with the key players in the crèche.

To be able to do this, for the first two months, I decided on the preliminary participant observation. This method was the best way to approach my study because in the words of Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) participant observation is "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting" (p. 91). [2]. Similarly, Dewalt and Dewalt (2011) define participant observation as the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. Furthermore, Bernard (1994: p.344) elaborates that "participant observation involves immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself every day from that immersion so you can intellectualise what you've seen and heard, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly. When it is done right, participant observation turns fieldworkers into instruments of data collection and data analysis."

To accomplish the objectives that I set for the first two months of my stay at the crèche, I developed my own version of an observation schedule. In an earlier research by Sylvia, Roy and Painter (1980), an observation schedule was used to complement linguistic data by contextual observations. In my research, I used it primarily to provide an overview of what a typical day looks like in the crèche. The format for the observation schedule I used is based on the one refined by Thompson (2000) but with major changes to the headings in an attempt to have a comprehensive picture of life in the crèche. Please refer to Appendix J for a copy of the modified observation schedule with a sample entry of one of my visits.

On my first morning at the crèche during the children's hello time, which is a special time during the day when all the children gather, the educational team leader introduced me formally to the children as someone who had come to play with them. This introduction shows that the team leader had understood that I was there to involve myself in the life of the crèche. However, it was clear that due to safety, security and legal issues, I could not function fully as a staff member, thus, already defining the limits in the areas of my participation. To determine the days that I could visit the crèche, I had to confer with the association president and the educational team leader because of a number of factors that

had to be considered. The working space had four rooms, with a floor area of 89 square meters excluding the kitchen area and the bathroom and toilet space. With five staff members, a parent who was present for her assigned duties, the association president and 13 children, the space available was very small. The team leader explained that they have to maintain a balanced ratio between the children and adults present. Because of the constraint of space, they wanted to avoid overcrowding, which was felt to be a deterrent to the children's free play. Afternoons were also not suitable for observations because of the children's siesta hours. After thoroughly considering the valid factors mentioned and based on my observations on the most productive time of the day, I decided that for the first two months I would be at the crèche on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday mornings, a schedule agreed by the associate president and the educational team leader.

After two months of preliminary participant observation, I had established a better rapport with the participants in the crèche. I noticed that the childcare professionals became less conscious of my presence as a researcher as they had come to know me personally. I had the impression that I was seen less as an outsider. The questions and casual discussions had evolved from what my research was about to questions pertaining to my own children. With the children, I noticed they got used to my presence in the crèche. The much older ones were interacting with me, while the smaller children were very receptive to gestures of affection. With the parents, there were no questioning looks of who I was and what I was doing in the crèche. On the whole, I had established a strong foundation with the participants through which mutual trust and collaboration could thrive. Moreover, this process paved the way for me to move on to the next stages of my data collection: interviews with staff members and parents and the more in-depth participant observation process.

#### 6.5.1.2 In-depth Participant Observation

After the second month of my stay at the crèche, knowing that the staff, the parents and the children were more comfortable with me and having a clearer understanding of the activities in the crèche, I decided it was time to let go of the pen and to be more present in the activities of the children and in so doing, observe the language practices of the personnel or staff members more closely. Thus, from the third to the ninth month of data gathering, I participated in the life of the crèche, which included helping the staff members watch the children, looking out for children's needs such as during mealtime and most importantly, playing, singing and reading with them. To understand meaningful social variables, one needs to actively participate, engage and contribute positively in the life of the locals (Stanford, 2013).

This strategy helped me to see and understand the language practices of the participants while they were performing their usual tasks on a regular basis. As George Orwell aptly points out that, “to see what is in front of one’s nose needs a constant struggle,” I noted down everything that I observed after I left the premises, thus giving myself more time to reflect and put into words what I had seen and heard. This strategy helped maintain an “objective” point-of-view of the activities that I had been involved in and observed throughout the day, allowing me time to reflect on the salient and remarkable events related to language policy. However, there was one disadvantage with this strategy: the impossibility to record the exact statements or recall the accurate words or expressions used. I argue that this was still the best possible way to gather the necessary data. Without a pen and paper in sight, there was an evident change in the behaviour on the part of the professionals. They felt more at ease and less constrained by the feeling of being observed. Helping the children became more automatic and unhindered as there was no notepad and pen to put away and as such I was immediately available for them.

#### 6.5.1.3 Field Notes: Observation Schedule Document and Research Diary

Throughout the whole research process, I used two important forms of writing to record my observations: *field notes* and a *research diary*. Although Bernard (1994) considers a diary a type of field notes, in my research I distinguish them as two separate types. In this ethnographic participant-observation, the *field notes* were largely based on the observation schedule that Thompson (2000) developed, which I modified to be able collect relevant information that could capture the crèche setting. The final document, named Observation Schedule (Appendix J), included the following headings: time, place, participants, activity, description, observation/remarks and transcription of utterances. The *research diary* contains notes and personal annotations of salient events observed during each visit. Each entry was unique in the sense that it highlighted the people, the events, the language practices and the conversations that caught my attention on every visit at the crèche. Also, I used the diary to note down my thoughts, opinions and the highs and lows of my experiences in the childcare setting.

The field notes and diaries served the following purposes for this research: to provide the context, which included important details necessary in analysing the audio recordings; and to bridge the gap and provide links with other data gathered, such as photos, informal discussions and spontaneous exchanges with the actors in the crèche.

I have to clarify that there were advantages and disadvantages in using the observation schedule form for my *field notes* (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). On the positive side, the

form allowed me to record important details of what was happening in the specific spaces of the centre. Guided by the main sections of the form, I filled-in specific information that was crucial for writing the analysis. However, there were several downsides as well. Primarily, actual note taking while working with children and professionals impeded access to some activities and practices. Instead of observing, I slipped into writing mode consequently oblivious of the other essential events happening around me. Additionally, the movements of people from one space to another rendered it difficult to focus on one specific incident. Furthermore, carrying a pen and writing notes served to remind the professionals of my researcher status in the crèche thus emphasising the hierarchical power play of the researcher and the researched (Riley, Schouten, & Cahill, 2003). It was this final point that made me reconsider my data gathering procedure. Not wanting to intimidate the staff members and the parents, I decided to use the observation schedule tool minimally and switch to writing my observation in my *research diary* outside the confines of the crèche. This strategy proved to be beneficial. It addressed the problem known to sociolinguists as the “observer’s paradox” (Labov, 1972). By putting the pen and paper away, I was able to “find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed...by systematic observation” (Labov, p.209).

My relationships with the crèche members: professionals, parents and children also determined how the note-taking process evolved. During the first few weeks, it was easier to actively engage in intensive note taking. However, as the professionals and children became accustomed to my presence and as my relationships with them progressed from being a stranger to a familiar figure, I became more involved in the life of the crèche. It became more and more apparent to me that it was difficult to participate, observe and write at the same time. Writing after each session was my best option. Although such approach has its limitations, it was more feasible. It also needed to be emphasised that the purpose of the field notes and diary in examining the language policy of the crèche likewise changed. Initially, they were considered secondary to the audio-recordings. However for purposes of practicality and authenticity, during the analysis, I relied heavily on the research notes when referring to the audio-recordings. Since these notes provided raw observation, statements and reactions from the participants, I used them as a backdrop to the audio-recordings, reviewing and playing them back again.

For the research diary, I used two notebooks of 17 x 22 cm, utilising 75 pages of the first notebook and 34 pages of the second notebook (Appendix G provides sample pages). Concerning the field notes, I used 28 observation schedule sheets.

#### 6.5.1.4 Audio Recordings During the Semi-participant Observation Process

Understanding the language practices and policies in the crèche required getting sample recordings of language practices. However, researching in a crèche poses a challenging task in collecting raw data through audio-recordings because of the rapid movement of participants from one room to another. Since the children's ages ranged from 0-3 years old, the staff members continually had to adapt to their needs. In the mornings during the children's free play, the children were allowed to move freely around the three adjoining rooms, and the professionals had to supervise the children in these three rooms. The children's movements from one space to the other also necessitated the professionals to do the same. These rapid and frequent movements of the participants (the children and the professionals) render it difficult to recognise the voices recorded. It was difficult to provide contextual data to the audio-recordings that were captured since I could only be in one place at a time. I also judged that it would be useless to have several recorders as this would just provide me with data that would be difficult to interpret because it lacked the context that could only be provided by notes.

In instances where there was one staff supervising, the opening to the first door was not blocked so that the staff member could still monitor the children in the two rooms. Given the scenarios that I described above, I decided to audio-record two main activities in the mornings: the hello time and the snack time as they are predictable main activities that happen in the mornings to which most of the children from 0-3 years participate. I also recorded group activities occasionally when I was present and could later write a description of the context.

For the purpose of having good quality recordings, I chose to use a digital portable recorder with built-in microphone. One important consideration in choosing this small device was the setting. I needed a small, unimposing and discrete device that would not grab the attention of very young children but was equally effective in recording on-going language use in the structure. Since the surface area of the crèche was small, I thought that using an external microphone was not necessary since the internal microphone could already capture what was going on in the entire room. Another positive outcome in using a portable recorder was that I was able to move from one room to another without disturbing the children and the staff members during simultaneous activities in separate rooms. The only disadvantage to this approach was that there were some instances in the recording when children could be heard talking at the same time and babies crying in the background, which made it difficult to transcribe conversations. I realised that this was something that I could not prevent since the recording environment involved very young children who have needs that can be expressed



either by babbling, crying and shouting. To ensure that I still got the important information, I wrote down notes of what I was seeing and hearing. Furthermore, to capture quality-recording sound, I used WAV files, which record better sounds than MP files.

One important question had to be answered: would audio recording be sufficient to capture the language use and practices in the crèche or should it be backed-up by video-recordings? Considering my research questions and the conditions at the crèche primarily the problem with space, the children's safety, the staff members and the parents possible reactions, I chose not to video-tape the sessions. Videotaping with the equipment would have not only impeded the day-to-day operation in the crèche but could also have elicited unnatural behaviour on the part of the participants. Since my research questions focused on the language practices and policies in the crèche, I decided that audio recording and other data collecting methods were already sufficient to be able to gather meaningful information.

#### 6.5.1.5 Audio-recording During Participant Observation

Since I had already recorded a considerable number of sample conversations of what generally goes on in the crèche during group sessions, during the third month I prioritised focusing on the first group activity in the morning and snack time. During this time, the children were together and there were more professionals gathered in the same setting. This ensured rich exchanges among them.

I also decided to limit my recordings to 15-20 minutes considering the difficulty in processing interview data. Moreover, to also ensure that the context was not lost or forgotten, I made a point of writing down the context and drawing a diagram of where the participants were at the time of speaking or during the activity. I did this immediately after each visit.

For the final two months of participant observation, I explained to the association president and the staff members that I would do the recording differently. Instead of putting the recorder in a place where everyone could be heard, I would ask the professionals to carry it with a light microphone clipped to their garments. This idea was accepted without any opposition, however the implementation of this type of recording proved to be a challenge for some of the staff members. Out of the five staff members, there were three who willingly wore the microphone and carried the recorder in their pockets. However, one of these three participants felt very uncomfortable at one point and asked to stop recording. After acknowledging that this method made some of the staff members uncomfortable, I clarified that they had the choice either to participate or not. This procedure yielded four good quality recordings. The voice of the professional who had the recorder with the microphone was

audible and the conversations she made with the children and other staff members were very useful data. This procedure provided very rich data. Data treatment of audio recordings is discussed in Section 6.6.3.

## 6.5.2 Interviews

### 6.5.2.1 Key Informant Interview

This crèche is a structure that welcomes very young children from 10 weeks to 3 years old and is operated by parents. Due to this fact, I was very much aware of the need to be deliberate in my entry. Understanding how the crèche functions and knowledge of the people involved in the crèche was primordial so I needed to understand how to approach the participants, to see when I could best conduct my observations and interviews and to know where to position myself when I was with the children. I thought that this would be the best way to initially interview a key informant, namely the crèche project manager/ crèche founder who is also the association president. The following were the more specific objectives that I noted down, which served as my guide when I drafted the interview questions: (1) know the children's language backgrounds and their families' multilingual repertoires; (2) build and establish rapport with the key informant and with the other staff members; (3) understand how the crèche functions and the role of the bilingual concept in the crèche project; (4) have an initial understanding of the educational project and language management of the crèche at this stage. The outcome of the first interview (Appendix C.1) gave me a good glimpse of how the crèche functions. I had information about the children's ages, their basic information, which is summarized in the table below. It is very clear that the OPOL policy was the agreed rule as far as who speaks what to whom in this crèche. All in all, I had three interviews with the association president (Appendices C.1, C.2, C.3).

### 6.5.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews: Parents and Professionals

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with the association president, parents and professionals. The questions of the interviews conducted with the different participants have the same major headings although there were variations with the follow-up questions based on the answers elicited from the participants. The questions are subdivided into the following area: personal information such as nationality, educational background and their languages; language beliefs and ideologies and their reported language practices.

Undertaking the semi-structured interviews was challenging given the situation of each participant and the demands of the crèche. For the parents, most of them hold full-time or

part-time jobs. One of the routines is that when a parent comes to the crèche, he or she communicates to a staff member about the child's physical, mental and emotional states before leaving to go off to work. That gives them very little time to mingle with other parents, let alone have an interview with me. Since the structure is a parental crèche, parents also serve a couple of hours a week or serve in the different tasks of the crèche. An interview conducted during this time was also difficult to manage since parents are expected to complete a list of responsibilities at the crèche for its normal functioning. Given the above-mentioned situation, I got hold of the list of parents' email addresses. I wrote to each one of them to ask for an appointment, giving them a list of possibilities, which included virtual interview. Most of them opted for the interviews to be conducted during their time at the crèche. However because of the many responsibilities of parents during their time on-duty, most of the interview schedules had to be rescheduled a couple of times. This proved to be very challenging because. With this there were constant negotiations with the parents and the staff members regarding visits and presence in the crèche, which were not limited anymore to the initial specified schedule of Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

I faced the same concern with the professionals. As they needed to deal with the children's needs first, I had to adjust to schedules. Some interviews were conducted while they were on-duty whenever the conditions were all right for the children. Even though finding a common time to meet the participants face-to-face for semi-structured interviews was difficult, in the end it was worth it because of the substantial information I gathered that would not have been possible with the use of other methods of data collection.

A concern that had to be considered was whether or not to interview the children. However, I decided during the course of my data collection not to include the children. I clarified at the onset that the study is not on the children's language acquisition.

There were three interviews conducted with the association president, which were conducted in three phases: first, before I started data collection in the structure; second, towards the end of the first six months since the opening of the crèche; and third, two weeks before I completed my observation, which was towards the end of the school year. Two of the three interviews were conducted within the premises of the crèche, while the last interview was via Skype. All were recorded and transcribed, with the first two interviews lasting more or less an hour and the last interview more than 20 minutes.

In general, the interviews with the parents were conducted in the crèche during their downtime while they were on-duty. Two interviews were conducted at nearby restaurants during their free time. The average interview time was between 30-40 minutes. Meanwhile,

all the interviews with staff members were conducted in the crèche. The quality of the interviews varied depending on where we were during the interview. The ones conducted behind closed doors to muffle the voices of the children yielded good sound results. However, there were two recordings whose quality was very low since the voices of the children interfered with the statements of the staff member who was being interviewed.

To get substantial information, I requested to redo the interviews in a much calmer setting. However, with the other interviews, I only transcribed those that were audible enough to be heard. There were 11 interviews conducted with parents (Appendices E.1-E.11), three interviews with the crèche founder/association president, who is also a parent (Appendices C.1-C.3) and five interviews with the professionals (Appendices D.1-D.5).

### 6.5.2.3 Informal Interviewing and Conversations

During my stay at the crèche, there were a number of opportunities to casually interact with the participants. These were spontaneous instances in which information about language beliefs, ideologies and choices were generated without formal prompts. Occasionally, these exchanges depict a more casual, friendly relationship than a researcher-interviewee rapport (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). Due to the nature of the circumstances, it was difficult to interrupt and secure a recorder to be able to capture what was said. Instead to ascertain that essential points mentioned are remembered, I wrote down notes of the conversations that occurred. From the point of view of methodology, these personal interactions are considered as a key part of the research itself (Stanford, 2013).

## 6.5.3 Collecting Additional Information

### 6.5.3.1 Crèche Documents

As my research covered the language policies of the crèche at three levels, I deemed it necessary to gather documents relevant to LP in the crèche. Thus, these documents include email exchanges with the city hall, the documents submitted for crèche application and documents available from the crèche website. These documents were necessary to understand the nature of the crèche, the process of its establishment and the position of the city in discussions about language (please refer to the documents under Appendix H). Understanding an organisation's language policy necessitates a triangulation of data, including relevant documentation.

### 6.5.3.2 Photographs

The linguistic landscape of the crèche was also interesting to analyse. To be able to capture this, I asked permission to take pictures of writings on the bulletin board throughout the nine months of my stay at the crèche. I took pictures of the documents that were posted on the walls, the bookshelves, the rooms and the different materials available in the Montessori activity room. I deemed it necessary to capture the writings on the board and other linguistic displays in order to document the linguistic policy with regards to the use of the boards and means of communication with the parents through notices. The pictures also provided a visual understanding of the use of language with regards to space (Appendix I shows sample photographs).

## 6.6 Data Treatment

In working with data, Thompson (2000, p.70) describes the essential responsibilities of an ethnographer, which are: “capturing naturalistic human behaviour; transforming human behaviour into data sets; analysing in terms of the perceptions and cultural values of the informants; and presenting insights that are acceptable and comprehensible both within and outside the observed community.” For the final task to be made possible, it is pertinent that the generated data be processed and transformed. For this research endeavour, the extensive field notes, interviews, audio-recordings, collected documents and photos underwent “inevitable transformations in the process of becoming data sets” (Thompson, 2000, p.71). However, pertinent processes of organising and converting data into analysable sets have been criticised as they could potentially alter and at worst distort data. Fully aware of these possible pitfalls, I employed the suggested framework for ethnolinguistic descriptive analysis (Thompson, 2000, p.71) with decisive modifications to emphasise the need for “intermediate analyses” (Seele, 2015). The descriptive analysis framework is incorporated in the research design.

### 6.6.1 Research Design

The research design for this research consists of three main phases: preparation, data collection and data analysis.

Figure 3 An Overview of the Research Design

<b>PHASE 1 - PREPARATION</b>	
(March – August 2013)	
Stage 1	Identification of the Case Study
Stage 2	Getting Access
Stage 3	Presentation of the Research to the Crèche Founder
<b>PHASE 2 - DATA COLLECTION</b>	
(August 2013 – August 2014)	
Stage 1	Preliminary Visit (August 26, 2013)
Stage 2	Semi-Participant Observation (September – October 2013) Initial Interviews (September – October 2013)
Stage 3	Intensive Participant Observation, Interviews, Gathering of Documents and Photos (October 2013 – June 2014)
Stage 4	Final Visit (August, 2014)
Collected data including research notes based on observations, audio-recordings of language practices, audio-recordings of interviews, crèche documents and photos	
*** Throughout the whole process of data collection, <b>Intermediate Analysis</b> and <b>Reflection of my own practices</b> occurred.	
<b>PHASE 3 - DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
(September 2014 – June 2018)	
Stage 1	Raw Data
Stage 2	Transcription of Interviews Reading, rereading and reviewing of field notes and research diary Listening to audio recordings Reviewing of crèche documents and photos
Stage 3	Making Sense of Data - Classification of data based on the following: declared language policy, perceived language policy and practice language policy - Choice of audio-recordings to back up analysis - Other salient points not covered in the initial classification
Stage 4	Analysis and Interpretation
*** During this period, I presented my research at local and international conferences. Also, I published articles that highlighted the findings of my research.	

In phase 2, the alternating processes of intensive participant observation and the writing of field notes and of the research diary from the perspectives of an insider and also an outsider render a balanced view of the empirical realities observed in the setting. Moreover, these two actions facilitated data generation and data analysis, which Seele (2015) considers as two processes that are closely associated. In this study, these back and forth processes of immersing in the lived experiences of the participants and being removed, viewing their realities from a distance allowed me to make conscious decisions about my stance as a researcher, such as the extent of assistance that I can accord, the physical space between myself and the children and also the professionals and the boundaries of exchanges and discussions that I could involve myself in.

## 6.6.2 Transcription Conventions

The following conventions were used when transcribing the interviews with parents and professionals.

((words))	Double parentheses enclose transcriber's comments
...	An ellipse is used to indicate that some material has been left out
?	A question mark indicates a relatively strong rising intonation
!	An exclamation mark indicates rising intonation (exclamatory)
[laugh]	Brackets are used to identify non-verbal communication.

## 6.6.3 Data Derived from Audio Recordings of Sessions

To capture naturally occurring language practices in the crèche, I recorded 23 sessions of professional-led activities, children's free play and other on-going activities for a total recording time of 15 hours and 33 minutes. Meanwhile, the recordings made by the professionals themselves produced a total recording time of three hours and three minutes. In addition, I recorded the entire association meeting for a total of an hour and 40 minutes. The table below enumerates the breakdown of these recordings.

Table 6 List of Audio Recordings

Number	Month	Date	Description	Interview Duration (hour=h, minute=m, second=s)
<b>AUDIO-RECORDING OF SESSIONS</b>				
1	October 2013	October 7, 2013	Circle Time	11m: 56s
2		October 10, 2013	Going Out	20m: 37s
3		October 14, 2013	Circle Time	38m: 51s
4		October 15, 2013	Typical Day, Informal talk with Parent 1	1h: 21m: 00
5		October 17, 2013	Prof. 3 talking to K	51m: 31s
6	November 2013	November 7, 2013	Informal conversations with parents	1h: 17m: 28s
7		November 12, 2013	Discussion with Professional 3	29m: 19s
8		November 18, 2013	Typical Morning	1h: 08m: 26s
9		November 21, 2013	Circle Time	18m: 27s
10	January 2014	January 27, 2014	Hello, Snack Time	35m: 39s
11		January 29, 2014	Hello, Snack Time	27m: 53s
12	February 2014	February 5, 2014	Typical Day	1h: 32m: 35s
13		February 5, 2014	Snack Time	28m: 11s
14		February 13, 2014	Snack Time Highlighting Prof. 2's interaction with children	39m: 06s
15		February 13, 2014	Typical Day, Parent 27 with the professionals and the children	2h: 26m: 10s
16		February 18, 2014	"Music Together"	19m: 15s
17		February 19, 2014	Children Preparing to go the Park	21m: 58s
18		February 19, 2014	Wednesday Snack Painting	1h: 05m: 21s
19	April 2014	April 1, 2014	Hello Time	17m: 49s
20		April 10, 2014	Hello Time	32m: 03s
21	May 2014	May 9, 2014	Professional 2 Switching English – French	1m: 30s
22		May 13, 2014	"Music Together"	27m: 49s
23	June 2014	June 6, 2014	Circle Time	10m: 32s
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>				<b>15h 33 m</b>



AUDIO-RECORDINGS OF CARERS CARRYING THE MICROPHONES				
1		May 13, 2014	Professional 2 with the Recorder	20m: 20s
2		May 25, 2014	Professional 4 with the recorder	45m:00
3		May 30, 2014	Professional 1 with the recorder	1h: 37m: 35s
4		May 25, 2014	Professional 2 with the recorder	22m: 56s
<b>TOTAL TIME</b>				<b>3h: 3m</b>
AUDIO-RECORDING OF ASSOCIATION MEETING				
1		January 10, 2014	Introductions of the professionals, discussion of the educational projects	1h: 42m: 45s

I listened to all the audio-recordings. For some of the recordings, several listening sessions were required to have a good grasp of the context especially when bilingual conversations overlapped or when children were shouting and crying. I decided not to transcribe most of the recordings but used them as added information to the field notes and research diary entries.

## 6.7 Data Analysis

To deconstruct the language policy at the micro-level of the English-French bilingual crèche, this ethnographic study on the implemented language policy is primarily informed by the language policy conceptualisation of Spolsky (Spolsky, 2004; Spolsky, 2007, 2008), which Bonacina (2010) considers to be the most extensive approach to examining and understanding language policy. During the stage where I was making sense of the data, I classified data sets according to the three main strands: first, the **declared language policy**, which pertains to the language policy found in the management decisions of a community; second, **perceived language policy**, which applies to the language policy found in beliefs and ideologies; and the third, **practiced language policy** which refers to the language policy found in language practices and thus, looking at language patterns and language choice patterns.

To distinguish the different strands, I decided to classify the data to analyse for each strand and the questions to ask to ascertain the language policy at the different levels.

For example, for the *declared language policy*, I used the three interviews with the crèche president (Appendices C.1, C.2, C.3) and reviewed the official documents of the crèche (H.1-H.16). As I was going over the transcripts of interviews and the official crèche papers, I asked the question: What do the crèche founder and the documents say about how languages are managed in the structure?

For the *perceived language policy*, I went over the transcribed interviews of all the parents (Appendices E.1- E.11 and Appendices C.1 – C.3) and the professionals (Appendices C.1 – C.3). Following the same process I used to determine the *declared language policy*, I read and reread the interviews and asked the following questions: What do the actors think about OPOL? What are the motivations, beliefs and ideologies behind the choice of this language policy?

For the *practiced language policy*, I relied heavily on my field notes and research diary. A thorough reading and rereading was imperative to answer the following questions: What do actors do about OPOL? How do they interpret and negotiate OPOL? Guided by the notes, I identified the audio-recordings of sessions to be transcribed.

### 6.7.1 Discourse Analysis

Considering the available data, the prime entry point for analysis is *discourse analysis*. Discourse as language in use is an understanding that language is a fusion of a linguistic form and a particular context or situation (Cameron & Panović, 2014). Shaw and Bailey (2009) provide an elaborate definition:

*“Discourse analysis is the study of social life, understood through analysis of language in its widest sense (including face-to-face talk, non-verbal interaction, images, symbols and documents). It offers ways of investigating meaning, whether in conversation or in culture. Discourse analytic studies encompass a broad range of theories, topics and analytic approaches for explaining language in use. They ask ‘What is social life like?’ and ‘What are the implications for individuals and/or wider society?’”*(p.413)

The aforementioned statements resonate with Gee’s (2014) definition that considers discourse analysis as a method of closely studying language to show the relationship between the micro-dynamics of language use with the broader context of culture and society. This sits well with the conceptualisation of language policy being multi-layered, multi-levelled and is influenced by societal and cultural factors (Hornberger & Johnson, 2011; Johnson, 2013; Spolsky, 2007).

The combination of an ethnographic approach and discourse analysis provided an in-depth examination and analysis of the relevant subjects that needed elaboration. While ethnography provided me the opportunity to examine agency or the roles that the parents and professionals play in the process of language policy and planning, discourse analysis allowed me to focus on issues such as power and ideology in the language policy identified.

### 6.7.2 Analysis of Interviews, Field Notes and Research Diary

The interviews with parents and professionals provided rich data. Similarly, the field notes and research diary accumulated over the period of participant-observation offered a massive amount of data that needed to be systematically examined. To reveal, recurrent ideas, I applied an isochronous approach of analysis, which required numerous readings of the transcripts and the notes. Through the cyclical process of examining the available data, important themes emerged. *Thematic analysis* permitted the researcher to identify salient and recurring concepts from the accounts of the interviewees (Duff, 2008; Pavlenko, 2007; Talmy, 2010; Talmy & Richards, 2011). Furthermore, using this form of analysis for the field notes and the research diary, language practice patterns were determined.

## 6.8 Practical and Ethical Issues

In this last section, I discuss some practical and ethical issues that I experienced in the course of data gathering and data analysis. I also present solutions taken to make sure the described concerns did not impede the research process.

### 6.8.1 Simultaneous and Consecutive Bilingual Interactions: Data Collection, Treatment and Analysis

When the children and professionals were gathered in one space and were collectively doing a single activity, the task of data collection was simplified. These professional-led activities somewhat provided structure and predictability. On the other hand, capturing simultaneous activities and conversations occurring in all the spaces of the crèche, proved to be challenging. The movements of the participants from one room to another were fast. Conversations were quick and short, and interlocutors switched from one conversation partner to another. The practical questions that had to be addressed were: How do I observe? Where do I start? Who do I focus on and when?

After the preliminary semi-participant observation, it became apparent to me that putting audio-recorders in each of the areas of the crèche was not an option. First, the recordings

would not make sense without providing the contexts. Second, simultaneous and consecutive bilingual interactions when recorded were challenging to transcribe (this will be discussed in the next section). I opted then to use one recorder and place it in the same room where I was at that moment. This ensured that the audio recording was supplemented by a sufficient amount of contextual data.

Moreover, choices needed to be made. Every time I came to the crèche, I pre-determined the professional or their possible encounters with other crèche actors that I would like to observe closely that day. The following were the categories I considered: observation of language practices of individual professionals, observation of interactions of professionals, professionals' use of space (Lamarre & Lamarre, 2009), professionals' interactions with children, a professional's interaction with another professional, English-assigned professionals with French speaking children, English-assigned professionals with bilingual children and professionals, French-assigned professionals with English speaking children, French-assigned professionals with bilingual children and professionals (English or French-assigned) and interaction with parents are among the combinations possible in order to capture the complex *linguaging* that occurred in the crèche.

It has to be clarified though that this process of pre-identification was very flexible. When I wrote my research diary after each session, I usually penned down incidents or encounters that were "memorable," or incidents that caught my attention. Finally, when it came to the analysis of the practiced language policies and the writing stage, I chose to go over my field notes and research diary first to identify the recordings that required more systematic examination. From listening to the recording over and over, I decided on the segments to transcribe that would enhance or reinforce language practice described in the field notes and research diary. The use of these tools served as an effective means for cross-validation.

### 6.8.2 Doing Research with Young Children

While this research did not focus on young children's language acquisition or their perspectives with regards to language use, conducting research with them (Christensen, 2004) required sensitivity, flexibility and on-going negotiation as a researcher (Delamont, 2002; Graue & Walsh, 1998). It should be understood that side by side with the educational aspect is the care factor that is equally emphasised. While language issues undoubtedly are pertinent concerns, the children's welfare should not be compromised. Having said this, it was fitting and proper to make certain that my research and my presence in the crèche did not interfere in the professionals' routine and activities with the children.

On my part, the first few visits at the crèche were characterised by balancing between “feeling” my way around and making conscious decisions about where I should position myself so as not to interrupt the centre’s day-to-day activities. Moreover continued dialogues or exchanges with the professionals were necessary. As a matter of fact, I told them to let me know about anything that I had to avoid doing or any practice that I had to be aware of. This corroborates with one of the entries of my field notes, “Professional 3 asked me to sit down. Then later she explained the concept about being at the level of children” (Field Notes, 27 October 2013). Throughout the participant-observation period, I made a mental note of this reminder to avoid putting the children in a position of inferiority.

As I dealt with children, I employed the *reactive* stance (Corsaro, 1997; Kalliala, 2006), in which as a researcher I allowed the children to approach me on their own accord and at their own pace. As the months progressed though, I gradually became more than just a familiar face to the children, professionals and parents. I had an insider’s access into the day-to-day operation of the crèche. It meant putting on a “caregiver’s hat.” Children would come to me to ask for help putting on their clothes, to read a book or play with them. In one of my field note entries, I have noted this down, “Ch loves to stay with me. How can I observe now?” (Field Notes, 27 October 2013). Moreover, there were instances when a professional needed to step out for a moment and I would be asked to mind the children. Like most adults in the crèche, I was concerned about the children’s safety and welfare and did not hesitate to take responsibility when necessary. However, I constantly reminded myself of my role as researcher. To do this, from time to time, I physically distanced myself from children and professionals. I stepped back and looked at the whole scenario from a distance.

### 6.8.3 Other Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns related to the processes of data collection, data treatment, data analysis, dissemination and presentation of results were carefully taken into consideration. As this ECEC setting caters to very young children, I took special attention not to take photos of them. Meanwhile, identities of the professionals and parents were anonymised and held confidential.

# Chapter 7 Declared Language Policies

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the crèche's *declared language policy*, the term I used in this study that refers to any "direct efforts to manipulate a language situation" (Spolsky, 2004, p.8). Since a parent initiated the creation of this ECEC centre, it was important to examine the three transcripts of the interviews I conducted with her (Appendices C.1, C.2, C.3). Additionally, I perused the ECEC centre's documents (Appendices H.1-H.16) that were submitted to the government agencies responsible for the ECEC services in the city. These documents pertain to the project proposal (Appendix H.1), the description of the project (Appendix H.2), the operating regulations (H.14), the PMI requirements to open the centre (Appendix H.3), job posting for an English professional, the letters sent to the agency officials and the city hall ECEC personnel (Appendices H.4, H.5, H.6, H.9, H.10, H.13) and the response letters from these agencies (Appendices H.7, H.8, H.11, H.12).

## 7.2 A Bilingual Crèche

For this crèche, its focus on bilingualism is its main identity. Being the "first bilingual English-French" crèche sets it apart from other childcare centres in the city of Strasbourg. Its bilingual dimension reveals the main thrust of this ECEC setting, which is the children's exposure to English and French. Emphasis on the equal status of the two languages is present in the discourses of the crèche founder. English is regarded as an important international language, while French is on an equal footing as the language of the country where the crèche is located. In fact, the term "bilingual" is present in all of the documents and exchanges between the association president, ECEC city officials and government agency heads (see documents under Appendix H). From the start, the objective was clear to create a crèche that fosters early bilingualism in English and French. In the parents' and professionals' discourses on bilingualism, language acquisition and language learning in this chapter and in Chapter 8, a number of benefits have been implicitly and explicitly mentioned. Among the studies that are worth mentioning that cite bilingual advantages are (Baker, 1988, 1996; Bialystok, 1991, 2001, 2007; Cenoz & Genesee, 2001; Cummins, 2000; Dewaele, Housen, & Wei, 2003) However as Baker (2014) warns: "Bilingualism is a simple term that hides a

complex phenomenon,” the linguistic situation of this crèche is far more complex and complicated. For instance, the language repertoire (Busch, 2012) of the agents provide evidence of the high level of multilingualism among professionals and families (see Chapter 5).

As a by-product of a parent-initiative, this crèche realises the linguistic desires and goals that parents have for their children. The founder’s decision to establish a bilingual early years centre is very personal (see Chapter 8 for an elaborate explanation). The influence of her home language situation is mentioned more than once in the three interviews (Appendices C.1, C.2, C.3). Below is an extract from the first interview when directly asked why she focused on the two languages.

*“Because **I am English**, and I’ve been living in France for sure. Why English-French because that **is my household**. English-French at home, and my heart language or my mother language is English.” (Appendix C.1, p. 17)*

As already mentioned, the reason for establishing this crèche is very personal to this parent. This crèche is therefore the result of a personal engagement towards creating an educational structure that would respond to the needs of families similar to hers. Moreover, the OPOL policy ensures continuity of their family language practice that extends outside their homes.

Furthermore, it should be stressed that the language in question next to French is English, a language, which is not perceived as a minority language in France but as a language giving affordances to speakers and providing a lot of cultural capital. Therefore, it is clear that English takes a very important place in this setting. As a matter of fact, in this three-sentence response, English is mentioned four times. With French as the societal language, the founding members emphasise children’s adequate exposure to ascertain proficiency in this language. With OPOL, they provide the children the context and extensive opportunities to speak and interact in this language on a daily basis. This setting also provides children who have English at home the possibility to maintain their proficiency and to continuously develop in the said language.

### 7.2.1 Emphasis on English

The consistent order of how the languages are introduced is apparent. In almost all cases English precedes French. This is apparent in all the correspondence sent to the city administration and governmental agencies, except for one instance found on the letter to the

mayor, dated June 30, 2011 (Appendix H.13). The following are the different ways in which the crèche is introduced:

*“le projet de creation de crèche **bilingue anglais/français . . .**” (Appendix H.4, H.5, H.6, H.10)*

*“La crèche parentale **bilingue anglais/français . . .**” (Appendix H.9)*

*“Strasbourg’s first **English-French** bilingual crèche . . .” (first page, crèche website)*

In these documents, the bilingual denomination is English-French not French-English. This recurrent use of “English-French,” which places English first before French reveals a covert policy of English language promotion. Moreover, putting this language in the forefront of this crèche’s identity somewhat creates its status. In the concluding remarks of a report written by Truchot (2002, p.21), he aptly points out that, “What gives English its status, therefore, is not so much its utilitarian function as the prestige attached to it and the social role attributed to it.” Moreover, with English’s prominent place in this ECEC centre, it distinguishes itself from the other bilingual settings in the city that promote German.

At the national level, the tendency towards English hegemony is considered a threat and a source of insecurity (Ager, 1996) to French, the national language that is considered a symbol of unity. However, with English as a “lingua franca,” the language through which knowledge is transmitted and exchanged especially in higher education, European countries, including France, realise the need to reconsider its place in education (Truchot, 2005). Also, the distinguishing characteristics of Strasbourg (see Chapter 3) seem to have softened this stance on French-only. Additionally, bilingualism is not new in Alsace. The German-French tandem in this region has long been established and recognised by the Ministry of Education. While the approval of English for an ECEC setting is somewhat surprising in Alsace, where German is promoted as the regional language policy, the international, cosmopolitan and Euro-centred policies of the city of Strasbourg have contributed to its approval. Below is the observation of the association president on why she thinks English as one of the main languages of the crèche was approved and supported by the city administration.

*“I think **the politics today are very Euro-centred** so any European language perhaps if it was Spanish or Polish . . . I think the city will say, ok, let us try this out, and I think the city will support it as well . . . **The city is very international . . .**” (Appendix C.3, p. 42)*

The following are the two important statements from this excerpt: “the politics today are Euro-centred,” and “the city is very international.” According to her, the choice of English meets the



two essential qualities of the present-day political stance of Strasbourg. Moreover, it has to be mentioned that in France, among the foreign languages, English is highly esteemed. Hélot and Young (2002), through a comparative table showing the provision for foreign language teaching (FLT) and migrant language teaching (MLT) in the primary education sector in France, show the dominance of the said language: "English is taught to over 90% of children in their last year of primary school" (p.99). Additionally, from the same classification, two realities emerge. First, there is an evident hierarchy of languages, which illustrates the status of the languages. Second, there is a shortage of language options. Furthermore, the following data are presented in the study quoted in the crèche project proposal (Appendix H.1): out of 442 families, 30% are enrolled in the English section as compared to 25% in the German section. It shows that even in Alsace, where German is the language promoted, English is still the most popular language that students would like to learn.

Moreover, the quote below, which is under the heading, "Intérêt de la création d'une crèche bilingue anglais/français," (The interest in creating a bilingual English-French crèche, *my translation*) provides the rationale for the creation of this crèche. It is based on a feasibility study presented to the ECEC governmental agencies that approved the creation of this crèche.

*« L'Agglomération strasbourgeoise accueille 1 885 élèves de sections internationales, scolarisés dans les établissements publics ou privés sous contrat, 1 930 si sont prises en compte les écoles privées. Les sections linguistiques privilégiées sont l'anglaise en premier. »*

*"The growing Strasbourg city welcomes 1,885 pupils in international sections, enrolled in public or private schools under contract, 1,930 if private schools are taken into account. **The preferred language sections are English first.**" (Appendix H.1, my translation)*

The statistics provided as context for the feasibility study of this crèche clearly show how English is regarded as an important language. It is a popular choice among students in the international schools. Providing this backdrop also justifies the need for an ECEC setting for very young children so that there is a consistent, continuous language path for them. The crèche provides these children an early start at bilingualism, from the crèche to the bilingual or international schools. The quote below provides us more insight into parents' language choices.

*« Il s'avère que 77 % (des participants à la recherche) trouvent l'ouverture d'une crèche bilingue anglais/français intéressante pour la ville de Strasbourg. Deux raisons motivent ces réponses, dont 44 % qui ont des enfants en bas âges et souhaitent les mettre dans une crèche bilingue anglais/français (soit 118 familles) et 40 % qui trouvent que cette crèche ajouterait à une image positive et européenne de la ville de Strasbourg. »*

*“Results show that 77% find an opening of a bilingual nursery English / French interesting for the city of Strasbourg. There are two reasons for these responses, of which 44% have children in the lower age group and wish for them to be in a bilingual English / French nursery (118 families) and 40% of the respondents think that this nursery would add to a positive and European image of the city of Strasbourg.” (Projet d'établissement, Annex H.1, my translation).*

It has to be clarified that this study was conducted much earlier during the conceptualisation stage. The founding parents aimed to determine how an English crèche would be received. The favourable reception as depicted above confirmed what they already knew. The reasons given were two-fold: impact on the personal and societal levels.

In the same document, the priority given to English speakers and their children is clearly mentioned.

*« Les anglophones constituent la cible première de la crèche, mais elle sera également ouverte à tout parent souhaitant introduire ses enfants au bilinguisme dès le premier âge, notamment les parents issus de l'immigration qui ont suivi une scolarité en anglais dans leur pays natal. »*

*“Anglophones are the primary target of the crèche, but it will also be open to any parent wishing to introduce their children to bilingualism from an early age, especially parents of immigrant background who have completed English schooling in their country of origin.” (Appendix H.1, my translation)*

Two important things can be deduced from this quotation. Admittedly, this setting primarily aims to serve English speakers or children of English-speaking immigrants. The second part however expands to include speakers of other languages, for whom English still plays an important role in their educational path. The crèche's emphasis on English is consistent with

one of the essential reasons of its conception, “favorisant la mobilité de professionnels en Europe et aux US” (Appendix H. 4). This means that the crèche was conceptualised for transnational families. Its interest to serve the international community of Strasbourg is coherent with the current position of the city administration to strengthen European values as it is the seat of numerous European and international institutions. This is clearly stipulated in the city’s official website.

*« Siège de nombreuses institutions européennes et internationales, **Strasbourg est également une capitale symbolique, qui incarne les valeurs fondamentales de l'Europe.** »*

*“As the seat of many European and international institutions, **Strasbourg is also a symbolic capital, embodying the fundamental values of Europe.**”*  
*(<http://www.strasbourg.eu/fr/developpement-rayonnement/europe-international/capitale-europeenne>, accessed 5 August 2017, my translation)*

As Strasbourg continues to build its image on the European and international scene, it needs an early childhood setting to welcome the international English-speaking newcomers and their growing families. In this sense, the crèche serves the purpose of the city.

In another instance, the crèche’s project proposal also mentions its networks of English associations in the city.

*« Ce projet de crèche **bilingue s’appuie sur les réseaux existants anglophones, tels que ‘English Speaking Community’, ‘Americans in Alsace’ et le ‘Cercle International l’association des parents du Playgroup.** »*

*“This **bilingual nursery project builds on existing Anglophone networks, such as ‘English Speaking Community’, ‘Americans in Alsace’ and ‘Cercle International’, the parent association of Playgroup.**” (Projet d’établissement, Annex H.1, my translation).*

This shows that the crèche has a wide range of connections and support thus ensuring the continuity of its program. Thus, it is not an isolated initiative. It is linked to a network of English speaking associations serving the needs of English speakers in the city.

## 7.2.2 Equal Opportunity: Preventing Linguistic Discrimination

The discussions and eventual negotiations between the crèche and the city administration resulted in the evolution of some of its original concepts. As mentioned in the earlier section, this setting was initially conceived to focus on English. However as it sought funding from the city, it needed to abide by one of the state's important tenets: equality. The following quotes state the admonition the association president received from ECEC city officials.

*“The city said to me very clearly, you have to **give equal opportunity**. You just could not take English speaking families, and if you are only going to take English-speaking families, you are not giving equal opportunity. You are discriminating right from the start.” (Appendix C.1, p. 21)*

*“They (named city officials in the previous line) wanted to make sure that this crèche was **not going to be a selective crèche closed** (in the sense of being exclusive) only to people who were English...we do want to be open...and as a proof we have founders who are French and other nationalities who do not speak English...”(Appendix C.3)*

This city policy is linked to the general policy for state funded institution in France. To ascertain that the setting does not discriminate based on linguistic background, the association members devised a set of criteria and an application form available on its website. The following criteria were the enumerated requirements:

- *Resident of the city of Strasbourg (mandatory)*
- *Interest in participating in a project centred on multilingualism, environmentally friendly practices and good management.*
- *The child's age (in order to balance the different age groups)*
- *Availability to ensure a weekly “permanence” (presence in the crèche)*
- *Enthusiasm and interest in participating in this exciting adventure (which they considered the most important criteria) (From the official website of the crèche under the heading Sign Up, accessed on 9 August 2017)*

From the list of criteria, language is not mentioned. Having English in the parents' linguistic repertoire is not a requirement for a child to be placed in the crèche. Following the official discourses of the state for equality, this crèche, as all the rest of government services, is open to the public. However because of limited available places, a recruitment committee of parents examines the application forms to ascertain that the initial criteria are met. The

applications that go through the first screening are then called for interviews. As this crèche is parent-managed, responsibilities are distributed among parents. Thus, their commitment and availability to serve in the different “commissions” are also considered in the selection process.

In the official discourse of France, the issue of discrimination is taken seriously. In fact, an independent administrative authority known in English as the French Equal Opportunities and **Anti-Discrimination Commission** (*Haute autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité* or HALDE in French) was created. This commission has the right to judge all discrimination, direct or indirect that is prohibited by law or an international agreement to which France is a signatory. HALDE was created by law n° 2004-1486 on December 30, 2004, published in the Journal officiel on December 31, 2004. As the crèche receives funding from the French government, it is expected to abide by the principles promoted by the state.

### 7.3 From Bilingualism to Multilingualism

While the crèche is officially bilingual, with English and French as the official languages, the document that was presented to the ECEC funding agencies assured that its doors would also be open to families and children who speak other languages.

*“La crèche accueillera également les familles qui sont déjà bilingues dans une autre langue et qui souhaitent ouvrir leurs enfants à une troisième langue.”*

*“The nursery will also welcome families who are already bilingual in another language and who wish to open their children to a third language.” (Appendix H.2, my translation)*

*“Then we have another line, which is another objective . . . **exposing to diversity, opening up their horizon.**” (Appendix C.1, p. 14)*

Aside from language maintenance, this early childhood setting also provides an opportunity to introduce a third language to already bilingual children. This shows that the parents who conceptualised this crèche envisioned not just a bilingual but also a multilingual ECEC setting where multiple languages and cultures are in contact. Evidently, these parents have positive experiences towards multilingualism to allow their children to have the same kind of exposure. This positive view towards multilingualism is exhibited in the following lines by the association president:

*“It would be nice if parents brought a **little more of their homeland**. It’s like a little more Greek, a little more Finnish, a little more Hebrew, a little more Punjabi. I think that would really be more fun to have . . .” (Appendix C.2, p. 31)*

The desire to grow from bilingualism to multilingualism is reflected in the aforementioned quote. With parents from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the potential to extend and include other languages in its daily operation is acknowledged. Clearly, the president sees multilingualism as an asset that needs to be nurtured.

## 7.4 The Choice of the One Person, One Language (OPOL) Policy

Though in reality language is beyond boundaries, irregular, constantly changing and very personal, efforts to manage it are very common for a variety of reasons. Language policy (B. Spolsky, 2009) is at times used as an instrument through which social rules are established. In education settings, it is used to promote language acquisition or language learning. At the international level like in Europe, it is used to develop a sense of European identity. Meanwhile, at the state level, it is used to sustain a sense of national identity and at the regional level, like Alsace, it is employed to build Franco-German reconciliation.

In the case of some immersion programs, Cummins (2009: p. 161) explains that in Canada, the programs are aimed to “develop proficiency in the language of instruction.” In social groups, adhering to a certain language policy is tantamount to membership. As Shohamy (2006) points out to belong or to be part of a social group means to subscribe to a particular way of “linguaging”. Whether or not these endeavours are blatantly stated or intentionally obscured, these policies create patterns of behaviour among groups of people.

Simply identifying the languages promoted by the childcare setting is not sufficient if the goal is towards effective bilingual acquisition (Barron-Hauwaert, 2011; De Houwer, 2009; Dewaele et al., 2003; Aldridge, 1996; Valdés, Poza, & Brooks, 2015; Wei, 2006). The necessity of having a well-conceptualised language policy is imperative. At the outset, the crèche founder determined and later imposed a clearly stated language policy, which Shohamy (2006) called, “declared language policy.”

*“The **only policy** that we have is the **one adult one language, one professional, one language**. That is the only policy we have . . . So if you are an English speaker, you only speak English.” (Appendix C.1, p. 14)*

This quote above signifies that the association president is certain on how to manage the two languages in the crèche. As far as she is concerned, the one person, one language is “the only policy.” The term “only” is intended to mean that what is in place is simple and easy to implement. Another interesting aspect that is remarkable is her knowledge of the other variants to the named policy: “one adult, one language” and “one professional, one language.”

In the extract that follows, the association president explains how they incorporate the language assignments to the routine in the crèche.

*“So we do different activities with them (the children). The day routine is kind of just starting. It’s [pause] in the morning, there is a morning story-telling time, and then a snack, and we sing songs. **One French person and one English person are always present at the moment so they talk to each other . . .** There is an owl that talks to puppets – Mr. Owl and Tiffany . . . They help with language and songs. They bring the English songs and they bring the French songs.” (Appendix C.1, pp. 11-12)*

As previously pointed out, the language policy choice emanated from the crèche founder. This was seconded and approved by other founding members of the association. It is conceptualised to promote the goals and aspirations of the parents for their children. As the association president explained, the children are in a context where they can acquire English and French in a non-threatening setting: “That is immersion for someone who is speaking French or for someone who is speaking English” (Appendix C.1, p. 13). Thus, this policy is a means towards a desired end. As shown earlier, the language policy is conceived as an extension of the founder’s language practices at home and as a space where the “minority” language, which in her case is English, is supported. The founding parents rallied behind this cause as they themselves reportedly employed the same language strategy with their own children.

*“Most of the parents have the **same situation at home**. So this feels like home to them because there is English and French going on all day long.” (Appendix C.1, p.15)*

*“I put this idea forth to the other members...**the other founding members who are bilingual with their own families, use the same practice**. They are speaking their own language whether Russian or German to their children (.) so it wasn’t hard to kind of convince them.” (Appendix C.3, p. 40)*

Several things need to be clarified based on this extract. First, the parents are not exclusively English and French. In fact as already presented in Chapter 5, this childcare setting is highly multilingual. The common denominator among them is the reported use of the one person, one language at home. “(T)hey were speaking their own language” to their children as the crèche founder explained. A Russian parent speaks only Russian to his or her child, and a German parent only German. This adherence to OPOL by the families approached by the founder resulted in the creation of the crèche.

In many bilingual families, OPOL is widely used (Barron-Hauwaert, 2011; Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Döpke, 1992a; King et al., 2008; Palviainen & Boyd, 2013). Its popularity has gained for itself a reputation of being the best strategy towards early bilingual acquisition. Actually, for most of the parents of this crèche, it is their reported de facto language practice in their homes.

On the other hand, consistent with Johnson’s multi-layered conceptualisation of language policy (2013), the crèche’s decision to adapt OPOL as the crèche’s language strategy has overlapping and multi-layered influences. The following are the common factors that affect language policy decisions: the parents’ own language practice and ideologies, the popularity of partial immersion program, which children’s exposure to the languages are split, the city administration’s stance on language management, and the regional and national covert and overt language policies (see Chapter 4 of the language policy discussion).

*“I think the one person one language, the only two examples in Strasbourg using that method the \_\_\_\_ ((for anonymity, the name of the setting is omitted)), the bilingual German structure, and they have one German speaker and one French speaker and the \_\_\_\_ ((for anonymity, the name of the setting is omitted)), is the other [pause] one person speaking French and the other person speaking English so not knowing how to really do it so I was **more following the examples of what had already been done.**”*  
(Appendix C.3, p.39)

What needs to be highlighted from the quotation above is that the language policy choice did not require exhaustive deliberation among its members. For this crèche, the decision was made during the conceptualization stage. Since existing bilingual structures in the city employed OPOL, this new childcare setting followed their examples. Thus, it conformed to the earlier choices made by other early childhood settings in the city. In the interviews with the crèche founder and the professionals, the influence of the other bilingual structures is mentioned. Clearly, the choice of OPOL or also known to them as “one adult, or one professional staff per language” (Appendix C.1) was based on language management



strategies of other German-French crèches and an English-French bilingual nursery that the association president's own children attended (Appendix C.3).

Closely associated with other bilingual structures in the city, the founder followed their language policy, "...so **not knowing how to really do it so I was more following the examples of what had already been done** and as we put into place..." (Appendix C.2, Interview 2). There are two parts to this quote. In the first part, she admits that she does not have a personal knowledge of the concrete ways to promote the two languages. It can also be interpreted as a lack of sufficient information on how to manage language diversity. In the second part, she resolves this problem using a practical approach of embracing a language policy that is already in place. Adapting the language policy model of other bilingual settings is somewhat considered practical and efficient. The process of trial and error is not necessary. By following the examples of other settings, she is assured that if it worked for them, then it should be feasible for this newly created setting. Moreover, as this crèche is a project with little directives from the city, which is responsible for ECEC settings, so examples of other bilingual structures are used as models.

The earlier choice of other bilingual centres seems to work using claims by parents themselves. Thus, OPOL is seen as an effective and efficient vehicle towards achieving their linguistic aims for their children. Professional 4 echoes the same observation, "maybe because of \_\_\_ [the founder's] association with \_\_\_ [the name of a bilingual nursery] and the experience that **she knew that it worked well**" (Appendix D.2, p. 56).

*"Yup! It's the same thing, one adult, one language. So we are trying to keep it so the child knows when they are speaking to someone, they have that person who only responds to them in that language. I think it helps in recognition because the kids are looking for stability, and to make sure that they've understood something" (Appendix C.1, p. 18)*

The use of the expression, "the same thing" shows the crèche founder's familiarity with the language approach adapted by other bilingual structures in the city. Moreover, the mention of this expression serves to assure parents that their bilingual program, which is the feature that is emphasised in the crèche, is not new. This means that children will not be subjects of experimentation because she considers OPOL as a proven strategy. It also needs to be mentioned that other private, bilingual settings for young children enjoy a good reputation in the city. Known for their strict and rigid policy of language separation, they are reputed to have produced "balanced bilinguals" who qualify for the screening and evaluation to the

international programs provided by the National Education for children from six years and onwards.

This section presents how the explicit choice of a language policy is elaborated. While the crèche founder explains that there is only one policy, which is OPOL, the analysis of the aforementioned extracts from interviews reflect more complex expectations of how the one person, one language policy concretely operates in the crèche considering the various actors involved. This explains the need of the “other policies,” presented in the succeeding sections, to concretely make sense of OPOL, as the umbrella policy.

#### 7.4.1 Language Policy According to People

The one person, one language (OPOL) policy is a deliberate choice to emphasise the different roles of the professionals, parents and children in the crèche. It is intended primarily as a guiding principle to the professionals’ language use in the crèche. However, parents and children are given free language choice. OPOL serves as instrument or vehicle through which the language ideologies (discussed under *Perceived Language Policies*) of the parents are formulated into a policy. Furthermore, professionals are expected to transform this declared policy into actual language practices (discussed under *Practiced Language Policies*). This language policy, which has found its place in the family settings as parents of different linguistic backgrounds aim for language maintenance (see Chapter 1), has often been chosen in the educational contexts such as schools. It is indeed the case in Alsace where an extensive bilingual program is in place with German and implemented from age 3 in many state schools (Hélot & Fialais, 2014).

The association president, considering her language practice with her children and her experiences as an involved parent in another bilingual structure, suggested the use of OPOL as a means to manage languages in the crèche. Other parents readily accepted this proposal to ensure children’s balanced exposure to the two languages. Deeply ingrained in the philosophy of the crèche and considered at the core of the bilingual aspect of the crèche, the OPOL policy was declared as the “only policy of the crèche” (Appendix C.1). This declared policy is highly promoted, visible on their website, on advertisements for recruitment and other official documents of the crèche (Appendix H.15, H.16 among others).

As in general cases, OPOL is an attempt to simplify complex and sometimes complicated multilingual situations in families and more formal learning structures. Although there are common denominators in the implementation of this policy, there are differences and

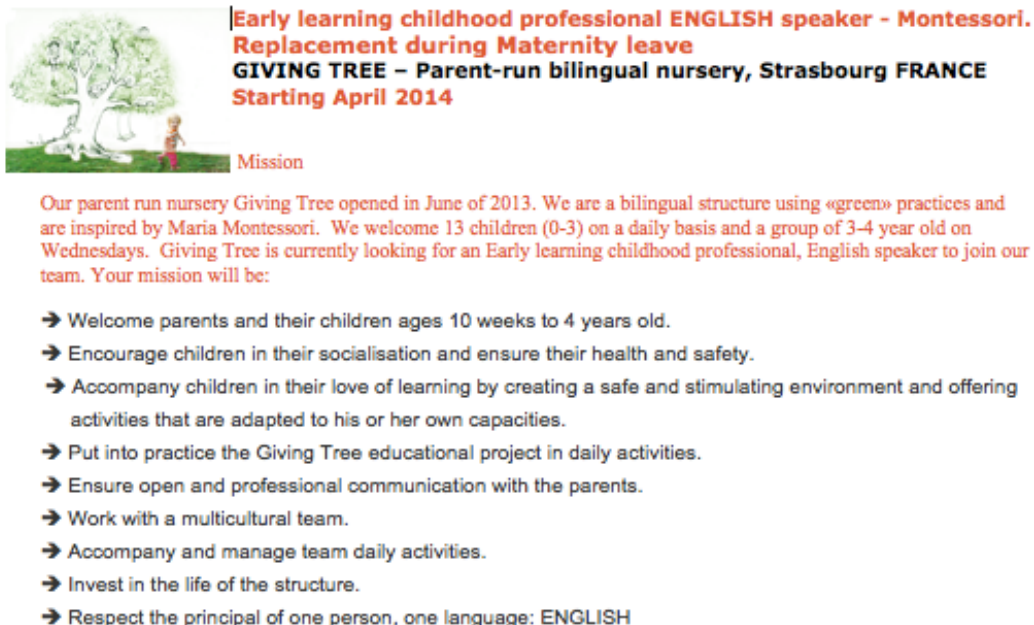
specificities depending on the context and the people involved in the conceptualisation and execution of such a project.

#### 7.4.1.1 The Professional's Crucial Roles

Within this language policy framework imposed in this bilingual crèche, professionals are expected to function based on their assigned languages. The responsibilities of ***maintaining OPOL and modelling language use*** are given to the professionals. In other words, consistent with the OPOL principle, the carers need to maintain their professional identities as either English or French speakers.

Below is a job advertisement in English (a French version is also available) that was circulated around the third quarter of the crèche's first year. After the primary English-assigned professional had informed the association of her pregnancy, they needed to find a temporary substitute.

Figure 7.1 Vacancy Announcement in English



**Early learning childhood professional ENGLISH speaker - Montessori.  
Replacement during Maternity leave  
GIVING TREE – Parent-run bilingual nursery, Strasbourg FRANCE  
Starting April 2014**

**Mission**

Our parent run nursery Giving Tree opened in June of 2013. We are a bilingual structure using «green» practices and are inspired by Maria Montessori. We welcome 13 children (0-3) on a daily basis and a group of 3-4 year old on Wednesdays. Giving Tree is currently looking for an Early learning childhood professional, English speaker to join our team. Your mission will be:

- Welcome parents and their children ages 10 weeks to 4 years old.
- Encourage children in their socialisation and ensure their health and safety.
- Accompany children in their love of learning by creating a safe and stimulating environment and offering activities that are adapted to his or her own capacities.
- Put into practice the Giving Tree educational project in daily activities.
- Ensure open and professional communication with the parents.
- Work with a multicultural team.
- Accompany and manage team daily activities.
- Invest in the life of the structure.
- Respect the principal of one person, one language: ENGLISH

As indicated in the announcement, it was imperative for this person to abide by the one person, one language policy. Consistent with the role of the person she was replacing, she was expected to be the English model for the children.

It has to be pointed out that OPOL requires a lot of effort on the part of the bilingual professionals. They are tasked to carry the crucial task of modelling the use of their assigned languages. As the association president herself acknowledged, the need to change some language practices to conform to the declared language policy is necessary. As previously explained, all the English-assigned professionals are fluent in French. As typical practices of bilinguals, they make language choices based on their interlocutors, and they *translanguage*<sup>24</sup> for different meta-communicative reasons (Hoff & Shatz, 2009; Myers-Scotton, 1993). However, with the language policy in place, these bilingual professionals are not authorised to revert to their ordinary language practice of translanguaging. The association president is aware that this imposed change in the language practice of one of the professionals is an arduous task. In fact, she had this to say about the experience of this bilingual professional who was restricted to English-only.

*“I know it is very difficult for Professional 3 because she has always worked in France. She has always lived in France...she’s had to do a very big effort, and it has not been easy for, but she’s an English speaker, she’s a native speaker so she’s been speaking English and she sometimes has to bite her tongue...” (Appendix C.1, p. 13)*

Evidently, the bilingual professional described in this quote necessarily modified her language use to meet the requirement of this childcare centre. It explained how strenuous it was for her as well to stick to her language assignment. Although her first language is English as her parents are British, she has lived in France from the age of 4. She reports that it is natural for her to use French when discussing with French speakers and English with English speakers. However, she had to modify her manner of “languaging” to carry out her responsibility as English speaker. Additionally, this quote is interesting because it reveals that the OPOL policy is not easy to implement, which is contrary to how it was initially conceptualised. There is an awareness that the language of a bilingual never corresponds to the straightforward separation of languages but has to do with the speaker’s mode of communication, choices, identities, etc. It implies that the relationship between native speakers and their ease in their supposed native language is a myth in the context of mobility. The environment in which one lives always has a strong influence on one’s language practice.

The excerpt that follows gives us a more concrete understanding of how the professionals are supposed to manage the two languages. “There are two people, only that one adult, one

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<sup>24</sup> Originally, the authors used the terms code switching and code mixing.

language. In this structure, I never say a word of French. It is almost a game that we play....” (Appendix C.1)

To provide an environment so that children will hear both languages, a setting is created where “a game” is played. This language game requires professionals to play their language roles well. For bilingual professionals, this means reverting to being monolingual, a drastic abandonment of their usual way of using languages. The policy in place has positioned them as implementers based on their assigned language. It is an imposed responsibility clearly specified as part of their employment terms. To do so requires discipline, constant language monitoring, and intentional use of the assigned language. Furthermore, this shows that the professionals are not part of the initial language planning process. In fact, the staff members were recruited based on their energy, commitment and capacity to promote and support the one person, one language policy (explained in Appendix C.2). These criteria were identified and decided by the founding parents during the drafting of the project proposal. Thus, OPOL functions through the recruitment of people in English and French. The professionals are employed based on competence and language roles they assume in the crèche.

*“You’ve seen in the structure as well that at times, two employees either to go faster or the children are asleep, they will speak mostly French to each other or Professional 2 will speak English to someone who does not understand any French so **we’ve made those exceptions already**, and that’s fine . . . what we wanted to avoid as well is two employees sitting down, chatting in say French ((for professionals who are assigned to English and French) . . . that’s kind of not allowed. It may happen, but that is not part of the project, but...again English and French have to be respected...a requirement for them.” (Appendix C.3, p. 40)*

The extract is taken from the last interview with the association president. Conducted a year after the crèche started its operation; this quote reflects a more complex implementation of the language policy. She admits that exceptions cannot be avoided, and there are specific contexts that necessitate flexibility. In reality, managing language practice in a bilingual or multilingual environment is complex and complicated. Translanguaging is common, but because of the commitment of the crèche towards ensuring that children hear both languages consistently and systematically, functioning in a monolingual mode is a requirement (Grosjean, 2010).

#### 7.4.1.2 Special Role of Parents and Children

What is interesting in the crèche is that the president made several choices regarding language management. The different reasons she gives in the interviews give us a view into her representations of language management (discussed under the heading *Perceived Language Policies*). Even at the onset, the founding parents who were part of the core group that envisioned the founding of this bilingual crèche and identified the implementation of its linguistic strategy acknowledged that parents and children play different roles. When the association president was asked why there was no language policy for parents, this was what she said:

*“Because they have a different role in the crèche [pause] and it’s a nice way to allow them to be very natural with them and with their child...a lot of the parents do what they do at home . . . and when they go to the grocery store, they speak French to the person behind the counter, and they speak English to their child for example. I don’t think there is any reason for them to change that behaviour.” (Appendix C.2, p.30).*

Parents are allowed to respond to their children the usual way they would at home or outside the crèche. As already mentioned earlier, the bilingual structure is conceptualised for the following purposes: an extension of parents’ language practices at home; a place or setting where the predominantly French-speaking or English-speaking child is immersed either in French or English; an environment where bilingual children in English and French continuously employ their linguistic repertoire; and where children who are bilingual in other languages are introduced to a third or a fourth language. In order to accomplish the specific objectives of each family, parents maintain their language practice(s), while the professionals need to perform the functions they are hired for. Clearly, there is no language mandate for the parents as the association president explicitly stated, “The parents are the exception to that. They can come, they can speak six languages” (Appendix C.1).

Similarly, the children are not expected to comply with the language policy. They are allowed to respond, “in any language they want...there is no requirement to speak A or B, but we do ask them. We encourage them to speak...” (Appendix C.1) By saying this, the association president means that the children can also use other languages, their home languages and not restrict themselves with the two official languages of the crèche. It has to be explained as well that the president distinguishes this early years setting from other formal language learning environments, where children are expected to answer in a prescribed language. She clarified,

*“We are not a learning centre. It’s a big difference. We are not a learning centre. We are a place for welcoming kids. **We want them to have fun, be safe and secure. We want all their needs met.** Then we have another line, which is other objective, which is exposing to diversity, open up their horizons, helping them grow in independence . . . And I think it’s very important because children, they always are learning. Anything they learn from it, and what we do, we have bottles of water. They pour one from another, then pour one to another, they are learning. We give them vocabulary, if I am with them, or if Professional 3 is with them or Professional 4 and we say water, water, we are pouring water. If they say l’eau, if they say water. **It makes no difference to us.**”*  
(Appendix C.1, p. 14)

Children are allowed to respond in any language. There are no restrictions on children’s language use because more than the language aspect, the crèche is to ensure that their fundamental needs are met: “We want them to have fun, be safe and secure. We want all their needs met.” Secondly, if this early children’s centre is to function as an extension of the children’s family language policy, then they should be allowed to use language the way they would at home. Thirdly, the crèche is distinguished from a school where there are imposed ways of “linguaging.” She clarifies that whether they use the French or the English term, “it makes no difference...” To them, what is important is that the child or the children is communicating.

## 7.4.2 Language Policy According to Space

The professionals of the crèche are expected to follow and use their language assignments within the structure, which meant throughout the seven physical spaces or areas of the centre (please refer to Figure 1 under Section 5.2.5 for the floor plan of the crèche).

### 7.4.2.1 Kitchen as “Free Space”

The varying language competence in English of French-assigned professionals is a challenge that this childcare centre is confronted with. This is problematic when young children’s welfare is at stake. Every now and then, essential information needs to be relayed to ensure that the individual needs of each child are met. Miscommunication on the part of professionals can lead to serious repercussions that can be dangerous for children. To prevent this from happening, Room 4, which is the kitchen, is declared a “free space” for translanguaging. Within this space, English-assigned professionals are allowed to use French under one condition, “when there are no children.” Here are the exact words of the

association president, “We can speak French in here (interview is taking place in the kitchen). I can speak French to her. This is a free space, and the door is closed...” (Appendix C.1). This declared exception to OPOL is essential for the structure’s smooth operation. It lessens or eliminates possible miscommunication especially discussions pertaining to children’s needs and welfare.

#### 7.4.2.2 Establishing Linguistic Boundaries Through Space

As previously explained, the president and the professionals are aware of the difficulties of rigid adherence to OPOL. This problem is addressed by authorizing “translanguaging” (elaborated under *Practiced Language Policy*) in a specific space within the locale of the crèche. However, this allowance afforded to the professionals has determined conditions, which are illustrated in the quotation that follows:

*“In this structure, I never say a word of French. It is almost a game that we play because for instance, we have a delivery at the door, and then I say, hello, how are you? And then, they’ll say une livraison, and blah...blah... blah. And then, I’ll say thank you, thank you very much. They look at me and sometimes I say, yeah... we are an English-speaking crèche. Most of the people, even the deliverer has a little bit of English. They might find it odd. Otherwise, I go outside of the door. I invite them in the kitchen, and then I shut the door. So this kitchen space, when there are no children in it is the space where the professional or the team members can speak French.” (Appendix C.1, p. 12)*

To establish the context, I have to clarify that the association president is narrating an incident with a deliveryman. With the children’s presence, she is aware that as a self-imposed rule she can only respond in English. She realises that her language choice is confusing to the deliveryman so she decides that a justification is necessary by saying, “...we are an English-speaking crèche.” Going outside the crèche, “outside the door” is an action that she thinks is appropriate. In so doing, she is not violating the language policy. At the same time, there is no communication breakdown with the deliveryman, who does not have any idea of the language rules of the crèche.

Inviting the outsider to the kitchen, which is the designated space where translanguaging can occur, is another strategy that she thinks is possible. It does not interrupt the activities of the professionals with the children and ensures her adherence to OPOL. “...I shut the door” is the final action that she describes in this encounter, which clearly demonstrates the rigidity in the implementation of the policy. The act of shutting the door is necessary to separate the kitchen space from the rest of the crèche in which OPOL is strictly followed, a phenomenon



restricted in the other spaces of the structure. The kitchen serves as a space where English-assigned speakers who are in fact bilinguals are able to communicate monolingually to someone who has no English.

The declared policy require that all professionals should adhere to the one person one language policy and maintain their assigned language at all times in all the spaces (Rooms 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7) of the centre except Room 4, which is the kitchen. In other words, OPOL is not possible in all spaces. One free space is necessary for communication to be possible among professionals and with outsiders.

#### 7.4.2.3 Language Policy for Bulletins and Posters

There is flexibility with regards to the writings on the bulletin boards and posters. Here are the actual statements of the president:

*“Things written on the board, and so any information we give to the parents. It depends who writes it. It could be that one day it is in French and one day it will be in English or sometimes it is even translated. There is no policy for that so we let it pretty flexible with the parents and who’s writing because all parents, 90% of parents understand both languages and the parent who does not understand the language, there’s one family who does not understand French very well, they will either ask or we’ll make special attention to tell them, but I’ll have to say that the majority of the time, it is written in English because it’s either me or Professional 3 who writes up there. Professional 2 sometimes will but not always and Professional 3 is very good in writing in both.” (Appendix C.2, p. 23)*

If an English-assigned professional writes a note or message, it will be in English, and in the same manner, if a French-assigned professional leaves a message, she normally writes in French. For very crucial information, they make it a point that both English and French versions are available, which is usually written by a bilingual professional.

#### 7.4.3 Language Policy on Official Documents

Most of the official papers and documents, especially those that are distributed to the parents, are in both languages. A clear effort to translate all documents is in place. One of the identified “parent commissions” of the crèche is to ensure that important documents have English and French versions In fact, a parent is assigned to do this task for papers that are yet to be translated in English.

#### 7.4.4 Language Policy According to Activities

The professionals are expected to model the use of their assigned languages to the children through the various activities of the crèche: singing, story-telling, playing, eating and giving instructions. In daily routines, the professionals should respect their assigned languages even when the children speak to them in whatever language they were comfortable with.

For special occasions such as Christmas or Easter, they prepare in advance and put effort into balancing the number of English and French songs (Appendix C.2). During this time, the professionals have more time making sure that there is a program and that the activities such as the number of songs in the languages are equal. There is parity of use of French and English in quantitative terms.

#### 7.4.5 Language Policy According to Time

The principal idea behind OPOL concerning time is clearly summed up in the following statements of the association president:

*“One English speaker and one French speaker **are always present** . . .” (Appendix C.1, pp.11-12).*

*“Throughout the main part of the day, the activity, the snacks, the lunches, the story time, **there’s always** an English speaker and a French speaker . . .” (Appendix C.1, p. 13)*

“Always present” and “there’s always” are expressions that are used in the two quotations to speak of the presence of the English and French-assigned professionals who are expected to be around the children.

#### 7.4.6 Reported Language Policy

In this section, I discuss two extracts taken from the interview conducted with Professional 4. It is imperative to mention the difficulty in making a decision regarding how these examples should be classified based on the three-levelled analysis. On one hand, the examples are “what they (the professionals) do” with the language policy. On the other hand, since they are “reported”, which means they are examples of what the professionals say they do with the policy or what they say about how they implement the policy, I finally decided to put the following examples in this chapter. This is a very good illustration of the limitations of the

distinction made by Spolsky as overlaps between the language policy conceptualisations are possible.

Professional 4 is originally from Canada. She is an Anglophone who came from the Francophone area of New Brunswick. As a student, she was educated in an immersion bilingual program for 8 years. As a professional who has recently migrated to France, her experiences are with educational systems that promote partial immersion programs.

*“However, **I always speak English, no matter what**, and sometimes there could be **difficulties** when somebody doesn’t understand, I usually try to **repeat and try to get my message clear**, through other types of communication, **body language or drawings** or that kind of thing (...) If there is a **problem**, I can always ask a French colleague. I’ll say, ok, let’s go talk to so and so, and then I’ll explain it to them in English, and they’ll translate it to the child, and **at very worst case scenario**, if I’m alone, I don’t have somebody that I can play off, when it’s really a situation, the child is very emotional, it’s not really the time, speaking English is not gonna help the situation, but it happens very rarely. I’ve only done this a handful of times, but in that kind of situation, I say, all right, **I have this pill that I can eat and it will let me speak French for five minutes** so I’ll eat it and I go, mmm...mmm...ah...wella, then I pretend that now I can speak French for five minutes, and we work out the situation, and then it goes away.”*  
(Appendix D.2, p. 54)

In the quotation, she states her strong support to OPOL. She further says that she does not have difficulties applying the policy rigidly. Her sentence, “I always speak English, no matter what,” shows of her strict adherence to her language assignment. She later admits the “difficulties” in applying the policy. She then enumerates the different strategies she uses: repeats, clarifies and uses gestures and pictures; asks a French colleague to help translate; uses acting device to switch to French in the “worst case scenario” by eating a pill that allows her to switch languages.

The next example shows tandem caring among professionals. This excerpt shows how Professional 4 and the other carer who is assigned to speak French work together so they can maintain their language assignments and still meet the child’s need.

*“So yeah, he \_\_\_\_ ((referring to the child who speaks only French at home)) fills his glass during lunch time all the way to the top even though I was saying, it’s half way, stop. Now, that’s enough. Stop now, that’s enough. So, it gets all the way up now . . . So*

*I say, it's a big glass of water, so you have to drink it, and then he said no. I don't want to drink it. So I said no, that's wasting water . . . I held it up to him, and said, you can have it, drink some water, okay? No, I am not going to drink any of it, and I was like it's really [pause] I disagree. That's not very good so before you leave the table, you got to drink your glass of water that you put in. So, he was really upset, and he started, you know, turning his head away, screaming a little, kicking his feet [pause] eventually he left the table, and **Professional 2 eventually said in French**, you know (mentioned the child's name), I agree with Professional 4. We just want you to drink some water before you leave the table because it's wasteful that you poured in the glass, and you're not gonna drink any. Still you know, **he was upset with hearing it again in French**, but he drank a little eventually, and it was all over." (Appendix D.2, p. 58)*

The first part described the English carer's interaction with the child in English. She saw this particular child pouring too much water in his glass. In keeping with the environmental and ecological principles promoted in the crèche, she addressed this problem and pointed out that as a consequence, the child will have to drink all the water he poured. Contrary to the demand, the child reacted in protest and became emotional. Professional 4 felt that her explanation and instruction in English aggravated the situation. Instead of getting the desired response, the child was throwing unnecessary tantrums. Given this scenario, the other professional (Professional 2) felt the necessity to be part of the on-going interaction. She addressed the child in French and reinforced the message of Professional 4. To this, the child became upset hearing the same message in French, but eventually gave in by drinking some of the water in his glass.

In the scenario described, the professionals maintained their language roles consistent to the prescribed language policy. Despite their awareness of possible comprehension problems on the part of the child, they persisted, but eventually found a way to support each other within the one person, one language framework. They complemented one another within a bilingual interaction but functioned in a monolingual mode.

## 7.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the declared language policy of the crèche. First, I emphasised the bilingual identity of the crèche and the manner in which the founding member presented the concept of establishing an English-French crèche to the ECEC government agencies. Second, I focused on the one person, one language policy, which is the identified language policy of the crèche that serves a number of purposes. It is considered a straightforward and

practical language policy that caters to the fundamental aim of nurturing bilingual language acquisition in children. In other words, it means making sure that children have enough input in both languages. Second, it is somehow regarded as a simple language policy that professionals can easily follow and implement. It is patterned after examples provided by other bilingual early childhood centres in the city, which have been in existence longer than this setting. Third, I elaborated the “other policies,” which were deemed necessary in implementing the “only LP” in the crèche. Finally, I presented the “reported language policy,” which clarified “what a professional says she does” with the identified LP of the crèche.

# Chapter 8 Perceived Language Policies

## 8.1 Introduction

This section attempts to present an in-depth analysis of the beliefs and ideologies behind the crèche's declared language policy. The choice of the one person, one language policy is not haphazard. The crèche founder and the members of the association are purposeful in their choice. This declared language policy is intended to primarily facilitate young children's efficient bilingual acquisition of English and French. However, a close examination of the discourses of the association president, parents and professionals provides us with a rich, diverse and multi-faceted understanding of their beliefs, ideologies and thinking processes that goes beyond the initial linguistic goals. There are underlying motivations, covert and overt factors that come into play (Hornberger, 2006; Johnson, 2013; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2008; Spolsky, 2012; Tollefson, 2002). The ideologies that underpin the language policy of this crèche furthermore reveal perceptions of multilingualism, culture and identity.

Language policy decisions are based on various social influences such as governmental policies (Curd-Christiansen, 2009; García, 2012; Huebner, Davis, & Bianco, 1999; Lane, 2010), mainstream discourses (Garrett, 2011; Okita, 2002), language learning experiences (King, Fogle, & Logan-Terry, 2008) and combined beliefs of parents and professionals about language, language acquisition and language learning. Moreover, Valdés, Poza and Brooks (2015: 56) underscore that in all cases, the conceptualisation of bilingual education programs are influenced by "larger national settings," which are formed as products of "dominant beliefs about the societal language and governed by policies and practices that define educational achievement". The same is true in the context of family language planning. Curdt-Christiansen (2009, 2013), King (2000), King et al (2008) consider language ideology as the underlying force that determines the choice of a language approach that aims to influence or control the language behaviour of family members.

Using my interviews transcripts, this second-level analysis that focuses on the "perceived language policies" of parents and professionals aims to uncover their beliefs and ideologies pertaining to the one person, one language (OPOL) policy. The agents' choice of language policy is based on their personal beliefs and reflective of societal ideologies. Whilst parents offer a somewhat logical reasoning to their choice of language policy, some of the explanations of their choice are based on general accepted concepts on language that are

leaning towards monolingual ideologies. Accordingly, this section will reveal that the parents' decisions to enrol their children in this crèche are ways in which they act on their language beliefs and ideologies. Moreover equally flagrant are the contradictory discourses of professionals and parents about languages and language practices. There are surprising instances when parents and professionals make statements contrary to previously stated beliefs.

This section is divided into two main parts. First, I will discuss the linguistic beliefs that motivate parents' decisions to adopt the one person, one language policy. These include what parents believe to be essential to the language acquisition and language learning process. Second, I will present the non-linguistic reasons of parents and professionals that reveal their beliefs about language and its relationship to culture and identity.

## 8.2 Linguistic Factors

The perceived effectiveness of the one person, one language (OPOL) policy in supporting the parents' goal of developing their children's bilingualism is the primary motivation of the founding parents of this crèche. These parents adopted OPOL as the crèche's language policy because many of their beliefs and ideologies on language, language learning and language acquisition are compatible with the basic tenets promoted by this language policy. Within the framework of the policy, professionals are expected to manage the two main languages in the crèche. This subsection takes into account the discourses of parents and professionals regarding OPOL and language in general. It focuses on the linguistic factors of their language policy choice.

### 8.2.1 OPOL and the Idea of a Perfect Linguistic Environment

As previously mentioned, parents envision their children having equal competence in two languages. Having equal competence means having fully developed linguistic repertoires that allow children to switch on and switch off their two linguistic resources anytime and anywhere as illustrated in the extracts that follow. The expressions that are evoked by this line of thinking are "perfect bilingualism" and the most common expression, "balanced bilingualism." However, in reality, perfect or balanced bilinguals are extremely rare. Citing Fishman, Baker (2006, 2011) clarifies that perfect bilingualism is more theoretical than realistic. The people with whom bilinguals use each of their languages, the contexts, purposes and the over-all communicative experiences differ resulting in unequal proficiency in the two languages.

Bilinguals employ their linguistic resources fluidly showing that there is no clear-cut boundary of the first and the second languages (Garcia & Li, 2014; F. Grosjean, 2001, 2010; François Grosjean, 2008). The distinction of the languages occurs only from an outsider's perspective. From the point-of-view of the speaker, he is only expressing his full repertoire (Otheguy, Garcia, & Reid, 2015). Although this is the case, balanced bilingualism has persistently been the ultimate linguistic goal.

Parents with different first languages often desire to nurture their children in their two languages, hoping for equal proficiency, and they may do so by employing a one person, one language policy in their homes, which is oftentimes suggested by other parents, healthcare and childcare professionals. One obvious problem with this conceptualisation of bilingualism is the use of monolingualism as the reference for measuring competence (Pavlenko, 2000; Romaine, 1995). From this perspective, a bilingual is seen as two monolinguals in one.

Professional 3 in the quote that follows had this to say about her daughter, "*If she would just switch to English and then to French **obviously I'd be happy, kind a proud in a way...***" (Appendix D.1, p.48). From this statement, the importance of fluency in both languages, which is marked as well by the ability to use her two languages separately, is a source of pride and satisfaction. For this bilingual professional, fluency in the two languages is considered an achievement as a parent or as a mark of being a good parent. Curdt-Christiansen (2009), King and Fogle (2006) point out that the desire to be "good parents" is a shared sentiment by many parents.

In similar manner, the founding parents of this ECEC structure desire to be "good parents" by making sure that their children are getting the best language learning environment. Since the common consensus among the founders is that OPOL is the ideal language policy for their families, implementing it in the crèche seems to them the best option. Furthermore, it seems logical to employ this popular language policy not only in private, family settings but also in educational centres such as this crèche. As an ideal language policy for the family, the association president, which discussed in Chapter 7, thinks that it should also be implemented in the crèche. It provides parents with assurance that efforts made at home through their family language policy are supported and extended into another context. The parents who have chosen this policy in their homes are reassured if their ECEC structure uses the same policy.

However to make this possible, clearly identified language roles should be followed by professionals. This means further that staff members who are bilinguals should function monolingually. In fact, the association president states, "...in a welcoming centre, in the



structure, it should be **clear** and really here, **it has become a game**, mostly, between adults” (Appendix C.1, p.18) with “**it**” referring to their language practice. The use of the term “game” implies that the adults play the roles assigned to them. A bilingual professional who is assigned to English should switch off her French competence and speak with the children only in her assigned language. For the French-assigned professionals, it goes the other way. Since OPOL is the clearly articulated policy, all staff members are expected to follow through. Clearly, this exhibits the belief of the parents and professionals that the OPOL policy offers the possibility of a perfect linguistic environment for language acquisition and language learning, which can be recreated or simulated.

The creation of this idealised setting that fosters balanced bilingualism results in a policy that is rather “artificial.” As OPOL is imposed upon multilingual professionals, they need to function as monolinguals in order to provide the perceived perfect language scenario. In front of the children, an English-assigned professional is the idealised English speaker. The same is true with the French-assigned professional. In general, this context does not tolerate language switching. In the extract that follows, Professional 2 verbalised her frustration along this line of thinking, which is in the context of attending to the needs of a predominantly English-speaking child. The child had just started attending the crèche and was undergoing what they call “adaptation,” a transitional period where the child’s integration into the life of the crèche is facilitated. Because she is expected to speak French-only in the presence of the children, to go around the OPOL policy, she spoke English to this particular child behind closed doors.

*« Ben, je pense que cette approche des fois est assez, comment dire...**assez rigide**, en effet...Je pense que c’est quelque part, **c’est une méthode assez artificielle** avec l’enfant, en fin de compte, parce que, même, je ne sais pas comment cela se passe à la maison, avec l’enfant....Après, je pense que pour l’enfant des fois, c’est **assez artificiel**, surtout pour les enfants qui sont nouveaux et du coup ils sont en adaptation. Ils ont besoin d’être rassurés. Je sais qu’avec [prénom de l’enfant] par exemple, je me suis **enfermée des fois dans le dortoir et je lui ai parlé en anglais parce que ça le rassurait. Il avait besoin de ça. Il avait besoin d’un référent, c’était moi en l’occurrence parce qu’il a choisi comme ça.** »*

*“Well, I think that this approach at times is a bit, how do I say... **rather rigid**, indeed ... I think it's somehow, it is a method that is **rather artificial** with the child, [ultimately, because, even] I do not know what happens at home, with the child .... Afterwards, I*

*think that for the child at times, it is **quite artificial**, especially for children who are new and so they are in the process of adaptation. They need to be reassured. I know that with (name of the child) for example, **I locked myself in the sleeping room, and I spoke to him in English because it comforted him**. He needed it. He needed a referent, it was me in this case because he chose it like that.” (Appendix D.3, p.64, my translation)*

This professional’s opinion rather opposes the idea of language separation. She implied that the strictness of the language policy affected not only the child but her as well. With the prescribed language principle, the full expression of her linguistic repertoire to help the child more effectively is restricted. As a professional who understands the need of the child to be comforted, this is frustrating. Being a multilingual professional with English as part of her linguistic repertoire, she finds OPOL a bit “rigid” and slightly “artificial.”

Moreover, the first part of the quotation points to the possibility that the parents’ family language policy (FLP) might not be as rigorous as parents reported. This remark is consistent with the findings of Palviainen and Boyd (2013). According to them, a general consensus on the use of the one person, one language policy does not necessarily translate into practice. The fact is that language ideologies of parents do not necessarily coincide with their everyday language practice that is fluid, spontaneous and unplanned. Although there is a conscious desire to follow a clear language policy, in reality language practice is more complex (Palviainen & Boyd, 2013; Schwartz, 2010). It has to be pointed out that this sentiment is not quite a popular opinion in this crèche since many parents report having implemented the same language policy at home or believing in its effectiveness. Among the members of the staff, Professional 2 is the only one who has overtly spoken about the tendency for the policy to be stringent.

In another instance, Parent 1 remarks:

*“At the beginning, I think **it’s not natural**. I mean, ah, as an example ((name of Professional 3)) **has been living in France for years now**, and I think it was **not a problem for her to be speaking in French...**” (Appendix E.10, p.133)*

To provide context to this remark, it has to be mentioned that the father (Parent 1) had previously met Professional 3 in another childcare setting where the latter’s working language is French. When they meet again in this setting, since the professional is assigned to English, the father finds it unnatural, to a certain extent, awkward that she only responds to him in English when he is fully aware of her linguistic background. This change of the professional’s language practice also prompts a sort of re-acquaintance. Since the father

knew the professional then as a French speaker, he needs to get used to her now as an English speaker. The assigned language has given this professional a new linguistic identity, a monolingual identity whereas she is bilingual. In addition, a new relationship between them needs to be established. This time it has to be built in a new language.

Another point that needs to be discussed is the father's understanding of bilingualism. He believes that since the professional is actually proficient in French as well, she should be allowed to speak French to him as well to the children. Somehow, the restriction of speaking in English-only, which is imposed on this professional, does not make sense to him. As a matter of fact, the professional herself reinforced this parent's claim in the following quote:

*“As Parent 1 told me, I’m the only real Alsatian in the project, which is true! Thank you, ((names the parent)), but probably, I’m the only one that is the most French in the whole team.” (Appendix D.1, p. 52)*

The statements of Parent 1 and Professional 3 to a certain extent illustrate the limitation(s) of the OPOL policy. Within this policy in the crèche, professionals are thought of as either English speakers or French speakers. It is a simplistic conceptualisation to the more complicated linguistic and cultural realities of the professionals. In the case of Professional 3, while it is true that on paper she is British, she has lived in France from age 4. Thus, comparing herself to the other professionals, she considers herself the only real Alsatian having lived and worked in Alsace, France for the most part of her life. While English might have been the language she spoke with her parents, French has since become her daily language even with her husband and children.

Related to the idea of creating an ideal environment is the notion of perfect time for language acquisition and language learning. In many instances, the emphasis on early exposure to language(s) is evoked. The following quotations show the parents' desire for their children's early start to language learning.

*“I really think that kids are great to learn, to be exposed to them [the languages] at an **early age**. There are so many couples in Strasbourg who are bilingual, so many, I mean even French couples. Even if they’ve grown up in France, they have an excellent knowledge of English, and they want their children to be exposed to that **earlier** so I think, it’s definitely just natural.” (Appendix C.1, p. 17)*

*Parent 21: English is obviously important for him, but French as well. That is nice for him to have an understanding of another language, and um you know, **from a young age as well.***

*Interviewer: How old is he?*

*Parent 21: He is three on Friday. (Appendix E.3, p.100)*

*“I think it’s good to start, I mean, personally, I think it would be good if you start **Greek language early on.**” (Appendix E.1, p. 80)*

*“When Paul had this **opportunity to learn German, I said ok, the younger the better,** I think because I thought this was just a chance. It could have been Italian or Spanish or Arabic or Russian.” (Appendix E.6, p. 117)*

The quotes above reveal their belief that exposing their children to languages at an early age is more efficient and beneficial. This is the commitment and the advantage the crèche offer parents. In this setting, babies and young children are in an environment in which English and French are employed on a daily basis.

Another interesting angle that needs to be emphasised is the commitment parents have in transmitting their languages, not just their first languages but also the learned languages, which is the case in the excerpts from Appendix C.1 and Appendix E.3. These parents are aware that, on the one hand, there is the bilingualism of the crèche and, on the other hand, the multilingualism present in families with languages beyond French and English. To take it further, Parent 25 enumerates other languages that her son could possibly learn. It does not matter which language her child is exposed to. It happened to be German but it could have been any other language. This gives us an insight into how they positively regard bilingualism and multilingualism at an early age. Parents in this crèche, based either on their experiences or their exposure to positive discourses on learning multiple languages, are optimistic and actively engaged in the linguistic education of their children.

Relating to the quotes, what they all believe is that to become bilingual you have to be in contact with the two languages at a very young age. This is another common representation of bilingualism.

## 8.2.2 OPOL and “Language Recognition”

One of the recurring terms in the discourses of parents and professionals is the word, “recognition.” In this sense, the person is identified based on the assigned language, thus, the language and the person become one.

*“So they are starting to **recognize**, especially those kids who have never heard or spoken English have started to **recognize**.” (Appendix C.1, p. 12)*

*“Yup! **It’s the same thing** [referring to the previously mentioned bilingual structures in the city], one adult, one language. So we are trying to keep it so the child knows when they are speaking to someone, they have, that person, only responds to them in that language. I think it helps in **recognition** because the kids are looking for stability, and to make sure that they’ve understood something.” (Appendix C, p. 18)*

*“I did insist that she [Professional 3, a bilingual] speaks to them ((children)) in English...the whole thing with **respecting children so that the children will recognize you as being a type of speaker** [pause] so the children who do not have any English at home, whose trying to make sense of coming into a crèche where there is somebody speaking to them in English all day and then that person would speak to them and would speak to another adult in French, and I thought that maybe that would be incoherent to a child . . . ” (Appendix C.3, p. 39)*

This belief is based on the idea of a person being a referent of a language and only that language. Thus, the person is recognised by the language assigned to him or her. Language recognition means separating one language from another one. It goes with the belief that language separation will expedite children’s language recognition and consequently facilitate efficient language acquisition. It is believed that, as the child recognises who speaks which language, he will respond appropriately to the person. The appropriate language is the language associated with the person. Closely related to this assumption is what Baker (2000) refers to as the process in which a child creates *language boundaries*. Language boundaries mean the association of languages with people, environment and contexts. As the crèche clearly defines language separation through OPOL, a slight modification of language practice may yield a reaction from a child consequently disturbing the established language distinction established.

The notion of language recognition is also believed to be linked to providing a stable, non-confusing environment for the young children. The excerpts above show that the associate president is keen in providing a positive affective climate for the children in the crèche. She believes this is achieved by enforcing language separation. When professionals adhere to the OPOL policy they are demonstrating respect to the child who is still in the process of “sense-making.” Since the crèche is a new context for the young children, she thinks that managing the crèche employing “direct and simple rules” will make the children’s transition from home to crèche easy and smooth. This includes straightforward and consistent policy in language management. This is further elaborated in the next section.

### 8.2.3 OPOL Provides Structure and Stability

As previously mentioned, the one person, one language policy refers to the separation of languages by people. This separation and distinct assignment of *who speaks which language in the crèche* is regarded positively. It is believed that it provides children with stability and structure conducive for efficient bilingual acquisition as reflected in the following discourses of parents.

*You have to provide them a frame, and to have a frame, and to have a frame, you have to...**There should be things that do not change.** You know. Maybe, I am wrong. For my three children, we try to make this the principle of education, no random chance, nothing that they cannot understand, like in rules or in everything, that is right for dining hours...that is right for rules at home...” (Appendix E.10, p. 133)*

The father compares language policy to house rules. Children need comprehensible guidelines that are consistently enforced, which is covered in his chosen expression, “no random chance.” He considers his philosophy of child rearing consistent and compatible with the stability that the one person, one language policy provides for the children.

*“I think somehow that it is easier for the children to have **stability, something that is stable** and that they can refer to...I think it is a good thing to have one who is the **reference for one language**...It might be more efficient to keep on speaking in one language. It is **more structured**...I am not a specialist in this field, you know, but for me it makes sense to have, to have some people have **reference in one language and others in another**...” (Appendix E.6, p. 121)*

*“Because they [the children] know, I think, **they know how they have to deal with the adults.** I mean when they speak with \_\_\_ [name of the Professional 4], they know that \_\_\_ [name of the Professional 4] is always speaking in English, and there is no question so if they do not understand, they will try to make her repeat or something like that. When they speak with \_\_\_ [Professional 2], \_\_\_ [Professional 2] is always speaking in French, and that’s the point...” (Appendix E.10, p.133).*

For these parents, the notions of stability and simplicity associated with clear language references make sense to them. Armed with their understanding of children’s psychology, they believe that uniformity in discourses on how the one person, one language policy works is positive for the children. Promoting straightforward rules are effective. Moreover, another point that can be deduced is the parents’ notion that the monolingual speaker is the ideal language speaker. In other words, having two monolingual speakers of the two target languages will result in successful bilingual acquisition. This somehow reinforces the belief that a bilingual comprises of two monolinguals in one.

#### 8.2.4 OPOL and Language Acquisition and Learning Beliefs

Interviews with parents and professionals reveal their beliefs on how children acquire and learn languages and how these processes are achieved with the established language policy (E. Caporal-Ebersold, 2018). Some extracts clearly indicate the distinction between the two processes following Krashen’s hypothesis (1981, 1982: p. 10), in which acquisition is distinguished as a “subconscious” process of language development as opposed to learning which is a “conscious” process of understanding how language functions. This difference is articulated in this quote: **“They weren’t getting English to learn English. They are only in an English environment in that English speakers spoke English and French spoke French”** (Appendix C.3, p. 40).

Coming from the crèche founder (also the association president), this clarifies the principal aim of the crèche: for children to acquire the two languages by providing language models. However, in a number of instances, this delineation is blurred. For instance, some parents expect that as professionals separate languages in this bilingual setting, their children will also learn the nuances of the language, which include semantics, pragmatics, syntax and phonology.

The following sub-sections highlight these beliefs in language acquisition and language learning.

#### 8.2.4.1 “Native speakers” are the ideal language models.

*“It seems to make just sense that somebody who is **native speaker of English** would speak English in the crèche, and somebody who is French speaker would speak French in the crèche...**plus they (the children) get the vocabulary with actually two people speaking to each other one in English and one in French**...they hear so much more and it is ok...It’s also to ensure children that it’s ok to be speaking in languages...You’re not requiring to speak one language over the other so I am not sure it that is very clear but it was for two reasons: one because that was the example that we have seen, and it worked, and two, respect for the children so that they weren’t being in an English class...**They weren’t getting English to learn English. They are only in an English environment in that English speakers spoke English and French spoke French.**” (Appendix C.3, p. 40)*

Putting the children in a context where “native speakers” use their own languages is believed to be suitable for language acquisition. This is the myth of immersion versus teaching the children. Following this myth, it is believed that when children are put in an environment where English is spoken, they will learn it without formal teaching. By immersion, children are not only exposed to the vocabulary of the language, but the manner of speaking that includes not only the linguistic elements but also the socio-cultural contexts. “(T)hey [the children] are also hearing how people speak” in context. In other words, they are exposed to the pragmatic and prosodic features of language.

In language learning, vocabulary is given emphasis. It is the basis on which one is considered fluent or not in a language. In terms of language practice in this early years setting, the professionals maintain the use of their assigned languages in a contextualised environment in the hope that children will “get them”, which means understand the vocabulary and expressions. In other words, the professionals’ roles are considered crucial in the language acquisition process of children. For predominantly monolingual English children, this kind of environment provides them exposure to French while maintaining their proficiency in English. This is the other way around for the predominantly monolingual French children. The same context strengthens and supports the language competence of children of bilingual families.

On matter regarding the professionals’ language “nativeness,” the question that needs to be asked is: Who does the crèche founder consider a native speaker? How does she define a native speaker? This conceptualisation seems to be equivocal at this time of massive migration and constant movement of people. Even with the composition of the professionals,



the question of nativeness is problematic. Nonetheless, it has continued to be the gauge on who is qualified to teach a language. The quote below by Parent 23 demonstrates this point.

*“My opinion is that the languages should be taught by the **natural speakers**, the **native speakers or people** that are really exposed or used this language. I don’t know if you can learn a language by reading books and never going to the country.” (Appendix E.4, p. 107)*

This strongly stated opinion by one of the parents in the crèche has been for a long time a prerequisite in the field of language teaching. While the native and non-native dichotomies have been considered ambiguous and problematic (Aneja, 2014), its idealisation as an expert in language grammar and use still persists. “Nativeness” is a model to reach. Up to the present, it is common to read, “native speaker” as a requirement in many recruitment advertisements at schools. However, in this globalised world and in societies where multiple languages cohabit, the native speaker question has come close to absurdity. Aneja (2014) points out that in reality “native speakerism” is entwined with ideologies of racism and racialisation (Shuck, 2001, 2006), classism (Labov, 1969), nationalism (A.S. Canagarajah, 2005), and accent (Amin, 1997).

Meanwhile, (Cheshire, 1991) as cited by Schmitz (2006), argues that the distinction between ‘native’ and ‘nonnative’ is difficult to operationalise and is becoming more and more blurred. The three circle model of World Englishes, which categorises countries as either part of the inner, outer and expanding circle of nations (Skinner, n.d.) is becoming more and more unclear (Cheshire, 1991; Schmitz, 2006). Countries, regardless of where they are in the earlier English language classification, are home to multilinguals. Thus, the term “native speaker” raises a number of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, political and educational issues (Schmitz, 2006, 2016).

The second part of Parent 23’s linguistic condition pertains to proficiency in the language, which he believes can only be attained by immersion (discussed later). This parent shows a very punctilious requirement for language teachers, and in the case of this crèche the professionals, consequently revealing how he values his children’s language development.

As shown in the profile of parents, all of them live and experience linguistic, social and cultural diversity. As a matter of fact, a number of them are transnationals (Vertovec, 1999, 2004, 2009) and clearly understand the consequences of superdiversity (Blommaert, 2015; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Vertovec, 2007). Even so, their beliefs and ideologies are

interlaced with monolingual notions that still persist such as native speaker ideology, language separation and language purism.

*“They ((the young children)) are getting the languages, and they are also **hearing how people speak** [pause] the idea here is that the kids are hearing both languages...”*  
(Appendix C.1, p. 28)

Pertaining to the transfer of “proper” pronunciation, its importance is mentioned on various occasions. A number of French-dominant speaking parents expressed their concern that if they speak English to their children, they might transfer errors in pronunciation. For instance, Parent 25, a History and Geography teacher, used the expression “**proper English**” (Appendix E.6, p.121) when she explained the reason she decided not to use English with her children. Although Parent 25 teaches her content area in English, she is not confident that she could serve as an ideal language model. Furthermore, she is concerned that she would “...transfer the accent, transfer grammatical or vocabulary mistakes...” (Appendix E.6, p.121). Related to this discourse, Parent 23 adds that the, “French are not naturally good speakers in English . . .” (Appendix E.4, p. 106). This belief to a certain degree influences the educational choices parents make for their children. In a recent study of French parents, who opted to include English in the repertoire of their children, a sentiment of dissatisfaction on the French way of teaching English is palpable (Bouchés, 2017; Bouchés-Rémond-R, 2014). In the case of the parents of this crèche, they plan to either enrol their children to bilingual schools or international sections. With their older children already enrolled in these settings, their younger children will have the advantage of getting accepted in the same schools on the basis of precedence.

Meanwhile, one of the important ideas behind OPOL as elaborated earlier is the fact that it provides young children opportunities to hear professionals who model their assigned languages. “They are hearing how people speak.” This implies not only modelling language use but also providing children the opportunity to hear how words are pronounced. As Parent 25 mentions, she prevents herself from addressing her children in English for fear of the “transfer of accent (p.121),” which is her French accent while speaking English. Acquiring proper and native-like pronunciation is indeed taken seriously. Thus, parents consider the crèche conducive towards children’s language acquisition and learning as they are provided the advantage of closely interacting with professionals who speak “correctly”.

The next quotes do not only concern the languages promoted in the crèche but also the other languages of the parents that they wish to transmit to their children. Recurring a

number of times is the term, learning “**correctly**”. This is a belief of purism that there is only one way of speaking.

*“Ideally, I would like her to **learn Greek correctly**, but that is another thing because Greek has complicated grammar, spelling...I would like her to **learn the language correctly** [pause] and this would be very difficult unless I really put an effort in teaching her how to write, spelling and then because Greek is not like English.”*  
(Appendix E.1, p. 85)

The terms proper, correct and ideal language model are evoked by parents a number of times, including those whose first language is neither English nor French. The phrase “learn Greek correctly” provides a glimpse of Parent 5’s ideal language learning perspective. It is clear that she has the language notion of “prescriptive grammarians,” which focuses on the correctness of the language, which includes the full extent of its grammar. Thus, language learning needs to be rigid, and learners should strive for correctness. Furthermore, what is evident is the influence of behaviourist learning theories (Bandura, 1977; Skinner, 1953; Watson, 1913) to how this parent approaches language learning. Using the behaviourist approach, the necessity of conditioning and establishing good language habits are evoked (Lightbown & Spada, 2013; Myles & Mitchell, 2014). To achieve competence, the learner is provided with stimuli and feedback through positive reinforcement or correction (De Bot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2005). Concretely, this means that a child is in a context where the parent provides the best conditions for language learning.

Since Parent 5 (the mother) knows that she cannot rely on other people to do this, she takes on the responsibility as her child’s “language teacher.” This also shows the limitation of the institutional language policy. The OPOL approach adopted by crèche does not meet the more complicated language needs of multilingual parents and their children. Thus an interesting question that should be asked is: how do you articulate a bilingual policy with the multilingual situation of most families?

Meanwhile, the quote below reiterates the belief that only native speakers are qualified to transmit or to teach the target language to the children.

*“You know, you know. I think it is quite a good strategy because I had this discussion with Parent 5 because Parent 5 is Greek, and I asked her if she speaks Greek to her daughter, and then she will sometimes in English. Well, you know, that is part of the fact that I don’t speak English to my kids daily. It is because I [pause] how do you say that? I would like them [pause] to have [pause] I would not say **proper English**. I am*

*still doing a lot. I am making a lot of mistakes, and transfer the accent, transfer grammatical or vocabulary mistakes.” (Appendix E.6, p.121)*

The aforementioned quotes with the adjectives “correct” and “proper” depict the following: the myth of the native speaker (Grosjean, 2010) and the importance of language proficiency. Parent 25 mentions that unlike the Greek mother who uses English and Greek with her child, she decides to stick to French only. Although she speaks fluent English, she decides that she is not an ideal English speaker because of the mistakes and errors she makes. As far as she is concerned, the “native speaker” is the ideal language user, who possesses a full mastery and possibly inherent fluency. These competences make him the best language teacher or model. Another possible criterion that qualifies one to transmit a language: native-like proficiency as a result of extensive language exposure and use.

In reality, the native speaker/non-native speaker dichotomy is seen to be problematic because it discounts multiple contexts, social processes and categories that have become the norm of a globalised society. Then, we begin to ask the following questions: in this super-diverse society, does the term “native speaker” carry any meaning? What defines a native speaker? Does it exist in our superdiverse world? Why do parents and educators believe in it with such persistency?

8.2.4.2 Effective language acquisition and learning are achieved when languages are separated.

The principal tenet of OPOL is language separation. Within this framework, languages should be separated as much as possible preventing different languages to come in contact. Translanguaging, a normal languaging practice among multilinguals, is believed to be detrimental to children’s language development because mixing languages is also believed to disregard the supposed monolingual norms of speaking. Moreover, bilingual development is seen as not only acquiring two languages but also acquiring the ability to distinguish between the two languages.

Therefore, it is highly discouraged. As a matter of fact, one of the parents has this to say about their language use before their son was born.

*“...We tried to be a little more disciplined because at some point before \_\_\_ [name of the child] was born, we were having a horrible language. We were speaking like this Hinglish, Franglish, half of the language is French, half of the language is English*

*so at some point we said that Amman will come, we have really to try to stick more to our language so yeah, so yeah, we made the decision.” (Appendix E.2, p.96)*

Between this parent and her husband, there are four languages. Admittedly, before giving birth to their first child, translanguaging was a normal practice (Garcia, 2011; Garcia & Li, 2014). In fact, her husband, who is originally from India, speaks Hindi, Punjabi, English and other unnamed languages spoken outside the home. In India, as is the case in other multilingual countries language contact is a norm not an exception. She reports further; “they [her husband and his family] are more used to switching languages.” When her husband is among multilinguals like himself, he makes use of all his linguistic resources. He is part of a multilingual community where boundaries in their languages are blurred. Translanguaging as a practice of bilinguals and multilinguals, is “a systematic, strategic...sense-making process” (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Alvarez, 2001). However, because of pervasive monolingual ideologies, this parent considers translanguaging as a mark of a “horrible” language practice. For them to effectively model “proper” language, a conscious decision needs to be made, which means a radical change in their normal language practice, from multilingualism to monolingualism. Indeed, when there are several languages involved questions revolving around language management are pertinent (Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018). When both parents are multilingual and their combined repertoires include four or more languages, it is common that their language practice will change with the arrival of a child. Parents find themselves asking the following questions: is it all right to mix languages? Would language mixing or switching confuse children or delay language acquisition?

Another important point in this excerpt is the ideology of language purity. This parent articulates that language mixing is “horrible” and that speaking in different language codes is a sign of being undisciplined. After the birth of their son, they changed their language practice to ascertain that their child would have “good language models”. This means that she started to speak to her son in French only, while her husband in English only. Informed by available language policy resources on language acquisition that recommended the use of OPOL, they made this a very deliberate decision. Thus, OPOL as a strategy is regarded as an ideal answer to bilingual development.

The questions that should be asked are the following: Does language separation provide the best condition towards language acquisition? Do children get confused when there are several languages involved? What about multilingualism? What about their other languages?

As studies have shown, children have the capacity to acquire and learn many languages. With enough exposure and interaction in a given language, a child can learn whatever

language. The same quote by Parent 17 also poses a problem for an adult multilingual speaker whose language practice is more fluid. The policy discourages a multilingual person to activate his linguistic resources to be able to express himself more effectively. He is expected to switch off the other languages and activate only one, thus, from being multilingual to function like a monolingual. Thus, the question that needs to be asked is whether this policy is artificial. It seems that with OPOL a multilingual language user needs to restrict his use of his linguistic repertoire to show the children an ideal language speaker of the target language. However, there is one advantage that we could identify that language separation provides. It assures enough exposure to the target language(s). In the case of the bilingual crèche under study, the children have exposure to two languages. With this, it is believed that children are not only acquiring the language but also the vocabulary of the language with its forms and functions. To a certain degree, they are so satisfied with the one person, one language policy that they cannot envision to have a policy of translanguaging. This is discussed in the next section, where parents cite concrete examples of the negative effects of “language mixing” on children’s language acquisition.

#### 8.2.4.3 Detrimental Consequences of Translanguaging

The excerpt below is from one of the interviews conducted with the association president.

*“Also with my son, when he was born, he didn’t speak any English to me. So as all parents first child, with your first one, **what am I doing? Am I doing it right?** He [referring to her son] really had a **hard time acquiring language**...He was about three when he started speaking, and it’s at two when we expect. There’s a lot of mumbo jumbo so we worried if what we were doing was right, was it ok, is he going to be ok? So, I felt, **I wished he could be in a structure where he is getting both.** It would have comforted me. ” (Appendix C.1, p.17)*

Clearly, the primary motivation in the establishment of the bilingual crèche that adheres to the one person, one language policy is this parent’s desire to enrol her child in a centre, where he is “getting both” English and French. Creating a crèche that follows the same OPOL policy would reinforce the home policy and ensure the child has enough contact with both languages. Additionally, this setting is not only a place where the two languages are present but also a setting where a clear policy of language separation is enforced.

The parent associates her son’s language acquisition difficulty to the unstructured way of dealing with languages, “there’s a lot of mumbo jumbo...” Another thing that can be inferred from the quote is that initially there was no clear language policy at home. In her

understanding, her child did not speak any English because she did not model the use of the language, as she should have. As French speakers surround her, she feels obliged to speak using the majority language. Thus, the child hears her speak both languages, which in her understanding has produced negative consequences concerning language acquisition.

Another striking point that needs emphasis is the amount of reflection and investment of this parent towards ensuring that her son develops bilingual competences. The following questions: “What am I doing?” and “Am I doing it right?” depict her thought processes. These questions reflect on what most parents raising bilingual children worry in contrast to monolingual families who on the whole just watch the language development of their children without questioning it unless the child has specific problems. The first question is an inventory of her concrete action towards her linguistic goal for her child. The second question is a self-assessment of whether what she is doing is beneficial or not. Her awareness of the problem to solve with regards to her son’s bilingual acquisition and her natural tendency as a mother to worry for her son’s well-being are transformed into a concrete action: the creation of this crèche. This bilingual crèche that focuses on her target languages is the realisation of her ideal setting. It provides her the assurance that her child is “going to be fine”. Furthermore, one can see from this extract that the mother does not know what bilingual acquisition is supposed to be like. It is difficult to think outside of the framework of monolingual acquisition without specific knowledge about bilingualism.

What follows is another excerpt from another multilingual mother. She describes the manner in which she communicates with her young daughter.

*“I talk to my daughter both in Greek and in English. Sometimes, English comes more naturally to me, and **I’m not sure** that it’s a good thing to know or if **I confuse** her because for example, we go through the same book for example, and sometimes I point the picture and say the word in Greek, and then, I say the words in English, and I’m not sure. Sometimes, I try to do it in parallel, **but I am not sure** if it’s like, **I’m confusing** her...” (Appendix E.1, p. 78)*

In this short excerpt, this Greek mother uses the variants of the phrases, “I’m not sure” and “I confuse her” when she mentions how she uses her two languages with her child. This shows that she is fully aware of her more complicated language practice. However, she worries that the use of the two languages might have detrimental effects on her one-year old child as depicted clearly in the statement, “I am not sure if it’s a good thing...or if I confuse her.” Originally from Greece, she has the desire to transmit her language and her culture to her offspring. She hopes that she would be able to speak Greek, but as she is married to an

American, who does not understand nor speak her first language, English has easily become their home language. It is likewise her primary professional language followed by French since she and her husband are scientists who are in France for their second and third post-doctoral contracts. The English language plays a very important role as they work with people from all over the world in their respective research laboratories.

For this mother, who juggles family and professional life, the influence and dominance of English are apparent in her daily language use. This affects even her interaction with her first child. From her own words, she says, “English comes more naturally to me.” This is evidence of the way the language environment of an individual at work and at home can occupy more space than the dominant language of the country of residence. Furthermore, it points out to the fact that a person’s languaging is not static. It changes based on the person’s experiences and contact with other languages. However, this natural tendency to favour English runs in contrast to her intrinsic desire to transmit Greek as far as the language development of her child is concerned. This mother says she uses two other strategies so that her child has enough input in both English and Greek vocabulary terms. With the use of picture books, she navigates between her two languages, sometimes “in parallel” and at times one language first then the next. However, she questions the effects of translanguaging, the alternate use of English and Greek to her young daughter’s acquisition of two languages and fears that this could cause confusion.

Furthermore, this excerpt shows that although lots of sites and blogs on raising bilingual children are available, parents and caregivers still adhere to the most popular views that heavily rely on monolingual standards. At present, a plethora of scientific studies show the cognitive advantages of bilingualism, but there is little accessible information on the concrete ways to manage multilingualism. What parents need is the practical advice for day-to-day living. This is the case for this mother, who speaks Greek, English and French. Although she is well intentioned and understands clearly the linguistic advantage of being bilingual/multilingual, she feels ill-equipped to impart her bilingual or multilingual repertoire to her child. For parents with multiple languages questions about language use, language management and language learning are common (Curdt-Christiansen & Lanza, 2018).

#### 8.2.4.4 Translanguaging has a negative impact on accepting to speak the minority language.

The quotation below is taken from the interview conducted with Parent 25 (Appendix E.6). This parent and her husband are both High School teachers. In fact, both of them teach History and Geography in English and French. To be able to teach her subject partly in English, a special certification is required. Moreover, she regularly travels to English



speaking countries. As a student, she completed her first year of a masters program in Canada. As a teacher, she paves the way for her students to travel to the United States through a special partnership program. Because of her positive experiences with the English language and due to her active involvement in associations, she is convinced that this bilingual childcare setting is the best for her second child. Her first child is enrolled in another bilingual crèche that focuses on German. For this parent, investing on children's bilingual literacy is important. Although it may seem surprising that this family made two different choices for their first and the second child, what is evident is how they value cultural and linguistic diversity.

Another striking similarity in the two ECEC settings frequented by their children is the adherence to the OPOL policy. In the lines that follow, she expresses her support for OPOL and provides a concrete example of the debilitating effects of not adhering to language separation.

*“It might be more efficient to keep on speaking in one language. It is more structured...consistent maybe. It makes sense, right? That is what I mean. If everybody will start to speak French, English. I do not know. Maybe, it might be a big [did not complete the sentence]. I don't know. I am not a specialist in the field, you know, but for me it makes sense to have, to have some people have preference in one language and others in other...I know that I have some friends who are, who speak different languages at home, and for example, I have a friend who is Japanese, who explained to me that at the beginning with her first, her eldest son, **she started speaking French and then sometimes Japanese**, and then she said to me that at one point **she had the feeling that the kid was completely confused, and he had difficulties to speak Japanese or accept this language, and he really fought, fight with her because he did not want to speak Japanese with her** so it was very hard for her, and for her second child, she said I am going to speak only Japanese and his daddy speaking French so he will have his environment in French, and you know, **I am Japanese so I will keep on speaking Japanese, and it went very well.** I know it is not only a question of...I know it is a question of personality as well, the kids' personality, but I think **she made it easier for her second one** to know...to keep on having his reference of one language, one person.  
(Appendix E.6, p.121)*

The excerpt above is the mother's reply when asked on what she thinks about OPOL. She employs the following terms: efficient, more structured and consistent. Additionally, she said

that the one person, one language policy, “makes sense.” Her choice of words is a blatant expression that she believes and promotes the principles behind the policy. While she clarifies that she is not an expert or a “specialist” in language acquisition and language learning, gathering from the examples and discussions with other families, she is certain that she is making the best decision for her children. Evidently, the reality and experiences, the learning and realisations of other multilingual families serve as references for other families, which is clearly the case for this mother. She cites the negative experience lived by her friend, a Japanese mother who initially used French and Japanese with her first child. She reports that the language practice of mixing the two languages has the following detrimental consequences: “she [her Japanese friend] had the feeling that the kid was completely confused and had difficulties to speak Japanese or accept this language and he did not want to speak Japanese with her.” The child’s resistance to speak his mother’s first language is naturally difficult for the mother who identifies herself as more Japanese than French: “I am Japanese so I will keep on speaking Japanese”. The Japanese mother considers the act of “fighting against her language” an act of resisting her origins, her identity. Curdt-Christiansen (2009) observes the same phenomenon with Chinese parents’ problem with Chinese competing with mainstream languages. They consider “the potential loss of the heritage language as a personal loss” (page 366). Seeing this discouraging result, the interviewee reports that the Japanese mother decided to change her language policy drastically with the second child, “making it easier for the second one”. This modification of language practice with the mother using one language and avoiding mixing it with another language is reported to have a positive effect on the second child. Thus, a failed family language policy can cause a home language policy shift, which changes the language dynamics in the family. From the perspective of the mother who reports the experience of this Japanese parent, the practice of language mixing causes confusion to the child and can ignite resistance towards the minority language. Towards the last part of the quotation, she also mentions the personality of the children as one of the factors that should be considered in understanding children’s reactions towards family language policies. What these parents are not clear about is the issue of input. For a child to speak a language or two, he needs to be sufficiently exposed to the languages. This is the basic information about language acquisition, which should be given to parents whether monolingual or bilingual.

#### 8.2.4.5 OPOL is language immersion.

Some professionals and parents consider this language policy identical with language immersion or simply known as immersion. Cummins (2009) explains that in the educational context, the term “immersion” carries two strands of meaning. The first signifies a systematic

form of bilingual education in which learners are in an instructional environment that promotes their proficiency in the two languages. To ascertain that the languages are equally prioritised, educational systems decide on some practical approaches. Languages are appropriated either according to people, time, content, space or place. The second signifies the immersion of children of minority language backgrounds in an instruction delivered through a second or a third language. Its specific aim is to equip the children in the language of instruction.

For Professional 4, OPOL is effective because it follows the principles of immersion: “One thing that I can say about one person, one language approach is how I learned French...with the French immersion at a public school in New Brunswick...”(Appendix D.2, p. 56). Originally from Canada where some bilingual programs are implemented, she recounted her experience when she started Grade 1, “suddenly everything was in French.” There were subjects that were taught only in the target language, which was French, until Grade 8. However, as many Anglophone children, English was continuously used at home. Although the change seemed abrupt, she reported: “I never thought it was difficult at all...”(Appendix D.2, p. 56). Having a positive experience learning French through her school’s immersion program, she implements the crèche’s language policy based on the language learning principles she experienced first-hand as a student in Canada. In fact, among all the professionals, she reports using varying strategies to make sure that the OPOL is maintained.

*“...I always speak English no matter what, and sometimes, there could be difficulties when somebody doesn’t understand. I usually try to repeat and try to get my message clear through other types of communication, body language or drawings or that kind of thing...If there is a problem, I always ask a French colleague. I say, let’s go to so and so, and then I’ll explain it to them in English, and then I’ll translate it to the child, and at the very worst case, If I’m alone, I don’t have somebody that I can play off, when it’s really a situation, you know the child is very emotional, you know, it’s not really the time, speaking English is not gonna help the situation, but it happens very rarely. I’ve done this a handful of times, but in that kind of situation, I say, all right, **I have this pill that I can eat, and it will let me speak French for five minutes**, and we work out the situation, and then it goes away. Also for learning purposes sometimes I use the trick of saying, more in situations when I have to teach them a new word that they don’t know, and there is no context that I can put the word in for example, what is a good example? I don’t know, I am trying to teach them the word shutters or something. It’s very hard to*

*describe that. I would say, oh you know Patricia. I think Patricia says “volet.” You know a Francophone calls it “volet,” but I say shutters, and then they know.”*  
(Appendix D.2, p. 54)

This whole quote is about her pedagogical practice in the crèche that describes how she manages speaking only in English. Although the professional does not mention where her professional influences come from as she carries out her responsibility as English speaker, it can be inferred that her teaching principles and strategies replicate and mirror the manner in which she was taught (Gourneau, 2005). Her own experiences in the Canadian Bilingual Program provide her the framework for her job. “I always speak English no matter what...” shows rigidity in the policy implementation. There are no exceptions and allowances permitted. As she is employed to speak and model English to young children, she does so “no matter what.” As she is fully aware of the challenges of these practices, “when somebody doesn’t understand,” she enumerates concrete actions to avoid communication breakdown. The following are the strategies she reportedly uses: (a) working in tandem; (b) use of a “language pill” that provides her competence in French; and (c) borrowing the French speaker’s terms to teach a new English vocabulary. It illustrates the variety of strategies she has devised to avoid translanguaging.

As Professional 4 was working at a bilingual preschool and at this crèche when the interview was conducted, it is difficult to decipher which strategies she used in the crèche and which ones for older children who are enrolled in the bilingual preschool program. As previously clarified, her job description is the same in both places: to provide an “authentic interaction with children in English”. Later in the same interview, she specifies that language use in the crèche is slightly different from the bilingual preschool setting.

*“At the crèche, you do less things that are with language. I mean the language is always present, but you can, you know, it’s like more physical things that you are doing, and you can show them physically, you’re not doing your activities solely based on the idea of a word or understanding what that word means.”* (Appendix D.2, p. 55)

In both places OPOL is the declared language policy. However, the quotation reveals the professionals underlying beliefs on language, language use, language acquisition and learning. The statement, “At the crèche, you do less things that are with language” has at least two interpretations. First, she attempts to differentiate the process of acquisition and learning. Second, she distinguishes the two settings. From her perspective, the demands for her as a teacher in transmitting learning are much greater in the bilingual preschool than in the crèche. In the former, she teaches young students vocabulary terms and expressions of

the target language. The students are expected to learn and master them. The parents' expectations are high because at the end of three years, the children take an entrance test to enrol at a bilingual school or international program. Meanwhile, at the crèche, she has a different role. Of course, she still needs to model the use of English, but in her perspective, the demands for the younger group of children are not as rigid as with the older group. This reveals an awareness of the difference between language acquisition and language learning in a more formal context.

Moreover, the excerpt is her unique way to distinguish the two settings. Her possible understanding is that language interaction with children in the crèche is contextualised. Non-verbal strategies can be used to communicate with young children. Since babies and very young children are not yet capable of active verbal exchanges, the use of gestures, actions and other overt expressions are seen to be sufficient. Does this sentence indicate the carer's limited understanding of how language works in the crèche? Does it show a lack of understanding of the importance of language input and interaction with babies?

In both settings, meaning making is essential through the use of language. Children who are at the crucial stage of acquiring language whether one, two or more languages simultaneously or consequently should be given rich language input necessary for language development. Adults or caretakers should provide the best conditions possible for children to be exposed to language through stories, songs and interactions. Moreover, adults should be sensitive to the verbal and non-verbal reactions and responses of children. These are precious moments and occasions when adults can provide these young children a good model of how communication works. Equally important is nurturing the young learners' desire to express themselves effectively. As Hornberger (2010) remarks, "Language is, after all, omnipresent in classrooms not only as subject and medium of instruction, but also as our very means of expression, of identity and knowledge construction." This is also true in the crèche.

As previously pointed out in this section, the common denominator between OPOL, the adapted language policy of the crèche and language immersion, commonly practiced in many bilingual programs is the basic principle of language separation. In the case of the crèche, the separation is prompted primarily by the language use of professionals. Below are quotations that reflect positive reception and support of this language policy chosen by this early years structure.

*"Well, I think that it works really well. I don't really have [did not complete this sentence]. I have not worked in a different environment. Of course, I've just been*

*working in this environment for two years so it's my only exposure to working in it. It works pretty well.*" (Appendix D.2, p.54)

Based on Professional 4's experience, language immersion effectively caters to successful bilingual education. Since the crèche follows the same principle, she does not have any doubt that it is the best context for language learning. Meanwhile, the widespread use of one person, one language policy in the educational systems of different countries is remarkable. This professional who comes from Canada and at the moment of the interview lives and works in France refers to the same policy, as she clearly states, "... so it's my only exposure... It works pretty well". The popularity of OPOL is unprecedented. Its principles and practices have percolated not only family language policies but educational language policies as well. The reality is that there are other language scenarios that could be considered such as translanguaging, which is the regular means of communication in bilingual families. The experience cited by Professional 4 is associated with immersion as a form of bilingual program.

However, this link with the immersion program to formal educational contexts opposes what has been emphasised in many occasions, the distinction of this early years centre from a school setting. The crèche is not intended for language learning. It is not the intention of this structure to teach English and French. The association president clarifies: "We are not scholarly here." New parents are informed and throughout the year reminded that the goal of the crèche is for children to be in a context where the languages are used. The following are the exact words of the association president on this matter:

*"They are **only in an English environment** in that **English speakers spoke English and French spoke French . . .**" (Appendix C.3, p.40).*

*"**We are not talking about how it works in schools...**" (Appendix C.2, p.28).*

The statements above illustrate the attempt to distinguish the crèche from school. By saying, the children are "only in an English environment in that English speakers spoke English . . ." the professionals of this ECEC are mandated to provide an environment where the two languages thrive to ensure young children exposure. In this setting, they do not teach the children English and French. They speak with the children in their assigned language, but they avoid putting the children in stressful situations where the latter are obliged to speak or respond in their interlocutor's language. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, the children are not restricted within the OPOL framework. What seems to be contradictory is that the effort to differentiate the crèche from formal educational settings is undermined in the adoption of the one person, one language policy. One could just hypothesise that the lack of

information of other available models to manage languages caused them to embrace a policy that is already in place in other bilingual education structures. What sets them apart is the leniency in implementation. On this note, Parent 1 has this to say:

*“Actually, it ((OPOL)) works. It works well even for the adults, I guess. I mean, we know who speaks in French, who speaks in English, and as long as it is not too strict or too rough, I mean, if the child is not really in distress or in difficulty...” (Appendix E.10, p. 133)*

This parent’s response concerns the adults and the children. For the first part, he affirms, although a bit hesitatingly as evidenced by the utterance “...I guess...”, that OPOL works. Professionals are identified based on the languages assigned. If initially, it was challenging because the multilingual professionals necessarily had to adjust to a new way of “languaging,” they have adapted well. The second part considers the children’s interest at the centre of the policy. He clarifies the condition that should not be taken for granted: its implementation should not be “too strict or too rough...” that it could cause “distress or difficulty.” This parent knows the priority of this childcare centre repeatedly stressed by the association president. Aside from introducing the children to bilingualism, the centre’s primordial task is to accommodate the individual needs of young children. Furthermore, he also understands based on his experience with the policy that strict separation could be detrimental to the well-being of children. This reveals a more flexible and dynamic view of bilingualism than other parents.

A review of the language learning programs at all levels in different continents points out to an extensive use of a total or partial immersion program. Language learning is conceived from a traditional or monolingual perspective. In an effort to preserve the purist concept of language, teachers resort to diverse and creative strategies to ascertain that languages are separated. In an English as a second language class for instance, students are prohibited to speak the other language, and a system of punishment or consequence is put in place so that children speak in the target language only. This is based on the goal of attaining native-like proficiency in the language. What seemed to be discarded in the language immersion approach are the psychological and sociological aspects of language and language learning. Aside from the fact that there are affective dimensions, identity issues and other concerns should be taken into consideration. The goal of developing perfect bilinguals or balanced bilinguals runs counter to the manner in which multilinguals actually language or use language.

The next extract from an interview with a parent again stresses the effectiveness of immersion in learning a new language.

*Interviewer: So how did you survive in Portugal? Did you speak the language?*

*Parent 1: Yes, I learned the language. I learned pretty well since I've been able to write my mémoire en portugais.*

*Interviewer: Master*

*Parent 1: J'ai appris facilement parce que j'étais dans une famille avec des enfants.*

(Appendix E.9, p.132)

Parent 1, who is a father to two boys who are enrolled in the crèche, compared his language learning experience to the concept of language immersion in the crèche. He seems to forget that the context in his case is different. He was an adult when he went to study in Portugal and was immersed in the language of the country. Meanwhile being immersed in English in the crèche is a totally different scenario. English is not the dominant language in France, and children are aware of this even at an early age. Evidently, this father uses his beliefs as basis from his own experience. Perhaps the specificity of the crèche context should be clarified to parents like him.

### 8.3 Other Non-Linguistic Ideologies of Language

The previous subsection highlights the beliefs surrounding OPOL, a language policy widely adapted in the educational spheres. What is evident is that these ideologies are offshoots of interplay of different factors. On the one hand, parents are guided by their parental instincts, their rearing principles, their observations of other parents' practices and lessons learned from their interactions and discussions with other parents. What is remarkable as well is that recurring notions that are not necessarily scientific are regarded as facts. Thus, included in the responses are expressions such as, "I heard something like that...". Without expert knowledge, parents base their beliefs on hearsay. On the other hand, discourses of parents and professionals are likewise replete with research-based information. These include knowledge of the favourable environment to facilitate language teaching, language acquisition and language learning.

In the sub-section that follows, I will attempt to uncover the emotional, sociocultural and relational factors informing the language policy choice and the pronounced values that parents and professionals attribute to languages and language practices (Curd-Christian, 2009, 2013; King et al., 2008a; King et al., 2008b; Pavlenko, 2004, 2006; Tannenbaum, 2012). Studies that focus on how these factors relate to language policy or more specifically



to family language policy (FLP) are few (Kheirkhah, 2016). However, an in-depth understanding of these relationships and other sociocultural and individual factors (Akinci, 2016; Akinci & Yagmur, 2012; Yagmur & Akinci, 2003) that affect language policy decisions may provide us holistic perspectives of the issues at stake for parents and professionals. More specifically, individual and subjective motivations behind parents' choice of family language policy that prompted them to enrol their children in this bilingual crèche are examined. Similarly, the different points discussed below will provide a glimpse into the sense-making process of professionals based on their own experiences in and outside the crèche

### 8.3.1 Language and Relationship: The Affective Aspects of Language

The power of language in building relationships cannot be overemphasised. The following quotes clearly depict this.

*“My heart language or my mother language is English.” (Appendix C.1, p.17)*

The expressed desire of this mother for her child to speak her language is a common wish of parents whose first languages are different (Tuominen, 1999). Terms used in this excerpt, ‘heart language’ and ‘mother language’ speak so much of how she views language. For her, language is very personal, and it defines her essence. To share her true self or her identity means to speak the language of her heart. In her opinion, there is nothing more genuine than that. In choosing to use her “heart language” or her “mother language”, she is imparting her innermost self to her child. It is the means through which her relationship with her progeny is established and strengthened.

Furthermore, the decision of this parent to preserve and maintain her “mother language” shows how the issue of language maintenance is intertwined with processes related to human emotions. Fillmore (1991), Tannenbaum (2005) and Okita (2002) emphasise this point in their research findings. More specifically, Tannenbaum (2005) and Okita (2002) underscore the degree through which language loss could create emotional distance between generations and between the past and the present. Clearly, in the case of this mother, the desire to link her past and her present is evident. Language is also used to ascertain that a continued relationship with her English-speaking family is maintained through language. Although she has been living in France for some time, preserving her heart language shows continued affinity with her own people. However, speaking consistently in English with her children necessitates some adjustments in her language use when the setting includes other people.

*“I speak only English to my children.... I never wanted to have a two-mom policy in where I was speaking French to my children and in certain situations English. I could not imagine talking to my children in French. It’s very odd for me and even today ((name of her son)) whose nine and a half, and when his friends who are French come over...it always comes out twice...I had to say it English ((for his son)) and repeat right away in French ((for the friends)).” (Appendix C.2, p.38)*

This parent is bilingual in English and French but because of her determined language policy of consistent use of English with her children, when there are other people or other children, her statements are delivered twice, first to her children in English and to others in French. In other words, she adheres very strictly to her policy. It shows a form of engagement and investment in her child’s bilingualism while at the same time not excluding her children’s friends who are non-speakers of English.

From the personal relationship level, the quote that follows shows the importance of language in maintaining familial bond from one generation to another.

*“I would like her to learn Greek because cause that’s the way to communicate with my parents, you know...” (Appendix E.1, Interview with Parent 5, p.85)*

For Parent 5, it is her strong desire for her child to speak her mother tongue. She understands that her child’s ability to communicate in Greek is crucial to building a relationship with her parents, the child’s grandparents, who have limited to zero knowledge of English and French. Furthermore, this parent considers language transmission to be her primary responsibility. She is aware that she has to take on this role aggressively realising that no one else could introduce her child to this language. This is consistent to how Fishman (1991) considers the family, which is the most common and inescapable basis of mother tongue transmission, bonding use and stabilisation. The decision, the choice and the practice of this parent will eventually determine whether Greek as a minority language is maintained or lost (Fishman, 1991).

This statement emphasises the cultural value of language, alongside the purely linguistic point-of-view. The minority language, which is Greek in the case of this parent, is believed to be the link between the generations (Fillmore, 1991; Tannenbaum & Berkovich, 2005; Tannenbaum & Howie, 2002). Teaching her heritage language is the only way through which her child will be able to socialise with her parents, her culture and her origin. Thus, she believes that language is a means through which the bond within members of her family can

be strengthened. Language is a means through which her child could be a member of her family or her cultural roots (Schwartz & Verschik, 2013).

However good and pure the intentions of parents are in maintaining and transmitting their language, it could be a source of pressure and tension in the family. Professional 3 knows this too well and speaks of her own experience in the excerpt below. .

*“I’ve kinda stopped putting pressure really on it because umm...language has been such a pressure for me when I was little...not pressure but having two...so obviously I’d like her and I know that it would be great for her, but I know I do think she can do what she wants with what she’s got and if she wants to develop English...my brother for example has gone back to studying in Cardiff in England so he switched back to English. He is fine with it. He does his studies in English. I think it’s also up to her at one point to say ok now...I’m giving her the freedom. I kinda pulled out all the pressure...I find that it’s my environment that puts a lot of pressure...my mom, “oh English, English, English, oh send her to England” [using a different tone of voice].”*  
(Appendix D.1, p.48)

Since Professional 3 left Britain at a very young age, it was normal that her inclination towards French was stronger. As she relates, this became a source of alarm for her mother who desired her continued development in English. However, her mother’s concern did not translate positively and had caused persistent friction between them as she was growing up. With French as the majority language in the environment she was in, she did not understand then her insistence in speaking English-only at home and the family decision to send her back to England to live in a boarding school during her teenage years (Appendix D.1). Perhaps as an act of defiance, while her mother continuously asserted to speak English, she and her brother spoke French together.

*“At home...that was the only language ((referring to English)). Me and my brother spoke French together because that was like the common language, and my parents didn’t understand. We still speak French together [pause] yeah.”* (Appendix D.1, p.46)

This is an interesting example of how some children resist the LP of parents. Gaining insight from her own experience, now as a mother, she has taken a more relaxed position about her own daughter’s English language learning. “I’ve kinda stopped putting pressure really on it...I am giving her the freedom.” (Appendix D.1) Although she provides opportunities for her child to learn English by sending her to the International School, she decided early on not to

replicate the same pressure her mother placed on her as she was growing up. Furthermore, as she is pregnant with her second child during the interview, she thought of a more subtle approach that she believes is not only good for her first born but for the second child as well.

*“I think I’m going to try to do like \_\_ ((first child’s name)) start with English definitely and it might be nice for \_\_ ((child’s name)) because I have noticed sometimes that I kind of, I joke with my partner and I start speaking English to him, and she picks up twice as much. If I speak English to him and her, she picks up even more so maybe if I kind of stick to English with the second baby, it might make her even more want to speak so I’m gonna try and \_\_ ((name of the crèche)) is **giving me the opportunity as I speak English all day to never, ever, ever have...so that’s why in the meeting I really had to write it down and get ready because professionally, I’ve never done my job in English.**” (Appendix D.1,p. 4)*

Professional 3 believes that the best language-learning scenario is one that necessitates all participants to speak one language. This environment provides the context for learning. In her case, this is achieved when her husband participates and also speaks the minority language, which is English. She observes that her child is more receptive to the said language whenever she hears the two parents use the same language. Perhaps the child understands the need to speak English to be part of the conversation and be an active participant in the family activities. Moreover, this observation is consistent with the finding that the majority language speaking parent’s role, which includes fostering the development of the minority language, is crucial in a child’s advancement in the minority language (Venables, Eisenclas, & Schalley, 2014).

Although the professional and her husband do this as a form of “joke,” after seeing the positive reaction of her child, Professional 3 is reconsidering their home language use and practice. The reaction of her daughter has caused her to reflect and possibly modify their family language policy (FLP). This shows how children can actively influence FLP and change the dynamics of “languaging” in home settings (Kheirkhah, 2016).

Additionally, the last part of this excerpt shows how the bilingual crèche serves as a place where she uses English in the workplace. Growing up in France, French has taken a dominant part of her life whereas English has remained a home language. However working in an environment where she is obliged to speak English-only, provides this professional the opportunity to tap on her other language that she solely uses with her parents. Her private

language through this ECEC setting has become her professional language. This transition requires effort and a change in her language practice.

If the preceding quotations focus on the role of language in building relationships, the excerpts that follow on the other hand, focus on language as a possible source of hindrance and frustration towards fostering relationships. This is exemplified in the statements below.

*“It’s hard to create a relationship in a language that is not your own so obviously with some English parents like Vicky, Richard, English just comes naturally. Their native language is English, but for the French parents, it’s a bit like being in a class...I do switch to French from time to time. It’s just because it’s easier for them...to build a relationship, and to kind of create that relationship between the parent and the professional and the carer which is very important because that’s how you gain confidence, that’s how you gain trust and obviously language can be a bit of an obstacle.” (Appendix D.1, p. 45)*

The important role that language plays in building relationships with parents is fully grasped by this professional. Language is a vehicle through which she gains their confidence and trust and thus establishing effective partnership in this parental crèche. However, she also acknowledges that language can be an “obstacle.” She admits that with English, she naturally connects with English-speaking parents, but the same language prevents her from establishing connections with French-speaking parents, who may not be confident in the other language of the crèche. Within the framework of OPOL, Professional 3 is mandated to speak English within the childcare centre’s premises, but as she understands what is at stake, she points out the need to “switch to French from time to time.” By doing so, she is not being consistent with her language assignment. This conscious decision that runs counter to the declared language policy shows the extent of her agency (Ahearn, 2001; Duranti, 2007; King & Lanza, 2017). She believes that translanguaging is essential to her job in order to foster good relationship and to create partnerships with the parents in the crèche.

### 8.3.2 Language and Community Membership

As an early childhood setting founded by parents themselves, the choice of implementing OPOL is considered a best compromise towards language maintenance and language acquisition of the societal language. According to Parent 17, this language policy works best for their family. As a French national married to a multilingual Indian, the language policy facilitates their child’s development in the majority language, which is French and provides

continued access to English, thus somehow maintaining a link with his father's culture and identity through English.

*“For Parent 18 ((referring to her husband)), it was really important for A ((their son)) to hear some English...because English, English is really the language he is using with his friends and even with his families [pause], he speaks Hindi or Punjabi but in his environment, his social environment, he speaks English more so for him it is important that A has a link with English.” (Appendix E.2, p.96)*

This quote shows how language creates a strong link with the community. Equally important is its role in forging one's identity (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). Language is the most direct expression of culture and identity. This quote emphasises the social, cultural, non-linguistic aspect of language transmission. Children through heritage language use and interaction with their parents and other caretakers are in part being brought up as members of their family and the wider cultural group or community. In other words, home language is considered as a means through which children socialise into their parents' culture, consequently to the community where they belong (Wong Fillmore, 2000; Tannenbaum and Howie, 2002). For this family, the choice of this crèche is a strategic move to extend the use of FLP in the hope to fortify the child's proficiency in the minority language. With English as strengthened linguistic repertoire, their son is able to take part in the community of his father. This highlights the fact that language is considered fundamental in community membership (Gee, 2005; Gumpertz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Norton, 2000). It provides him access to the socio-cultural and economic milieu of his father.

The second part of the quotation presents a sort of dilemma for multilingual parents whose other languages cannot be reinforced elsewhere. Coming from a society where multilingualism is a norm, this father's language practice is more complex. “He speaks Hindi and Punjabi” aside from English. These are the two languages he can potentially pass on to his son aside as well. However, for practical or perhaps other ideological factors that are not mentioned in the extract, the family settles for English and French. This decision to focus on English can be seen as strategic and a good trade-off as it is considered an important language in India's higher education and government. Proficiency likewise means opportunities for professional growth and social distinction. However, Agnihotri and Khanna (1997) explain that the role of English in India is paradoxical. On the one hand, it is highly essential in the education and government. On the other hand, it plays a very small role in private domains such as family language use. Meanwhile, the next quote focuses on the role of language that extends beyond the familiar into the unknown. A capacity to speak a

language allows a person a glimpse and a perspective into the lives of other people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

*“I decided that I got to speak a lot of languages because **if you can speak a lot of languages, you can talk to a lot of people.**” (Appendix C.2, p.35)*

This shows that the association president’s deliberate choice to learn other languages captures her understanding of one of the functions of language, which is to bring people together. The ability to speak other languages means an increased opportunity to communicate and eventually understand individuals who speak those languages. Language learning is considered for its practical and cultural utility in exploring other worlds or other realities of people who speak other languages, hence resulting in social cohesion, understanding beyond language difference.

### 8.3.3 Language and Migration

Equally important is to point out the relationship of language and migration. Questions regarding family language policy (FLP) are often complicated for immigrant families (Curd-Christian, 2009). Contrary to Fishman’s beliefs of the exclusivity of the family to determine practical strategies towards language maintenance (Canagarajah, 2008; Fishman, 1991), the excerpts point to a more complex and complicated route towards language transmission and language practices.

Sometimes in the process of acquiring and learning another language, one can risk losing one’s heritage language. Such is the case for the children of Professional 5, who is quoted below. She and her husband are of Algerian descent. Both speak Arabic, however their children do not speak and have very little to zero understanding of this language. What follows is the response of Professional 5 when her family’s language use was asked.

*« ...**nous, les arabes**, c’est un peu différent. On est trop habitué surtout pour ceux qui ont vécu beaucoup en France depuis comme moi jeune. On est habitué trop. **On a trop mis le français en premier. C’est une erreur, je pense. J’essaye de parler plus en arabe bien sûr, mais ce n’est pas systématique. Ce n’est pas facile.** Après mon mari et moi, on peut parler qu’en arabe parce qu’il n’y a pas de problème. Mon mari parle très, très bien l’arabe, moi ça va. Mais avec les enfants, on est sorti, c’est un peu dommage, je dis. C’est mieux d’avoir les deux langues ou bilingues. On est trop habitué en français, je pense. »*

*"We Arabs are a bit different. We are so used to especially for one who has lived in France for a long time and came to this country as a young child like me. **We put too much emphasis on French. I think is a mistake. I think. I am trying to speak more in Arabic of course but not systematically. It is not easy.** My husband and I can speak in Arabic because there is no problem. My husband speaks very, very good Arabic. Mine is all right, but with the children, it is a pity. It is better to have both languages or to be bilingual. We are too used to speaking in French, I think."*

*(Appendix D.4, My Translation, p.105)*

To have a better understanding of this professional's response, it is important to mention that her family migrated from Algeria to France in the 1970s. She came to France as a baby. As everybody else in her family, she has dual citizenship and has continuously maintained strong ties with her relatives in Algeria through regular visits, once or twice a year. When initially asked of her nationality, she immediately responded Algerian. She is Algerian first, then French second (Appendix D.4). However, this is not reflected in the language policy choice of her household. By saying, "...we Arabs are a bit different" and then explaining that this is especially the case for those who came to France as children, she attempts to explain the tendency of immigrants to prioritise the language and culture of the host country to have easy access to services. This shows the relationship of language and power. French is given emphasis for integration purposes. A good command of the societal language provides advantages in pursuance of better opportunities. Moreover, the fact that Algeria is a former colony of France comes into play when examining this link. Under 130 years of colonial rule, every aspect of Algerian society was profoundly affected. Thus, this excerpt can also be seen to highlight the issue of power relationship between minority and majority languages, with Arabic as the minority language and French as the majority language. As basic services could only be availed in French, learning and functioning in this language are given priority.

Meanwhile, the quote also reflects the evident desire to maintain their heritage language yet is not apparent in practice. It is difficult in practice perhaps because she did not choose a specific policy at the beginning with her child, which could be because Arabic is a minoritised language in France and people who speak it are discriminated against. The dilemma of this professional is consistent with the observations of Curdt-Christiansen (2009) that immigrant families face problems with establishing language rules at home. There are a number of possible reasons: perhaps their languages have no power or perhaps because their languages are not supported, not taught in schools. In fact, intergenerational language shift within generations is a language behaviour commonly observed in immigrant families (Clyne, 2003; Clyne & Kipp, 1997; Fishman, 1991).



*“I think **they have to speak Arabic fluently**. It is better for them... Des fois, je me dis en tête : je parle en arabe à mes enfants. Yanis ((her child)) m’a demandé, ça veut dire quoi [laughs]? Alors, j’ai dit s’il me demande comme ça, c’est qu’il y a un problème. Tu vois ? Alors, j’ai dit ça veut dire ça, mais j’ai dit il faut petit à petit, il faut quand même je te parle en arabe comme ça tu apprends. »*

*I think they have to speak Arabic fluently. It is better for them... Sometimes, I tell myself, I will speak Arabic to my children. Yanis ((her child)) asked me, what does that mean [then laughs]? So if he asked me in this matter, it means there is a problem. You see? So, I told it means this/that, but I said it is necessary little by little, it is necessary at least that I speak to you in Arabic so that you will learn. (Appendix D.5, My Translation, p.76)*

The same sentiment is shared by one of the parents when discussing the reason of language loss in her family.

*Parent 9: My mom was born as an Italian citizen and naturalised French.*

*Interviewer: Did she ever speak to you in Italian?*

*Parent 9: **Never because when my grandma’s family moved to France, they wanted to be integrated so no more Italian at home.** At that time, the mentality was that. My mom still speaks Italian though because she was old enough to remember that. (Appendix E.5, p; 113)*

This excerpt highlights the fact that for this family, integration into the French society means total abandonment of everything that is Italian. It is the grandmother’s belief that one cannot be both and that remaining Italian is incompatible with becoming French. This kind of thinking was the prevailing mentality at that time. However, by saying “at that time,” we can infer that this parent acknowledges the change of opinion regarding identity and integration.

#### 8.3.4 Language is a means towards achieving future goals.

The instrumental aspect of language is evoked in the two excerpts below. As the following parents plan for the future of their family, which in both cases includes moving to an English-speaking country, they carefully consider their choice of an early childhood setting for their children. With English as one of the main languages of this crèche, they believe that they are already preparing their children’s easy transition from a French to an English-speaking society.

*“Because maybe in the future we might go to an English-speaking country, maybe we might immigrate so that has always been a project for me, on my side so that she is prepared in case...” (Appendix E.4, p.109)*

Parent 23, who is French and who works in an international pharmaceutical company could not be any clearer in expressing his future plan to work and migrate to an English-speaking country. This foreseen possibility of migrating is already coupled with a concrete and strategic action: enrolling his child to the bilingual English-French crèche. He understands the necessity of the role of language to facilitate a smooth transition for his daughter, thus from a French home environment to French-English in the crèche and possibly a dominant English-speaking milieu. It involves long-term preparation, planning and investment as parents. When a move involves children, there are a number of considerations because the stakes are higher. This parent clearly understands this and so his approach is early planning, which includes his child’s language competency in the target language.

Moreover, this clearly illustrates how language is regarded as an instrument that provides access to social mobility (Curdts-Christiansen, 2009). For this parent, English, which is an important language in this ECEC setting, serves as a bridge towards the life that he hopes for his family’s future. Parent 21 is also considering what is in store for them in the future when he and his wife were looking for a suitable day care centre. As a transnational family (Li Wei, 2012), this explains the choice of English.

*Parent 21: So, I’m English. My wife’s Finnish.*

*Interviewer: All right, and you’re here in France.*

*Parent 21: Yes, exactly. Now, we wanted him to go somewhere where **he could speak English, or at least some English.** So that was the motivation.*

*Interviewer: So you are leaving.*

*Parent 21: At some point, yeah! At some point, we will yes. We will leave, but when I don’t know... (Appendix E.3, p. 98)*

The response of this father needs to be understood from the perspective of their realities. First, it has to be clarified that he is originally from England, while his wife is from Finland. They moved to Strasbourg due to his wife’s job at the Council of Europe. For him, migrating to France drastically changed his life. He resigned from his job and since then has been working as a freelancer. However, since his wife’s work contract is temporary, both of them are aware that they will leave and move back to either Finland or England. Although he clarified that there is no specific date, but the certainty of going back to his or her country of

origin is apparent. Hence, putting his child in the bilingual setting that emphasises on English-use everyday is a way to assure him that his child will easily adjust to a new community, in which English is vital. What is further evoked in the extract is the important status of English in the age of globalisation. It is a resource or a linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) for moving around the planet. In this sense, English has easily poised itself an international elite's lingua franca (Graddol, 2000, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2011; G. Weber, 1997).

## 8.4 Summary

This section has shown the various beliefs and ideologies of parents regarding language, language acquisition and learning, language maintenance and transmission. In many instances, their beliefs are congruent to the choice of OPOL. However, it should be pointed out there are significant disproportionate claims of what they perceived language to be as opposed to the general accepted notions of the OPOL policy. The policy is identified to ascertain that the languages of the parents are maintained and transmitted to their offspring. However, English and French are not the languages of families in all cases. It should be highlighted that the linguistic reality of the crèche is more complex and complicated. In the case of the Greek parent who would like to pass on her "heritage language" to her child, the crèche does not provide support for this language, whereas English, her husband's language, has the possibility to be maintained. The OPOL policy does not address the aspect of linguistic diversity in this ECEC setting. The policy for sustaining other languages other than English and French is not formulated.

What the discourses point out is the fact that the language ideologies that are present in the formal educational settings have permeated the ECEC structures as well. Even if in reality, the early crèche structures are different from schools, the discourses of policy makers in both settings are the same. In other words, ideologies of language are all pervasive. OPOL as a language policy is posed as the best strategy because it has been used for decades. It is highly popular that it seems as though no other alternative exists. Educators and parents know of no other as an efficient bilingual policy. It provides a simplified framework to ascertain children's exposure to the two languages. However, when involving the management of multiple languages where the scenario is more complicated, OPOL fails to manage multilingualism.

Many of the multilingual parents think that this setting provides an effective compromise towards language transmission and language maintenance of one or two of their multiple languages. For some of the professionals, it is an opportunity to be in close contact with the other language. However, it has to be clarified that at the very core of OPOL is the child. It is

anchored on parents' desire for their children's language development in English and French. However because of the complexity of the linguistic situation of the crèche composed of multilingual parents and professionals, this section shows that the chosen one person, one language policy that restricts itself to the two languages does not fully meet the linguistic goals of parents who aim to transmit their other languages to their children.

# Chapter 9 Practiced Language Policies

## 9.1 Introduction

In the previous sections, I focused my analysis on the selected crèche documents and interviews conducted with people I considered to be language policy agents. Chapter 7 presented the 'declared language policy' by examining the interview transcripts of the association president (Appendix C.1, C.2, C.3) and the crèche documents (under the heading Appendix H). I discussed how the crèche founder who is also the associate president conceptualised the one person, one language (OPOL) policy to highlight the bilingual nature of this early childcare setting. This section also looked into the reasons behind the decision to focus on English and French and to adopt OPOL.

Meanwhile, Chapter 8 examined the 'perceived language policy' of professionals and parents. It analysed the language beliefs and ideologies behind the language policy choice. This chapter had two parts: the first part considered the linguistic factors, that is to say the language ideologies and language acquisition beliefs; while the second part dealt with the non-linguistic ideologies of language, which included the social and cultural beliefs related to languages.

For this chapter, I provide a third-level of analysis focusing on the actual language practices of agents, principally the professionals of this crèche. I am interested to see how the professionals operate in their assigned languages taking into account the assigned languages of their fellow professionals and the language competency in English and French of the children and parents, who are both exempted from the OPOL policy. Furthermore, I hope that by closely studying these practices, I bring to light the 'practiced language policies' of this crèche, which may or may not be consistent with the declared and perceived language policies.

Since what people believe, say or do may or may not be congruent (Curdts-Christiansen, 2016), it is essential to consider practices to understand the dynamics of a particular policy. Spolsky (2004; 2007, 2008) posits that it is only through studying its implementation that a given language policy can be fully understood. He considers practice as a very important component as language policy only comes to life in practice. In the same vein, Menken and Garcia (2010) argue that the execution of a policy in reality entails acts of policymaking. In

this bilingual crèche, as professionals make sense and enact the prescribed language policy, they do so based on their background knowledge, experiences and their beliefs. These consequently result in differences in language policy interpretation and diversity in the actual language practices (Palviainen & Boyd, 2013). Through this complex process of language policy negotiation, professionals become actual policymakers themselves. While initially positioned to execute the previously conceptualised language policy (Shohamy, 2006), they necessarily need to adapt, redefine and create new policies as they work together, as they deal with children and as they resolve challenges and face realities that go beyond language concerns. Similar to teachers, professionals in this ECEC setting as implementers of the declared language policy have the ability to either allow or curtail policies and their enforcement (N. H. Hornberger, 2006; Menken & Garcia, 2010).

For this section, I discuss the data from field notes, research diary, audio-recordings of activities and photos. However, a large amount of data is based on the field notes using the personalised observation scheduled (discussed in Chapter 6) and research diary. These data are read and reviewed many times and are used as references to identify key extracts from audio-recordings for more in-depth analysis.

Using all these tools, this section presents an examination of the actual language practices primarily of the professionals and other agents of the crèche: the parents and the children. This chapter is outlined under five main headings: language practice according to particular moments at the crèche, language practice and its relation to physical space, language practice in diverse social contexts and the chapter's summary. The decision to use the aforementioned categories, i.e. time, space, context and people to describe how language is practiced within this early childhood setting springs from the desire to present a complete yet multi-faceted and extensive perspectives into the complexity of the language policy in question.

For purpose of clarity, it is imperative to recall the linguistic repertoires of the professionals and their assigned languages, which according to the declared language policy are the languages they need to maintain within the premises of the crèche regardless of the language of their interlocutors.

Table 7 Professionals' Linguistic Repertoire versus Assigned Languages

<b>Codes of the Professionals</b>	<b>Declared Linguistic Repertoires</b>	<b>Assigned Languages</b>
1	French, English (B1-B2 level)	<b>French</b>
2	Polish, French, English	<b>French</b>
3	English, French	<b>English</b>
4	English, French	<b>English</b>
5	French, Arabic, English (A2 level)	<b>French</b>
6	English, French	<b>English</b>
7	French, Arabic	<b>French</b>
8	English, French	<b>English</b>

## 9.2 Language Practices According to Particular Moments at the Crèche

I start my analysis with the language practice of agents principally the professionals according to the main activities chronologically scheduled throughout the day. The table below gives a glimpse as to how a typical day in the crèche is organised. During the integration period of children in the crèche, which is known as “adaptation” in French, professionals inform parents of this schedule. They encourage the latter to arrive and to collect their children according to the designated timetables.

Table 8 Typical Day at the Crèche

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:45-9:15	Arrival / Free Play
9:15-9:30	Circle Time (singing)
9:45-10:00	Snack Time
10:00-11:30	Montessori Activities/Painting/Outside Activities/Free Play
11:30-12:30	Lunch Time
13:00-15:00	Siesta for the young ones/Activity Time for the older ones
15:00-16:00	Snack Time
16:00-18:00	Departure/Free Play/Guided Activities

This daily program of activities serves as a framework as to how the day unfolds as the activities are planned based on this schedule. Children’s basic needs and educational activities take primordial considerations in the crèche’s program and structure. Since the description of activities is general, it provides professionals necessary flexibility to adapt to specific activities according to children’s age, interests, their moods and physical state on a given day. Thus, it is fairly common to hear staff members discuss specific agenda and children’s activities for the day over snacks as shown in Section 9.2.5.

Moreover, a typical day in the crèche is marked with routines and rituals, which ensure easy integration of the children into the life of this collective setting. Once they know when and how things unfold, participation is easier. They can anticipate the activities and be active participants in the process. For the professionals, routines and rituals serve as guide to more specific activities. This section focuses on the language practices of agents, principally the professionals, who are expected to maintain their assigned languages as they work together, as they care and provide educational activities to children and as they work with parents who have diverse linguistic repertoires and language competencies during the major activities at the day care.

### 9.2.1 General Observation

In general, the professionals maintain their language assignments when collectively addressing the children during circle time and over snacks. An English-assigned carer talks to children in English, regardless of the dominant languages of the children. The same thing happens with the French-assigned professionals. However, with the bilingual/multilingual professionals, there are unguarded moments when they revert to their usual language practice of translanguaging, which is a clear deviation from the prescribed one person, one



language policy for professionals. These are the incidents we describe and analyse in the succeeding subsections.

### 9.2.2 English and French: Is it heard throughout the day?

Under the section “declared language policy,” it is clearly stated that the decision to employ OPOL is to ensure that children are exposed to the two official languages **at all times**. To have at least one English and one French professional around the children during the main activities of the day is the ideal scenario. Here are the exact words of the association president,

*“Throughout the main parts of the day, the activity, the snacks, the lunches, the story time, there’s always an English speaker and a French speaker.” (Appendix C.1, p. 13)*

This statement serves as guiding principle in managing the two languages in the crèche. In fact, on several instances when an assigned professional is absent or on-leave, a substitute replaces her and carries-on the same language function. While effort is made to ascertain the presence of English and French professionals, in practice, it is not feasible to have both languages at the same time and place at all times. Acknowledging this reality, the association president further said that,

*“There are a few moments, the first half day in the morning or the last half in the evening that there is not French or English. It could also be that there’s only English...” (Appendix C.1, p.13)*

The quote above is an admission of how languages are handled in the daily operation of the crèche. Having English and French in the crèche at all times and in all spaces within the ECEC setting is the ideal scenario that they strive to achieve, but it is not always viable because of various reasons. First, during the first few months of its operation, there was only one full-time English professional. While waiting for the coming of the part-time carer, the association president imposed upon herself the responsibility of being the second English speaker. However, as she served as the setting’s cook as well, it was not possible for her to be with the children at all times. Second, the professionals function according to a pre-determined duty schedule, which they prepare in consultation with each other. Work shifts are organised systematically to ensure shared responsibility, more specifically the task of opening and closing the crèche, and not necessarily on language assignments. Third, considering the challenge of a small space, the professionals put children into small groups and assign activities in several designated spaces within the crèche. During these activities,

it is typical to have one professional with them, who facilitates the activity. In reality, professionals cannot always function in pairs. In this case, the children, who are with one professional during that time, are hearing either English or French. Fourth, as decisions are made spontaneously and quickly, this guideline of having an English and a French professional at all times is to a certain degree disregarded. For instance, two English-speakers decide to go out with children for a walk and only French speakers are left in the crèche, a scenario described in Section 9.2.6.

To provide a concrete example, on Thursday mornings until 11 AM, there are only French-assigned professionals manning the crèche. The extract below illustrates this.

*“All conversations are in French this morning. Then, the association president clarified that on Thursday early mornings; there are only French speakers. The English speakers arrive at 11 AM” (Field Notes, 10 October 2013).*

The answer to the question raised in this section is that English and French are not heard or present in the crèche throughout the day as initially conceptualised. Whilst concrete efforts and a clear language policy are in place, problems in logistics and manpower are to some degree, sources of challenges.

### 9.2.3 Language Use During Children’s Arrival in the Morning

What happens when parents who are exempted from the language policy interact with professionals who are mandated to use their assigned languages? More specifically, what happens when French-assigned professionals discuss with English-speaking parents, who are still developing in the French language? These are the scenarios tackled in the following subsections. How do I analyse and interpret their reactions?

#### 9.2.3.1 French-assigned Professional and English-speaking Parents

As children with their parents arrive in the crèche, professionals greet them. This moment of separation is rather crucial for the child and the parent. Parents transmit important information to the carers regarding the child’s physical and emotional state. Sometimes, parents mention more specific and practical requests regarding children’s food intake, clothing, naptime, etc. The discussions are very diverse because they are very specific to the needs of each child. Thus, the role of language is very critical to ascertain that right information is conveyed to the professionals who will oversee each child’s well-being.

In this crèche, the majority of the parents have English and French in their linguistic repertoire. This is very practical for the professionals because they are able to maintain their language assignments. In general, parents adjust their language according to the assigned language of the professional who is welcoming his or her children. However, over the course of the research, two families joined the crèche. Initially, they did not have French in their linguistic repertoire. The first family (Parents 13 and 14), moved to Strasbourg due to their mission with the Euro corps. They have one child, who started in the crèche sometime in October. The second family (Parents 29 and 30) joined the crèche in May, towards the end of the school year. Both parents are scientists. They migrated to Strasbourg because of work. They have two children who both attend the crèche. For these two families, the promotion of English in this setting is an important factor for their choice of a childcare centre considering their lack of French competence.

The two extracts below show instances when Professional 2, who is assigned to speak French, tap on her English resource to communicate with English-speaking mothers who are new in the crèche and do not speak French.

Extract 1:

*“Professional 2 switched to English to accommodate K’s mother. She asked, “Is everything fine?” (Field Note, 17 October 2013)*

In this extract, Professional 2, who is a French-assigned professional, realises the necessity to modify her language use knowing the language repertoire of this mother. As the case on Thursday mornings, the English-assigned professionals have not yet arrived so Professional 2 chooses to speak to K’s mother in English, not her assigned language, to gather information. The question, “Is everything fine?” seeks to understand K’s physical and emotional states on this particular day. This question is very important. The professional needs to get all the essential information to make sure that she is able to respond to the child’s needs as care is being transferred from the mother to her. Thus, the professional needs to depart from her assigned language in order to fulfil the aim of communicating efficiently with the parent in question.

Additionally, the question serves to comfort the mother. She is assured that her child is going to be looked after and that the professional is going to ensure his safety and welfare in the setting. Thus, by speaking in the mother’s language, she creates an atmosphere of trust and chooses to establish a relationship with the parent rather than insisting on maintaining the use of her assigned language. It has to be clarified that within the framework of the declared language policy, OPOL should be used with children, not necessarily with parents. However,

since the conversation is within the premises of the crèche, where children can overhear the exchanges of parents and professionals, the need to maintain the assigned language was expected.

In the extract that follows, the same professional has to modify her language use with another parent.

Extract 2:

*“Notable was the conversation that transpired between Professional 2 with J and F’s ((initials of the two siblings in the crèche)) mother. From what I overheard, it seems to me that the **mother only speaks English and so Professional 2 had to adjust to be able to be understood.** They were primarily talking about F.” (Research Diary, May 9, 2014)*

It has to be clarified that the mother (Parent 29) and her children are newcomers in the crèche. They recently moved to Strasbourg and are adjusting to everything in France including lifestyle, culture and language. They do not speak French. In fact, German and English are their home languages. The whole family is in the process of adjusting to their new life in a new country, which means that in addition to language, they are dealing with many changes and sorting out practical concerns. Unlike the other children in the crèche who have already adapted to life in this collective setting, J and F started attending in May, which is towards the end of the school year. They needed to adjust to new routines, procedures, environment and adults. Cognisant of the concerns that this family is going through, the professional suspends her language role to adapt to the communicative needs of the mother. She knows that it does not make sense to speak to her in French, as she will not be understood. A rigid adherence to the crèche’s language policy would defeat the purpose of establishing good communication with parents as in the example above and could even have an effect on the well-being of the child.

Moreover, the mother needs clarification concerning the procedures in the crèche and to be assured that her children will easily adapt to the new setting. In this extract, the topic of discussion revolves around the care of F, who is the youngest child. To make sure that her needs are met in the crèche, the mother provides the professional all the necessary information to understand the child better. As far as the language repertoire of the mother is concerned, this can only be done in English, the language that is shared in common by the professional and the parent. In other words, each interlocutor has her own plurilingual repertoire within which they find a common language, which is English.

### 9.2.3.2 A Multilingual Parent's Language Practice

What follows below is an example of how Parent 1 who is on-duty<sup>25</sup> welcomes and ushers parents, children and visitors to the crèche.

*“It was a male parent who opened the door after I rang the bell. Initially, **he greeted me in French, but after perhaps hearing my accent, he switched to English.** Then, another male parent arrived, and there was a short exchange of updates between them in English. Two female parents arrived with their children. From the hallway where I was putting away my things, I could hear **a mix of English and French conversations.**” (Field Notes, September 30, 2013)*

There are two important points in this extract from my field notes. First, parents, in the same way as the professionals, welcome children and other parents. Whoever is on-duty takes the initiative to help in opening the door and ushering parents, children and sometimes visitors into the crèche. This is a special feature of this parental crèche. Parents take active part in the different day-to-day operations. As the Associate President points out, “parents feel very comfortable here...and then everyone wants to bring a little bit of themselves to it...” (Appendix C.1, p.16). This means that they themselves feel certain kind of belonging and ownership. As a parental crèche, they are not merely customers or clients who are being served, but they are decision-makers and implementers at the same time.

Secondly, “bringing a little bit of themselves” also signifies that parents come with their language and culture. The one person, one language policy does not concern them, thus they speak to their children, as they normally do. There are no language assignments. The bilingual parent's language use is fluid, as illustrated in the field note on September 30, 2013, freely accommodating the language used by their interlocutors. In fact, translanguaging is a common practice by bilingual and multilingual parents in this crèche who thus function in a bilingual mode (Grosjean, 2001). It is a practice children hear and witness in this crèche all the time on the part of their parents, whereas they witness the professionals functioning in a monolingual mode for the greater part of the day. The disparity between the two modes, monolingual and bilingual questions the language experiences of the children and how they understand the policy in place.

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<sup>25</sup> As previously clarified, as a parental crèche

## 9.2.4 Language Use During Circle Time

Circle time is the first structured activity of the day where children, professionals and parents who are present gather to sing and talk about different topics that might be interesting to the children, especially the older children. One of the important characteristics of this activity is that children's participation is solicited. During this time, children are usually asked to suggest a song to sing as a group. This is commonly directed to children, who are able to talk, ask questions and share about their activities or experiences over the weekends or holidays. These interactions transpire in between songs that are either English or French. In each session, there is a good balance of songs in the two languages (ex. Research Diary, 16 January 2014). In general, professionals who are assigned to English lead the English songs, while the professionals assigned to French lead the French songs. This activity usually runs between 20 to 30 minutes.

### 9.2.4.1 Singing and Language Use

Singing during circle time is an integral activity in the crèche. It is an essential part of the daily routine. Professionals and children gather in a circle alternately singing songs and talking about some news and updates. Parents are likewise encouraged to take part, especially those who have a few minutes to spare in the morning. A parent who is scheduled to serve in the crèche on that time and day usually participates in this activity.

In general, professionals choose and lead songs based on their language assignments, but all professionals sing with the children irrespective of the language if they are familiar with the song. Thus, it can be observed that professionals are more flexible in their implementation of OPOL when singing. Furthermore, children's contributions are solicited. Usually, the facilitating professional asks the children, especially the older children who are already communicative and eager to participate, to suggest their favourite songs. In general, English-assigned professionals lead the English songs, while the French assigned-professionals lead the French songs.

The following examples are instances where professionals are observed singing songs in the language other than the one assigned to them.

*“French speaker was singing an English song.” (Field Notes, 27 October 2013)*

*Professional 3 (English-assigned professional) sang along in French. (Audio-recording, 15 October 2013)*

Singing during circle time is marked with flexibility. Regardless of the assigned language, professionals, if they know the lyrics of the song, freely sing along in English or French. Thus singing that lends itself to bilingual mode becomes more prominent.

#### 9.2.4.2 Ensuring the Singing of Songs in the Two Languages

True to their commitment to ensure children's exposure to English and French, professionals make sure that there is place for both languages even in the choice of songs. The following examples from research notes show how this is done.

Example 1:

*“During the Hello Time, she (Professional 3) and Professional 4 led a couple of English songs. She may have noticed that they were already singing 2-3 songs and so she asked if they could sing a French song. She said something like, **should we sing a French song now? It was a cue for Professional 1 to lead a French song.**” (Research Diary, 10 March 2014)*

The professionals practice self-monitoring and discipline their language use and the language use of their colleagues. Evident in this extract from research notes is the awareness of the dominance of English with the choice of three English songs in a row. To balance this, Professional 3 overtly calls out the need to sing some French songs. This serves as a hint to the French-assigned professional to initiate and lead the singing of songs in the other target language.

If in the first example, the language that needs reinforcement is French, the examples that follow show how they manage when English needs to be supported and represented.

Example 2:

***To balance the absence of an English speaker during Circle Time, the Association President led some songs in English.** (Audio-recording, 7 November 2013)*

As earlier explained, during the first year of this centre's operation, to ensure the normal functioning of the crèche, the Association President took on multiple roles. Serving as English speaker is one of the many tasks she assumed. Example 2 clearly shows how she fills in and leads the songs in English when none of the English-assigned professionals is present. Again, this shows the awareness on her part of the need for an equal input in

English and French for a bilingual educational structure to ensure the development of bilingualism by the children.

The next example demonstrates how in another instance, the researcher and a parent pitch in to ascertain the singing of songs in English.

Example 3:

*“During the ‘Hello Time,’ Professional 2 and Professional 5 were present. V.K., an American mother was there. Professional 3 said we have to wait for the association president to help us sing songs in English. When it was apparent that she couldn’t, we started. **I led three songs in English + V.K. one song.**” (Research Diary, 13 February 2014)*

Professional 3, who is facilitating the activity, expresses the need to wait for the association president, whose role is quasi-professional, before starting the first activity of the day. This shows the professional’s desire to maintain the usual routine. The presence of the association president means that both languages in the crèche are properly represented. However, because the latter has to deal with other concerns, professional 3 proceeds with the day’s routine. Professional 2 and Professional 5 led the singing of the French songs.

What also needs to be pointed out is the fact that V.K. as an English speaker can easily take the role of the association president. However, as parent, although she is encouraged to participate in the life of the crèche, there is no obligation or expectation for her neither to lead nor to take part in the main activities. Furthermore, this extract shows that the absence of one of the professionals who is expected to lead the English songs prompted the other adults in the group to take charge of input in English. Finally, the mother and the researcher lead some songs.

What follows is an example of how an English-assigned professional handles the situation where no French-speaker is present during the singing of songs. This scenario is rather rare, but it happens when other professionals need to take care of children’s individual needs.

Example 4:

*Professional 4, who is the facilitator of the day, **initiated the singing of several French songs.** She started by saying, **this time we will sing something in French.** She led “bateau sur l’eau” and two other songs. (Audio-recording, 25 May 2014)*



As already previously emphasised, Professional 4 is bilingual in English and French. Her ease in the two languages is in full display on this particular occasion. As the facilitator for this day, she taps on her linguistic repertoire to continue to provide exposure to children to both languages. She is acting as a bilingual model for the children. She is functioning in bilingual mode (Grosjean, 2001, 2008, 2010) rather than the ascribed monolingual mode of the OPOL policy.

Another important point that has to be mentioned from this extract is that the children are told in which language they do the activity. In this case, Professional 4, who is assigned to English, clearly mentions that she is about to lead a song in French. This means that to some degree, she would like the children to explicitly know the difference between the two languages, to distinguish English from French and vice versa, in other words to keep the two languages separate.

#### 9.2.4.3 Singing: A Multilingual Activity

As mentioned in other sections, the first few months of operation was marked by stringent adherence to the ascribed language policy. However, in the singing of songs, as shown in the previous section, professionals are open, unrestricted in their language use. Professionals lead songs in their assigned language and also sing songs in the other language. This is evident even during the early stages of the project and even more towards the end of the school year. It is common to hear an English-assigned professional leading and singing songs in French and a French-assigned professional doing the same in English. Furthermore, professionals use singing as an opportunity to introduce children to other languages that are present in the crèche. Singing is then used as an avenue towards language awareness (Hélot, Frijns, Gorp, & Sierens, 2018).

*“During the singing, as I had already observed a lot of times before, Professional 4 and Professional 1 although with assigned languages would sing both English and French songs. **Professional 1 also introduced a song and sang it in three languages.** I remember that **she also called out Professional 2 to sing the Polish version.** As they constantly do, they asked the older children to suggest songs to sing with the other children.” (Research Diary, 6 June 2014)*

This research diary entry shows examples of how the professionals introduce languages other than French and English to the children. First, Professional 1 leads a song in different languages. Mouthing words to the same tune to some extent is argued to provide children an understanding that a single idea can be expressed through varied languages. Second,

calling out Professional 2 to introduce a Polish version of the song is an acknowledgment of yet another linguistic resource. Until this moment, Professional 2's first language has not been highlighted in any of the activities. As this practice is observed towards the end of the year, a month before the summer vacation, one can say that it took a while for the professionals to be comfortable to introduce other languages.

To "open to languages" (Appendix C.3, p.43), as mentioned by the association president, is introduced more easily through the singing of songs. In fact, part of the educational program of the crèche was the development of a multilingual songbook. Parents are encouraged to contribute songs in the book and introduce these to the children. They expanded this project with the inclusion of the songs from the professionals' repertoire. The above-cited journal entry shows that Professional 2 is solicited to sing a Polish song. Towards the end of the school year, more and more impromptu instances are observed where parents and professionals lead songs in other languages, including songs from their respective countries of origin or foreign songs they know.

#### 9.2.4.4 Language Practice of a Bilingual Professional as an English-assigned Speaker

The scenario below is taken from a transcribed audio recording, dated October 7, 2013, which is reinforced by an elaborate description on my research notes. It takes place during circle time. Two English-speaking professionals, one French-speaking professional and seven children are present. This session starts with the professionals and children singing the "Hello Song" and followed by several other songs in English and French. Between songs, Professional 3 facilitates the discussion about the weather and the children's weekend activities in English. However, when the exchange described below occurs, the French-assigned professional steps outside the room to welcome a child and her parent who arrive late.

*Professional 3: Hello everybody!*

*Professional 4: Hello!*

*Professional 3: Did you have a nice weekend?*

*Child: **Mon doudou...***

*Professional 3: Hello **doudou!** Did [pause] did you go apple picking? Who went apple picking?*

*Child: **Moi avec ma maman***

*Professional 3: (calls the child by her name)*

*Child: **Avec mon papa et ma soeur!***

*Professional 3: You went to (name of another child in the crèche) farm  
to pick apples and you made some juice for us, did you?  
(Circle Time dated October 7, 2013)*

Professional 3, who is responsible for this day's circle time, is bilingual in English and French. Although born in England, she and her English parents migrated to France when she was four years old. As she was educated and raised in France, her working language in her prior employments was in French. In this crèche, however, she is assigned to speak English. Meanwhile, the child who actively interacted with her in this short excerpt, which is shown above, is a three-year-old English and French bilingual child. Her mother is French. She works as a university lecturer in the English Department. Her father is originally from New Zealand, who works outside France. This young child understands and speaks both languages. With her mother, French is the language of communication. While with her father, it is English. However, because of her father's work related travels abroad, she has limited interaction with him. Although this is the case, the child understands and speaks French and English. But it has to be clarified that French is her stronger language. This is noticeable during the first few months at the crèche, and as depicted in this excerpt.

As shown above, Professional 3 addresses the children in English. Professional 4 reinforces this greeting in the same language. Then, the first professional, who serves as the facilitator of this activity, asks the children how their weekend went. Instead of giving a direct answer to the question, the child answered "mon doudou". Acknowledging the child's contribution, she also greets "doudou." Noticeably, instead of using an English alternate such as teddy or doll, she accepts the French term that the child used. Two possible reasons can explain this reaction. First the term, "doudou" has an affective connotation. As Professional 3 has lived in France for the most of her childhood and adult life, she understands the importance of this object to a child. A "doudou" serves as a comfort toy or object from home which frequently accompanies the child. To a limited extent, it serves as a mother's substitute. In a collective setting as this crèche, it helps to comfort a child. Being a familiar object from home, its purpose is to bridge the gap from home to crèche. "Mon doudou" is a very emotionally charged word, personal to the child that perhaps an English equivalent does not do justice to how precious it is to this child.

Second, repeating the same expression shows that she recognises the child's contribution to the on-going discussion. It is a strategy to maintain interaction. It is a way to get into the world of the child and to help her transition to the main subject of discussion. "Did you go apple picking?" can be seen as a question addressed to the doll and then to the rest of the children. The act of looking at the doll and at the children is a way to expand the scope of the

question. Moreover, it is a way to be able to stick to the policy of using English and to continue her activity in English. The response from the child shows that she understands English, but the child answers in French again. The child continues the interaction but uses French. This shows that children also act as agents of language policy (Bollig & Kelle, 2016).

This scene provides us with a glimpse into how this bilingual professional negotiates her role as an English speaker. An effort to maintain the use of the assigned language is evident. During circle time, she draws the attention of children by citing familiar things and experiences using the target language, which is English. Questions are simple and direct. However, she negotiates the imposed English-only policy to accommodate children's responses in French by employing the same term suggested by the child. This act of yielding to the child's language choice can be seen as a sign of respect and an act of valuing her contribution. Interaction or communication with the child comes first before policy. This strategy shows how she takes on her role as an English speaker but also considers children's psychological well-being even if it means deviating from the declared language policy. This is a clear example of how a policy can be negotiated at the level of language practice because the aim is first and foremost to keep communicating with children and to encourage and support them in their language development.

### 9.2.5 Snacks and Meals

Snacks and meals are considered the main activities of the day. It is when children and professionals gather to share and enjoy food. It is an occasion when very young children discover new tastes.

This section highlights three important points. First, it emphasises the fact that in general, the two languages are represented and heard. The one person, one language policy is usually maintained. Although this is the case, this does not prevent bilingual professionals from switching to bilingual mode, once in awhile. This brings us to the second point: the bilingual practices of professionals. Finally, mealtime is considered a teaching moment.

#### 9.2.5.1 English and French

Two songs usher this important moment, a song in English and a song in French. It has to be emphasised that there is a balance of conversations in the two languages as initiated by the professionals based on their assigned languages and parents who are on-duty. In general, when the professionals talk to the children, they do not translate. When they do, it is not done intentionally as shown on the section entitled "Teaching Moments".

The extract below reflects the general language practice during this time of the day.

*“During Circle Time, the songs and conversations were both in English and French. There were seven children with **two English-assigned professionals, a bilingual father and a French-assigned professional**. The same thing happened during snack time with English and French songs to mark the transition to this main activity in the morning.”*  
*(Field Notes, 30 September 2013)*

In this scenario, clearly, the English professionals outnumber the French-assigned professional. To support the French professional, the bilingual father uses his linguistic resource to reinforce the use of French. This shows the important role of parents in fulfilling the primary goal of putting children in an environment where both languages are heard and used consistently. This illustrates that parents are also very sensitive to the need of equal input in both languages. It gives the impression that everyone is always watching his or her language practice and making choices to ensure input in both languages for the children. Furthermore, this reveals another advantage of not obliging parents to conform to the OPOL policy. By not assigning them to a given language, bilingual parents can adapt and adjust their language use to the language need of the crèche at a specific moment or situation.

#### 9.2.5.2 Bilingual Practices

One observable practice during snack time is how bilingual professionals, who are assigned to speak English-only slip into bilingual mode. While the declared language policy regulates their language use to English, this does not prevent them to revert to their usual way of speaking. The first two examples show the manner in which the key terms in French are incorporated in an English utterance. Meanwhile, the last example presents how a professional operates in bilingual mode.

*“Children, let’s have our **gouter**.”* *(Research Diary, Focus on Professional 3, 18 March 2014)*

Professional 3 invites the children to sit around the tables for their morning snacks. Instead of the English alternative, she used the term “gouter”. The rest of the words are in English except for the single word. To determine whether she does it intentionally is not possible. Nonetheless, as a bilingual, translanguaging is a usual practice. In the moment of utterance, she draws from her linguistic repertoire the word “gouter”. In fact, in this case, it was very beneficial to call the attention of all the children. It serves to include not only the

English-speaking children but also the French. Moreover, while limited, to some extent it provides the English-speaking children the opportunity to hear the French term for snacks.

The next entry from the research journal highlights the use of a French term by an English-assigned professional.

*“I noticed that there were terms that are used automatically in the language without translation – I heard (omitted the name of the English-assigned professional) . . . use the term ‘poubelle.’ (Research Diary, Snack Time, March 20, 2014)*

In the above-mentioned example, the researcher hears an English-assigned professional use the term “poubelle” a couple of times instead of its English equivalent. In other words, the professionals are code switching. A strict OPOL policy does not prevent code switching. At one point, she calls on the attention of an older child to throw a piece of garbage. Instead of using trashcan, garbage can or waste bin, she uses the French term. I have observed this on many occasions regardless of whether the child she addresses is dominant in English and French. In other words, it is not intentionally done as a means to teach a term, but it is an expression of the full linguistic repertoire of the speaker. It should be emphasised that this happens in many instances. Terms in French are inserted in supposedly fully English sentences.

In the last example, Professional 4, who is also assigned as an English speaker, disregards the one person, one language policy and leads the French song, which is one of the songs that they sing before eating snacks.

*“During snack time, she (Professional 4) was the one who led the French song.”  
(Research Diary, 10 March 2014)*

This journal entry is consistent with the observations presented in the section that describes how singing is conducted during circle time. While there is rigidity in adhering to the identified language policy in other activities, such is not the case in singing. In this example, Professional 4 does not wait for a French-assigned staff member. She takes initiative and confidently leads a song that she knows very well. It cannot be emphasised enough that although, she is supposed to exclusively speak in English within the confines of this setting, she is bilingual in English and French. Her Canadian experience being schooled in a French-immersion school from Grade 1 actually means that she could have been chosen as a French-speaker as well. In other words she is an example of a bilingual professional being asked to function in a monolingual mode whereas she could be an example for the children

of what it means to be bilingual, and to develop a bilingual identity where one does not live all the time separating the two languages.

### 9.2.5.3 Teaching Moments

This section describes how mealtime is used as an opportunity to informally teach English vocabulary terms and manners. While clearly pointed out that the goal of this early childhood setting is to immerse the children in the languages of the crèche, the adults utilise opportune moments to accomplish the following: to introduce children to new experiences, to learn new words and to model proper demeanour.

Below is an example of how words in English are taught to children in a subtle way: by incorporating them in the routine of the crèche,

Example 1:

*English vocabulary terms were introduced. The English professionals named the following fruits: **grapes and prunes** and emphasised them in English.” (Field Notes, 14 October 2014)*

By emphasising and repeating the names of the fruits in English, the professionals are introducing vocabulary in context. Thus, paving the way for better memory retention. From this example we see as well that the English language holds a very important status in this crèche. Although it is not in competition with French, which is the majority language, it clearly has a special place in this setting. It is the use of English that differentiates it from other parental crèches in the city.

Meanwhile the next example shows another role that parents play in this crèche. Primarily, parents on-duty help in the normal operation of the crèche by performing practical tasks. They clean, cook, feed and help in caring for the children. Additionally, in the next example, Parent 21 serves as a language resource for Professional 2.

Example 2:

*During snack time, **Parent 21, who was on-duty, corrected Professional 2 to use the term grape instead of raisin.** (Field Notes, 15 October 2013)*

Parent 21, who is originally from England, corrects Professional 2 in her use of the term raisins when she means grapes. This indicates that parents also function to support the language component that is highly promoted in the crèche. The act of rectifying the staff

member's error demonstrates how he sees his role as an expert of the language. Another interesting angle that merits discussion is the professional's choice of word. While distributing the children's snacks, she mistakenly uses the French term rather than the English but with the English accent. This shows how Professional 2's language use is influenced by the contact of her two languages. Her first choice of using raisin to mean grape shows that she automatically taps on her French repertoire. Although raisin still means grape, to a monolingual English speaker such as this father, this is an error that needs to be corrected.

In the example that follows, professionals once more use this propitious time to introduce children to exotic fruits. They use concrete objects that are already within their reach and are right in front of children.

Example 3:

*Association president: **Today, we have some exotic fruits.***

*Professional 2: **Aujourd'hui, on va manger des fruits exotiques.***

*Association President: **pineapple, cranberry and goya beans with high vitamin C.***

*It can be noted that throughout snack time, the terms were mentioned repeatedly.*

*(Audio-recording, Snack Time, 7 November 2013)*

In this third example, the association president starts off by saying, "Today, we have some exotic fruits." To support this introduction, Professional 2 provides a direct translation, by saying, "Aujourd'hui, on va manger des fruits exotiques". Then, she continues to name the fruits one by one and shows what each fruit looks like. Then, the professionals distribute the fruits for the children. This is a teaching strategy that emphasises parallel monolingualism, with the rationale of developing balanced bilingualism in the children. For children whose primary language exposure in their homes is English, the translation serves to illustrate how the same statement in English is said in French and vice versa for children whose home language is French. However for bilingual children, as a teaching strategy, research has shown that bilinguals do not need to be taught the same thing, twice (J. Cummins, 2005).

Furthermore, snack time is also another opportunity that adults use to teach proper demeanour. Below is another instance where a professional a child to use a polite term when asking something.

Example 4:

*"During snack time, Professional 4 reminded H to use the term **"please."** (Field Notes, 14 October 2014)*



This incident is one of the many other instances where professionals, in either English or French, demand children to use terms that indicate respect and politeness. When H asks for more water, Professional 4 sees this as a teaching moment to remind the child to add the term “please,” which was done in one language only.

### 9.2.6 Structured Group Activities

The scenarios described in this section show how group organization, group activities and group dynamics affect the implementation of the one person, one language policy. In Example 1, professionals discuss in their respective assigned languages during snack time how the morning group activities are organised. Moreover, the decision has implications on the language use of participants and eventually the language the children are exposed to.

Example 1:

*“While children were eating, **professionals had the chance to talk about how they were going to organise the children’s activities.** They decided to split the group into two. Half of the children were going out for a walk with two professionals who were assigned to English and the parent on-duty. Meanwhile, the other half stayed in the crèche. By 10:40 AM, all conversations in the setting were in French with the two professionals who are assigned to French and a parent who also spoke in French.”*  
(Field Notes, 30 September 2013)

Because of the limited play area in the crèche, groups need to be organised. A group of children with adults usually go out, as children need to move freely and breathe fresh air. This explains as well why the groupings are essential to ascertain that all children have the possibility to go outside. Another important factor under consideration is the ratio of adults and children. In the excerpt, there are equal number of adults accompanying children to the park and the same number of adults who are staying with children in the crèche. However, one point that needs to be highlighted here is the fact that the language assignments do not play a role in the decision of how the groups are formed. Consequently, the conversations in the crèche by 10:40 AM are all in French, which is not consistent to what they had planned to do: a balance of English and French to be heard during the main activities of the day. This is an example of language policy being negotiated according to space, because there is a shortage of space, diverse answers are found to propose motivating activities to the children and the language policy is no longer the priority.

Unlike the previous example, the episode described below shows how OPOL is being strictly implemented. During the activity, Professional 4 serves as the English speaker, while Professional 7 speaks French. But, nonetheless, the language practice at one point of the English-assigned professional digresses the principles of the said language policy.

Example 2:

*“Professional 4 and Professional 7 are in Room 2 for the children’s activity. They are taking four children at a time. After the children complete the task, they take the other ones who would like to do the activity as well. **I heard Professional 4 speak in French as she inquired who from among the children would like to do the activity.**” (Field Notes, 14 October 2013)*

During this artistic activity, Professional 4, who is assigned to English and Professional 7, who is assigned to French, are with four children in Room 3, of whom one is bilingual and the other French speaking. This room is a multi-purpose space that serves as Montessori Room and converts into an additional sleeping space in the afternoons. It has a door that can be closed when necessary. Since the activity requires the use of paint of different colours and water, the professionals decide to close the door to prevent little children from coming in. This requires professionals to open and close the door as they invite other children to do the activity after each batch. It is in this context that Professional 4 uses French instead of English. She asks the children to know who have not gone inside to do the activity. Again, this shows that French is part of her linguistic repertoire. Furthermore, using French instead of English in this context illustrates again how she needs to adapt her language to her interlocutors, the French-speaking children and a bilingual English-French child. With a question that requires an immediate answer, OPOL needs to be negotiated.

### 9.3 Language Practice and Physical Space

The goal of this section is twofold. First, I examine and present the manner in which professionals use their language assignments according to the different identified spaces in the crèche. This is following the explicit statement of the association president that the assigned languages are expected to be enforced in all spaces of the crèche however with the kitchen as an exception. Second, I provide an analysis of the linguistic landscape by focusing on the writings on the boards and various displays on the walls. I also include a short discussion of the books and materials used in the setting.

### 9.3.1 Language Use According to Space

The following extracts from my research journal show that the following professionals align themselves with the declared language policy of the crèche according to space. As already clarified the kitchen is considered a free space. In other words, it is in this space that the staff members have the freedom to use their full linguistic repertoire and do not have to control their languaging.

In the extract below, English-assigned Professional 4 who is bilingual in English and French is talking to French-assigned Professional 2, who is multilingual with English and Polish constituting her declared language repertoire.

*“Professional 4 switched to French-English-French when talking to Professional 2 while they were in the kitchen.” (Research Diary, 7 May 2014)*

Professional 4’s use of her two languages displays her linguistic repertoire. Unrestricted by the language policy at this space, she navigates through her languages as she talks to another professional whose capacity to understand is likewise unhindered. The term “free space” aptly describes how this space allows them “to be.” The language policy is suspended in this room. Hence, there is no judgement and no restraints. Bilingual professionals do not need to monitor their languaging.

The kitchen is a very strategic place for translanguaging. Firstly, this room is in general off-limits to children. This means that their goal that children only hear English and French with the appropriate individuals is not compromised. As food preparation takes place in this space, to avoid accidents, children are restricted to go inside except when deemed necessary by professionals. Secondly, its door that leads to the hallway is usually kept closed. In this way, there is clearly a separation between this space and the other rooms in the crèche, where children are given free access. In the excerpt above, Professional 4 reverts to her usual way of communicating as a bilingual.

In the next extract, the association president intentionally shifts from French to English on the basis of her location even if she is talking to a predominantly French-speaking interlocutor.

*“The association president spoke in French to the lady while they were in the kitchen. She shifted to English as they move into the hallway. The woman responded in English but reverted to French when it probably became a bit complicated for her to express everything in English.” (Research Diary, 2 June 2014)*

In this scenario, it is clearly the space that serves as framework to how the main speaker uses her languages. The first part of the encounter transpires in the kitchen where the one person, one language policy is suspended, and so she feels comfortable to speak in French. However, being fully aware of the language policy, as they move from the kitchen to the hallway, she shifts to English, which is her assigned language. She persists in the said language as they continue the conversation in the hallway. Initially, the visitor responds in English but due to limited language proficiency, she reverts to French. Although the association president is maybe aware of her interlocutor's dilemma, she carries on in English knowing that even if the visitor's speaking proficiency is limited, she understands it. This illustrates how she is always aware of her language practice but controls it at all times, which shows how the declared policy has a hold on her languaging and she sees it as central to all communication in the crèche.

#### 9.3.1.1 Linguistic Landscape

Johnstone (2010) stresses the weight that linguistic landscapes and their meanings have in a particular environment. In the same vein, Schwartz and Verschik (2013) posit that aside from a declared language policy, multilingual space (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005) aids in nurturing and developing multilingualism in children. In reality, there are places that either encourage or discourage multilingualism. A place in which multiple languages are visible encourage the acquisition and learning of the languages represented. It is therefore necessary to consider the use of the crèche's linguistic space in reference to its bilingual language policy.

In this crèche, two main places are designated for information and messages: a white board by the entrance door and another board hanging on the wall in the hallway, which are either directed to the parents or to the professionals. These spaces serve the following purposes: to inform parents of children's activities, to remind parents and professionals of up-coming events such as parent meetings or staff meetings, to introduce student-interns who are going to work with the children for a period of time, and to disseminate information about various topics related to children's care or health.

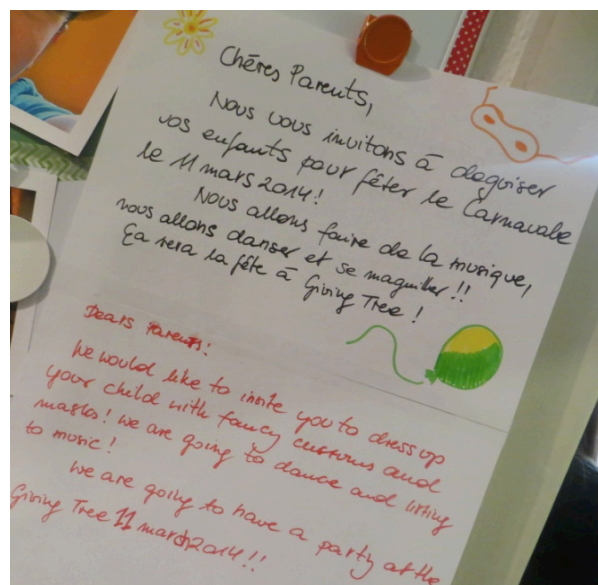
In general, the professionals and the association president write messages or hang posters on the walls. Written announcements usually correspond to the assigned language of the professionals. Bilingual professionals, however, write messages in both languages. This is the case for the association president, Professional 3 and Professional 4, who are assigned to speak English but are equally competent in French. In this way, the information is

available in both languages. On the other hand, French assigned professionals stick to their assigned language.

### 9.3.1.2 Poster

The message below is posted on the board by the hallway. It has a twofold function: to inform parents of the carnival theme party in the crèche and to invite parents to participate by dressing up their children in costumes and masks.

Figure 4 Invitation to Celebrate Carnival in the Crèche



As showed in the photo, this information is intended for the parents in the crèche. It is written in both French and English, which is in line with the bilingual policy of the crèche. The choice of French first indicates that many of the parents in the crèche understand the language. Additionally, the activity is inspired by the French carnival, an annual activity in March and widely celebrated in Strasbourg as well. Meanwhile writing the English version is in keeping with the goal of the bilingual crèche to promote the said language. It is likewise imperative because there are parents who have recently migrated to France and are in the process of learning French.

A close examination of the two versions demonstrates a difference in the structure. The first paragraph of the French text includes an invitation for parents to dress up their children for carnival on March 11, 2014. However, this information is not available in the first paragraph of the English message, which highlighted dancing and listening to music. Overall, the English version is not the direct translation of the first although all the necessary details of

the event are available in both versions. This further shows that in preparing the messages in the two languages, professionals are not rigid in form and structure. Emphasis is rather on the transmission of essential information.

### 9.3.1.3 Documents in the Crèche

All the documents regarding parent responsibilities when they will be on-duty, daily reminders for professionals and cleaning instructions are written in English and French. These are documents that are prepared in advance. A parent is tasked to translate important papers from French to English. These are distributed to parents to get them acquainted with the procedures in the crèche. Cleaning instructions and specific tasks for parents performing their responsibilities, known as permanence, are written in English and French. This is purposely done to ascertain that regardless of the linguistic repertoire of the parent on-duty, he or she will be able carry out his/her tasks without any difficulties.

Figure 5 Sample Task List

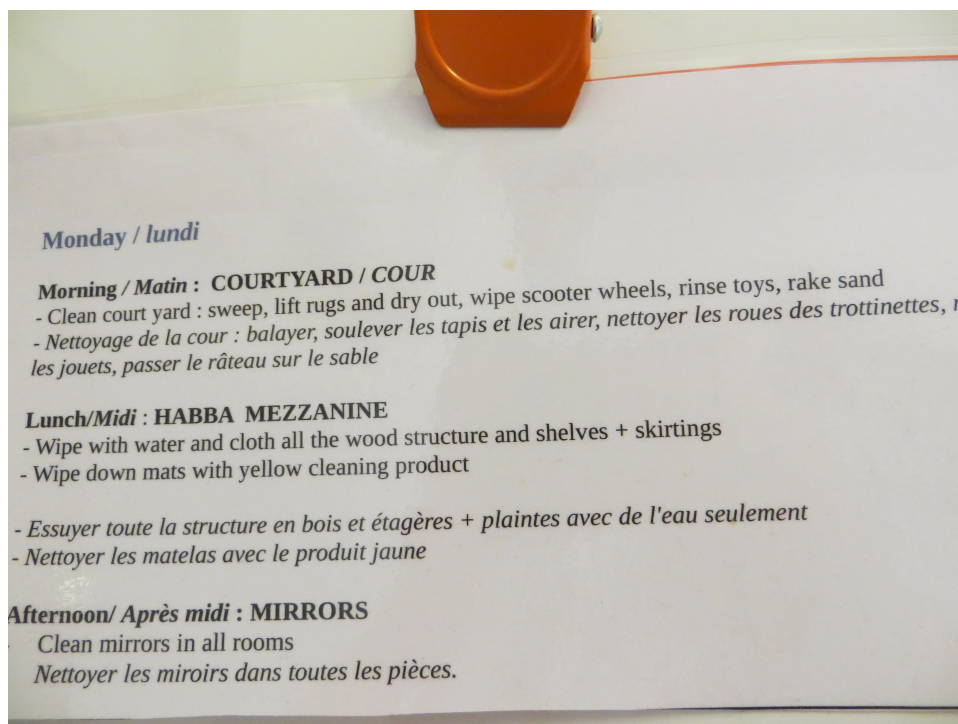


Figure 5 is one of the daily task lists for parents who are on-duty. Specific instructions are available for each day of the week. This facilitates the smooth flow of the day-to-day operation in the crèche. During their scheduled duty, parents go over this checklist to determine what needs to be accomplished. The fact that all instructions are in the two

languages prevents miscommunication. Thus parents whose dominant language is English but who are still developing their proficiency in French do not have any problems knowing what needs to be done. The same is true for French-speaking parents whose English proficiency is low.

#### 9.3.1.4 Available Books

This early childhood care and education (ECEC) setting understands the importance of printed words in preparing children for the development of early literacy skills. In one corner of Room 2, there is a reading area. It is a space accessible to all children. Most of the books are in boxes and are placed on the floor rendering it easy to carry the boxes from one room to another as professionals deem it necessary. This has been very useful in instances when professionals are in the hallway with the children. As part of the routine, some children go out for a walk with identified professionals and accompanying parent. During cold days, it takes some time to get everybody ready. Adults then resort to either giving older children some books to read while waiting or to reading to the children to ascertain continue to maintain order until each child is warmly dressed and ready to go.

#### 9.3.2 Combined Space for English and French

In congruence with the bilingual nature of this crèche, in general, the books are a combination of English and French with a few books in both languages. There is no definite order as to how the books are placed in the boxes or hanging shelves. All books are placed irrespective of language in the boxes. Below is a picture of the reading corner.

Figure 6 The Reading Corner



This reading corner is located in Room 2. English and French books are put together in the boxes without particular order or arrangement and therefore are not separated according to language. Aside from the boxes of books and low-hanging shelves, a mattress with a pillow and foldable little chairs making this area inviting for children. At times, a professional uses this space for one-on-one time with a child or for a small group of children. The child sometimes initiates the reading time as well, which usually takes place in the afternoon.

### 9.3.3 Multilingual Space

Languages other than English have a place in the setting. The multilingual and multicultural realities of the parents are properly recognised. In fact, a multilingual songbook is being developed on the first year of its operation that highlights song contributions in the different languages of parents. It is made of big sheets of cardboard paper, which have been hand stitched. Some of its pages have colourful drawings. Every now and then during the months following Christmas, professionals refer to this songbook for songs to sing with children. Aside from this, other books in other languages can be found in the crèche, sometimes mixed with the pile of English and French books. The book below is a sample of a book in a language other than the official languages of the crèche.

Figure 7 Nursery Rhymes from the Arab World

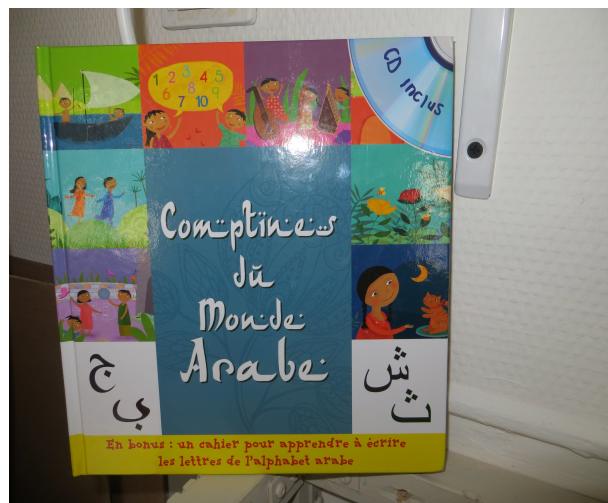


Figure 4 shows a book of nursery rhymes in Arabic. It also contains pages that provide samples of how to write letters in the language and a CD that professionals can play-along as they go through the book. With three French-assigned professionals who also speak Arabic, it was not difficult to find a space for this language in the crèche. Remarkably, even the English-assigned professionals initiate to play the CD and go over the book with some



children, showing that they are aware of the need to also familiarize the children with multilingualism.

## 9.4 Language Practice in Diverse Social Contexts

Social situations influence language use. It is interesting to see how professionals perform their language assignments while at the same time responding to arising contextual concerns. This section examines their language practice and analyses how these practices correspond to specific contexts. It comprises five subsections under the following headings: maintaining the assigned language, conducting a meeting, negotiating language policy, spontaneous translanguaging of professionals, and other factors that affect language practice.

### 9.4.1 Maintaining the Assigned Language

The following extracts from field notes illustrate the different circumstances in which the professionals deal with children whose dominant languages are not the languages assigned to them. In these instances, they choose to maintain their assigned languages, remaining steadfast in their commitment to uphold OPOL.

*“When dealing with L, Professional 4 maintained her assigned language. She asked L, ‘Where did your coat go?’ **She did not translate instead she used gestures to ascertain that L understood the question.** She showed her a coat to reinforce the use of the vocabulary.” (Field Notes, 19 February 2014)*

Professional 4 believes in the effectiveness of the one person, one policy having experienced language immersion in her home country, Canada. As discussed in Section 8.2.4.5, she strongly states “she speaks English no matter what.” However as shown in a number of instances (e.g. Sections 9.2.4.3, 9.2.5.2, 9.2.6), her language practices do not always coincide with the OPOL policy. In these instances, her language use is marked with translanguaging. Meanwhile, interesting in the extract above, she chooses to address a French-speaking child in English, her assigned language. A different angle of the professional is seen here. She decides not to negotiate the language policy. Instead of providing the French equivalent, she gestures, pointing to her coat in an effort to ascertain that the child understands. Her decision to stick to her assigned language is possibly motivated by her desire to teach vocabulary to this child. L, is one of the older children, who only comes on Wednesdays when there is no school. She attends a French nursery school during the other days of the week where she is introduced to some formal learning rules. Her

enrolment in this crèche makes the goal of her parents apparent, that is, early exposure to English. Knowing this, Professional 4 takes on a stricter stance in her language choice as she deals with her.

The incident that follows involves a French-assigned professional, an English-speaking child and me in Room 2. In the same manner as the previous professional, her language choice is influenced by a specific context.

*Professional 2 was attending to J who was crying. She tried to pacify him. The child could not be consoled. Since she needed to also take care of the other children, **she asked me to come and asked the boy what was wrong.** It was only then that I realised that **the boy only spoke English.** (Research Diary, 8 May 2014)*

It has to be clarified that the child involved in this episode was new in the crèche. The family joined this ECEC setting towards the end of the school year as both parents found new jobs in Strasbourg. When this incident transpired, the child was still in the process of integrating in the crèche. Understandably, everything was new for this child. The professionals, the children and the surroundings were unfamiliar and strange. Thus, it was not surprising that after his mother left J became emotional. Professional 2 attended to him in an effort to calm him down. She stayed with him for a while. The act of calling me to take over was due to three possible reasons. First, although she would have wanted to stay with the crying child, she was aware of her other responsibilities. She needed to oversee the welfare of the other children as well. Second, perhaps she thought that during this emotional time it was beneficial for the child to hear someone who spoke his language. Third, surrounded by other children in Room 2, she was fully conscious that she had to maintain her assigned language. Thus, space and context largely influenced her language choice. To resolve the problem, she sought my help, in my capacity as English speaker.

The third example is another scenario in which the professionals are able to maintain their language and get things done without having to be concerned of which language to use.

*“While French professionals were in Room 1, I **overheard them update each other of children’s individual needs and state.**” (Field Notes, 14 October 2013)*

Transmitting information about each child’s condition is crucial in an ECEC setting. A professional who welcomes the child in the morning gathers essential information regarding the child’s condition from the parent. This needs to be communicated to the rest of the staff members especially as they have work shifts. These details are usually written down on a

notebook. However, they are easier transmitted when discussed. As depicted in the excerpt above, a common language shared by interlocutors facilitates easier dissemination of these details. With language assignments, this simple task can become complicated considering the varying English language proficiencies of some professionals assigned to speak French.

## 9.4.2 Conducting a Meeting

It is interesting to see how meetings are conducted as professionals function within the framework of the one person, one language policy in a context where there is significant diversity in the linguistic repertoire among parents and professionals and where there are varying degrees of proficiency in the two main languages of the crèche. More specifically, this section presents the language choice of professionals during the Educational Team Meeting on January 10, 2014 but focuses primarily on Professional 3, an English-assigned staff member who is bilingual in English and French. To provide a more comprehensive context, a discussion of her discourse is provided as backdrop followed with a description of the meeting conducted on January 10, 2014, finally an analysis of her actual language practice.

### 9.4.2.1 Discourse on How to Handle Languages During the Meeting

What follows is a description of an informal discussion I had with Professional 3. It is based on the recording I made outside the vicinity of the crèche setting in an effort to recall and cover the main points of our exchange.

*In an informal conversation with Professional 3, I found out that the primary objective of the next meeting, which will transpire early next year, is to present the status of the educational project. As the educational director of the crèche, she is tasked to be facilitator of the meeting. Regarding language, she emphasised the necessity of using English, consistent to her work mandate. Then, I asked on how she intends to deal with parents who may have difficulty understanding due to limited English proficiency. She said that in this case, the concerned parents should ask for clarification. Her concern is mainly handling parents' questions and conversations in French. Whilst OPOL policy does not concern parents, professionals are still expected to continuously maintain the use of their assigned languages.*

*Meanwhile, having lived in France for most of her life and having worked professionally in the French environment, she worried that she would switch to French*

*automatically. According to her, what is of utmost importance is establishing the English identity of the crèche through the consistent language use among English-assigned professionals. (Audio-recording of personal impressions, November 12, 2013)*

This extract shows a conflict between her role as English speaker and her language practice. Fully aware of her job description, she asserts the need to maintain her language assignment, which is in line with the goal to secure the place of English in this ECEC setting. To do this, she has to consciously make an effort to watch her language use in this setting, a practice that is clearly different from her previous work experiences. This to her is an issue of concern, requiring self-monitoring of her language choice to avoid translanguaging. Moreover, she offers a solution in response to the hypothetical question of parents' possible comprehension difficulty: request for clarification. While the practical implication to this suggestion is not elaborated, it implies the intervention of the French-assigned staff members.

#### 9.4.2.2 Actual Practice During the Meeting

The following excerpts are taken from the audio recording of the Educational Team Meeting conducted on January 10, 2014, which was attended by the association president, the professionals and the parents. A baby's crying could also be heard in the background. The meeting started with the individual introductions of the professionals, consistent with their assigned language. Each presentation consisted of the following information: country of origin, educational background, employment background and role(s) in the crèche and some interesting anecdotes. One salient commonality in the presentations is the migration background of the staff members.

As the educational team leader, Professional 3 facilitated the meeting and was the first to share her background. Noticeably, she held papers, which contained notes. Below is an excerpt of her presentation.

*“I am delighted to be director of the ((name of the crèche)) **using English as my working language for the first time**, as I said...the principle of the crèche backed up my professional and personal thinking with its approach to multilingualism and bilingualism.” (Audio-recording, January 10, 2014)*

In her introduction, she made it known to everyone that being in the English-French bilingual crèche was her first time to use English in the workplace. Why is this information pertinent? Firstly, it is an essential detail that differentiates her function in this crèche from other ECEC

settings where she worked before. More importantly, she deemed it vital to inform the parents that she was still in the process of getting acclimatised to the prescribed language policy of the crèche. This detail also served as a form of justification so that parents would understand the reason behind her translanguaging practice.

After the presentation of professionals, Professional 3 talked about how the crèche's typical day is organised. This was followed by a presentation of the different groups per age and activities they conduct with each group. While she was explaining, Professional 2 added some details about the Montessori activities and explained what the children do during their time in the Montessori room. As a French-assigned professional, her explanation was in French. After this addendum, Professional 3 responded, "Oui, tout à fait," and continued her presentation in English. In another instance, she had this to say:

*"The Robins and the Owls have more organised activities in the morning and in the afternoon that are offered to them so I am thinking about creative activities. They are very much into the **jeux symbolique**."*

*The Association president made a quick correction and suggested the term, "imaginative play." (Audio-recording, Educational Team Meeting, 10 January 2014)*

In these two instances illustrated above, Professional 3 added expressions or terms in French. This was a language practice that she tried hard to suppress. In fact, she prepared her notes in advance, which she read and referred to throughout the meeting. However, the French expressions that characterised her language practice displayed her full linguistic repertoire. She separated the languages, but when she did not know an expression in English, she used French.

Another interesting point that needs to be emphasised in this extract is the response of the Association President, who corrected her and suggested another term, "imaginative play." This shows that monitoring occurs to ensure that the language policy is enforced. In this example, the language policing is done by the association president. As a crèche employee, it is imperative that Professional 3 adheres to the prescribed language policy.

### 9.4.3 Language and Music

Music is an integral part in this ECEC setting. It is an important tool exploited by professionals serving different purposes. During children's downtime, soft music is played in the background to create a serene and relaxing atmosphere. Moreover, children are exposed to weekly or sometimes bi-weekly activities known as "Music Together." A parent-volunteer,

who is trained in this curriculum, facilitates this time of singing, dancing and playing songs that range from slow, gentle lullabies to loud jam sessions using child-friendly percussion instruments. Through this, young children are trained to be aware of different sounds and rhythms and to appreciate a variety of music.

Discourses concerning the relationship of language and music vary. Some researchers claim that music is ancillary to language. However, Brandt et al. (2012) claims otherwise. He argues that the ability to speak is dependent on one's ability to hear musically. Language and music are fundamentally intertwined in early years and develops simultaneously. Thus, listening to music provides us an understanding of the sounds of the language even before there is comprehension and even prior to having words to describe the experiences that the world offers.

From this perspective and focusing more specifically on the first sentence, music is seen as a precursor to language. Furthermore, Brandt et al. (2012), Johnson (2010), Johnson (2011), Karmiloff-Smith (1995) and Newham (1995), theorise that the spoken language is actually a special kind of music. In very young children, the processes of acquiring both are entangled but later grow distinct and "develop along parallel tracks."

Professional 7 seems to understand these assertions as illustrated in the field note below:

*"Professional 7 was humming while changing the child. Is this a strategy? She used no words, no specific language." (Field Notes, 27 October 2013)*

To clarify the context, the professional and the young child are in Room 5, which is a multi-purpose space. It is separated from the rest of the crèche with a thick curtain creating an ambiance of privacy. This area room has a changing table and also serves as a laundry area with a washing machine and clothes dryer. It has hanging shelves with carefully organised marked boxes for easy identification and access to specific things. Another important space within this room is a closed toilet. The professional is in this space having a one-on-one time with the child while changing him. From the hallway, her humming can be heard. Instead of talking or describing what she is doing, which is a normal practice of many professionals, she hums a beautiful tune. Although the child is awake, there is no sign of resistance or noise of complaint. It seems as though there is a calming effect from the beautiful melody produced by the professional.

## 9.5 Negotiating Language Policy

The implementation of the one person, one language policy is a top-down guideline that is imposed on the professionals by the manager of the crèche. It was emphasised during the recruitment process and reiterated in numerous occasions throughout the year. While the professionals are aware of the importance of OPOL in the identity, the functioning and the vision of this crèche, the care of young children involves more practical issues that are more critical than the enforcement of the said language policy.

On many occasions, they have to negotiate the language policy to accommodate the diverse linguistic repertoires and the varying language competencies of their fellow staff members, parents and children. Professionals need to interpret, negotiate and reconstruct the OPOL policy (Menken & Garcia, 2010) while in the process of implementing it in this setting where young children and parents are involved. It is a dynamic, flexible approach (Garcia, 2009a) in the process of “policy meaning making” with the professionals at the epicentre creating a learning community (Kenner & Hélot, 2009) for very young learners.

Concretely, they negotiate the OPOL policy to ascertain the following conditions: for the continuity of crèche rituals and routines, for children’s safety and welfare, to establish connections with new interlocutors, to provide clear and specific instructions and to validate a child’s participation. These are contexts that legitimise (Bonacina-Pugh, 2017) the use of the other language, not the assigned language of the professionals.

### 9.5.1 For Continuity of Crèche’ Rituals and Routines

As any setting for infants and toddlers, this crèche has established rituals and routines to provide the children with a basic framework for the day. A structured daily program provides young children with a sense of predictability, thus making activities meaningful and less stressful.

Below is an entry from my field notes that illustrates how an English professional takes on the role of the French-assigned professional.

*“Professional 3 led the French songs as well since the main French-assigned professional has been sick for the whole week. There was a need to adjust the way that professionals do some routines. Even the work schedules of professionals need to be modified.” (Field Note, 28 November 2013)*

Each staff member has a distinct role and has designated tasks for the crèche to function smoothly. Hence, when one professional is absent, the remaining staff members reorganise themselves to insure that the important tasks are covered. In the example above, Professional 3, who normally leads songs in English-only, takes the role of the French-assigned professional so that the rituals and routines in the crèche are maintained.

The next example is an excerpt taken during snack time, the second main activity of the day. It occurs in Room 2 of the crèche, shown in Figure 1. After putting the cushions away in Room 1, the professionals guide the children to the adjacent room where the small tables and chairs are located. There are no seat assignments so children have the freedom to choose where they like to be seated. Meanwhile, the professionals make sure that at least one of them sits at the table with the children. On this particular occasion, there are only two professionals with the children, one assigned to English and the other one assigned to French. As part of the ritual, the professionals lead songs in English and French. Most of the time, they abide by the language policy, but as illustrated in the following scenario, it is not feasible at all times.

*Where: Room 2*

*When: During snack time, everybody is seated, getting ready for snacks.*

*Routine: They sing two songs: one English, one French (English song: We Have Two Eyes; French Song: A Table)*

*Who: There are two professionals present (English and French speaker).*

*What happened: One of the children asked to go to the toilet. It was an urgent request.*

*One of the professionals (French speaker) attended to him. **Thus, the English speaking professional was by herself. She led both the English and the French songs.***

*(Field Note, 13 April 2014)*

As shown in the excerpt, one of the children had asked to go to the toilet before the group started singing two songs, a routine to introduce snack time. The child sought the help of the French-assigned professional, who was seated next to him. In the absence of the French speaker, the English-assigned professional led both songs. The professional who was left with the children made sure that the routine was not interrupted so she led the two songs consecutively, first the English song and then the French song. She knew that the children were looking forward to having their morning snacks, and it did not make sense to wait for the “French speaker” to come back and lead the other song, which she in fact masters as well.



The account that follows clearly illustrates how a professional manages the “wait time” using whatever resource is available and how the language policy is negotiated to a certain extent.

*“Storytelling while waiting to go out – After the children were dressed up, Professional 2 mentioned that they had to wait for Parent 1 as he was getting the strollers from the basement. While doing so, she directed the children to sit down (They were in the corridor this time). **She grabbed a book, which was in English.** She started talking about the pictures, talked and illustrated the sounds of the animals. When she came to a page with the song, *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, she led the song and the other adults sang along as well. She led another song in English. **When she realised the next couple of songs and rhymes were unfamiliar to her, she asked Professional 4 to carry on.**” (Research Diary, 2 June 2014)*

There are two facets to this scenario. On one hand, one can highlight how the professional manages the children’s “waiting time.” Knowing that an idle moment for children who are already eager to go out can spell disaster, she provides them an interesting diversion. She picks up a random book, shows them the pictures, talks elaborately about each image and dramatically demonstrates how each animal sounds. She does this for a couple of pages until she gets to a page with songs. She sings two English songs, which she does animatedly. The children sing along as well as the adults.

On the other hand, one can emphasise her resourcefulness. As a French-assigned professional, she uses any book that was within her reach and creatively entertains and at times teaches the children from this resource. With regards to language, knowing that it was an English book did not take her aback. She takes on the challenge and even sings two English songs from it. This somehow shows confidence in the other language, not her assigned language. It further shows how this language is actually part of her linguistic repertoire. She negotiates the language policy and activates her English resource in an effort to maintain order and to contain children, who cannot wait to go out. However, knowing that the extent of her mastery is limited, she passes the baton to the English-assigned professional, who knows the rest of the songs inside out.

### 9.5.2 To Ascertain Children’s Safety and Welfare

Keeping children safe and looking after their welfare are two primordial responsibilities of ECEC settings. Fully aware of their crucial roles in fulfilling these tasks, the professionals are willing to set aside their assigned languages. They know that the children’s safety cannot be

compromised. The following observed incidents demonstrate concrete scenarios where professionals do not hesitate to use the “other language” not their assigned language to ascertain the welfare of young children.

*Where: Corridor*

*Who: Two professionals assigned to French*

*When: After snacks, past 10 AM. The professionals were dressing up the children to go to the park.*

*Scenario: There was a box of books to keep the children occupied, especially those who were already dressed up. An English-speaking boy, who is 3 years old was restless and was trying to open the door.*

*Professional 2: **Ferme la porte, close the door!***

*(Research Note, April 11, 2014)*

The professional's choice of translating from French to English shows that she is fully aware of the child's linguistic repertoire, which at the moment was limited to English-only. Seeing the possibility of the child opening the door and conscious of its imminent danger, she did not hesitate to provide a direct English translation of her French instruction. It was short, direct and emphatic, “close the door!”

Undoubtedly, the professionals of this setting understand the importance of making children's health and safety their prime priorities. Transmitting correct information is crucial. These include the amount of milk and food a baby has eaten; the body temperature of the child who is showing signs of sickness; or even details of a baby's sleeping patterns. Actually, these are some of the many essential details that staff members need to pay careful attention. As they work in shifts to ensure that all the tasks are covered, relaying accurate details is indispensable. Taking into consideration the assigned languages of professionals and their varying levels of proficiencies, how do they make sure that no details are misinterpreted or misconstrued? This is just one of the many practical questions that one could raise especially in a centre that looks after children. The research note below provides the answer to this question.

To establish the context, the scenario below involves two staff members: Professional 5, who is assigned to speak French, and Professional 3, who is assigned to speak to the children in English. Both have English and French in their language repertoire but at varying levels. The former's English proficiency can be considered at the advanced beginners level, whereas Professional 3 is bilingual. To avoid miscommunication that may possibly lead to disastrous

results, the bilingual professional (Professional 3) deliberately uses French with Professional 5.

*“Another possible reason for switching to French is the level of proficiency of the interlocutor. Professional 5 understands English. However, as I have observed, her understanding/comprehension is not advanced enough especially in circumstances in which important information and crucial instructions are essential ... the exchanges revolved around the babies’ basic needs: food, diaper change, sleeping schedules. **There are terms that may have been difficult for Professional 5 do grasp if Professional 3 would stick to English.** The basic and the essential needs of the children are above all the priority of the staff members. (Research Note, Focus on Professional 3, 18 March 2014)*

Taking into consideration the basic needs of the children, Professional 3 temporarily abandons the rigid language policy in her discussions with Professional 5. She chooses to activate her French knowing that it is the only language that ascertains clear communication between them especially in matters pertaining to young children’s care. While this language practice is not consistent with the declared language policy assigning her to English only she cannot do otherwise. Furthermore, this illustrates again that there are circumstances in which OPOL cannot be applied or cannot be applied at all times for the sake of efficient communication. Therefore, staff members are bound to adjust their language practice based on the proficiency of their interlocutors knowing that meeting the vital needs of young children is their priority.

### 9.5.3 To Establish Connection with Interlocutors

While the professionals are assigned languages that are supposed to be consistently used with the children, professionals negotiate this policy to cater to the need of their interlocutors. As Grosjean (1990:107) writes, “New situations, new environments, new interlocutors will involve new linguistic needs and therefore change the language configuration of the person involved.” This is the case for Professional 2. At times, she suspends the language policy specifically to respond and to attend to the needs of K, an English-speaking child who is new in the crèche. In the first example below, she works around the policy by not totally abandoning her role as French speaker but by translanguaging every now and then. Her statements that contain few interjections and expressions in English allow her to continuously connect with K. From a transcribed audio recording below that captured voices of children and the singing of Professional 2, I highlight the instances when the professional uses

English expressions and terms to accommodate K. She also intentionally uses these expressions to get the child's attention.

In this sequence, Circle Time had already started when K arrived. As soon as the professional saw him, she greeted him enthusiastically and indirectly invited him to join the group by asking him to show her and the children the book he was carrying with him.

*Professional 2: Bonjour, K! **Is everything ok?***

*K: (showing her something)*

*Professional 2: **Wow**, ah K (in a very excited tone)! Regardez qu'est-ce qu'il a ? (showing a book to the other children). **Merci**, K!*

*(She is then interrupted. A baby started crying this prompted her to start leading songs in French, which she animated by gestures and sound effects. She takes rounds in calling different children to participate and make mimic the sounds. Amused reactions of children could be heard. Then, she called K's attention.)*

*Professional 2: **OK. Hey**, K! Qu'est-ce que tu as ramené mon loulou (instead of contributing a song, K gave her the same book) Vas-y K. Assieds-toi avec nous. **Wow, wow, wow!** Il a ramené une super histoire. C'est une histoire de maman **piggy**. Je m'appelle Peppa et ce livre, c'est un livre à propos de ma maman. Regarde (pointing at the illustration) **Mommy, mommy piggy**, c'est une meilleur maman au monde. Regarde, maman **piggy**, K **piggy**. C'est qui ça? M? Ca, c'est qui?*

*K: Papa (whispering)*

*Professional 2: Papa piggy! Bravo, K! C'est K qui nous raconte une histoire. **Hey**, regarde, K, K! (Audio-recording, October 17, 2013)*

She read a few lines from the book until another child stood up, and she had to insist that he sat down. Then she called another child who was hitting another boy. A baby started to cry and then stopped after being attended to by another professional. She continued to read a few lines and when she got to the part about chocolate cake, and asked K a question.

*Professional 2: Tu aimes bien cette histoire?*

*K: whispers some words*

*Professional 2: C'est un gâteau au chocolat?*

*K: Yah!*

*Professional 2: **Wow! OK!** Regardez et lui, KZ. Est-ce qu'il va manger le gâteau au chocolat ou il va manger le biberon ? Il va manger du lait !*

*K: Oui.*

*Professional 2: **OK!** Ecoutez pour l'instant, on laisse l'histoire, et on va chanter encore un petit peu.*

*Then the singing continues. (Audio-recording, October 17, 2013)*

As soon as Professional 2 saw K, she greeted him with the usual "bonjour." She then asked him a more personal question in English "Is everything ok?" Evidently, the sudden shift of language was purposeful. She wanted the child to feel welcomed and indirectly told him that he belonged and that his presence was valuable and important to her. She wanted to be certain that he was all right and that everything was fine. It has to be clarified that other children witnessed this language shift to English, a language practice that was not supposed to be implemented within the framework of the declared OPOL policy.

In this extract, Professional 2 exercises and demonstrates her agency. She fully understands her more complicated role: she is not only responsible in welcoming French-speaking children, bilingual children but also a monolingual English child, who is an emergent bilingual (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). She decides that it is imperative to use the following English expressions: wow, hey, OK and mommy piggy. She does this strategically to get the child's attention or to enthuse him. By using a few English expressions, she is able to maintain her primary language role as French speaker.

In the next example below, Professional 2 further shows how she adjusts her language practice as she interacts with the same child. As she is aware that he does not have French in his linguistic repertoire, she accommodates his questions and answers them in English. She does this in different ways. Sometimes, she provides a direct translation of a French reply to English. At other times, she only translates key expressions to English.

*"I overheard **Professional 2, who was in Room 1, translate some expressions to English for K who is new and does not speak French. I think that since K was seated closer to her, she probably felt the need to respond to the K's inquiries in English.**"*  
*(Field Notes, 21 November 2013)*

Clearly, the professional's knowledge of the linguistic, cultural and social background of the child and his parents come into play in her language choice. She understands fully that she cannot insist on speaking to him in French. It would be meaningless to this child who is still integrating in the crèche and making sense of his new life in a new country. For the professional to be able to connect with the child and consequently establish a relationship, she needs to alter her ways of languaging.

The second part of this note shows the influence of the seating arrangement to her language use. As the child is seated close to her, the questions that he asked were directed to her. To satisfy his inquiries, the professional needed to respond to him in the language that he could comprehend and not in her assigned language.

Moreover, this shows that the competence of Professional 2 in English benefits her and the child. It is in this language interaction in English that she can establish a connection with the child. It is through this language that the child is able to get the answers to his spur-of-the-moment questions. Furthermore, this professional displays consistency with her convictions and beliefs about language and her language practice (Appendix D.3). Her primary concern is providing an environment where children feel secure, especially in the case of children who are integrating in the crèche. If establishing a relationship with them necessitates activating her English repertoire and translanguaging, she willingly does so to facilitate the children's easy integration into the collective life of this ECEC setting.

The scenario that follows involves J, a child who is new in the crèche. At the moment of the observation, he is three years old. He joins this setting with his younger sister who is a year old. Their parents' linguistic repertoire includes English and German. In reality, his experience in French is only through his association with the children in the crèche and the French-speaking professionals. As in the case with most of the children, his first week can be considered quite challenging. The language barrier somehow adds to the difficulty in integrating.

*J, one of the new children, who spoke English, was crying. He was looking for Professional 4, and so Parent 11 (who is also the Association President) stayed with him. (Research Diary, 2 June 2014)*

It needs to be mentioned that since Professional 4 was the one who welcomed him the first time he came to the crèche, he considered her as his reference person. Since they share a common language, which is English, this bond is strengthened.

However, on this particular day, the professional's work shift allowed her to come later in the morning. So when J arrived, he seemed lost because the carer who spoke to him in the language that he knew was not present. To compensate for her absence, Parent 11, who is also the Association President took the initiative to stay with him. As a self-imposed English speaker in the crèche, she knew that being with the child and speaking with him in the language that he was comfortable with calmed reassured him that everything was going to be all right.

This example provides a double-edged view of the language policy. On one hand, having a prescribed language policy helps in establishing relationships with children who speak the professionals' assigned language. On the other hand, OPOL can cause problems especially when the assigned professionals are not around to be with children who only speak one of the respective languages of the crèche.

#### 9.5.4 To Provide Clear and Specific Instructions

This section highlights the interactions of Professional 2 with non-Francophone children and how she negotiates her role as French speaker to provide them clear and specific instructions. As previously mentioned, this professional's level in English is high; she does not only understand but speaks it as well. This capacity to tap into her linguistic resource comes in handy when dealing with English-speaking children. The following excerpts illustrate the situations in which she is confronted on a daily basis as she attempts to maintain her assigned language and at the same time give guidance to children who are still in the process of developing their French competency. The notes are chronologically presented to examine her attitude towards her language role and to see her interpretation and reinterpretation of the policy as the months progressed.

*“Professional 2 who is assigned to French mentioned to me in one of our casual chats that **she feels that is imperative to switch to English** when giving instructions to K and H ((children's initials)).” (Research Diary, 21 November 2013)*

The desire to speak in the children's language, not the language assigned to her, is verbalised in one of the informal conversations with this professional. Both K and H's home language include English but not French. And although at the crèche, they hear English spoken and used but when they are alone with Professional 2, the directions are only given in French. This has become a source of frustration to this staff member. Somehow, she attributes the children's non-compliance to their lack of comprehension in French, hence, the desire to address them in English. In fact, this professional is aware that strict adherence to the OPOL policy can cause comprehension problems in children. During this time, K and H are still developing their proficiency in French. Thus, they are prone to misunderstand the instructions. Such lack of understanding necessitates the use of other modes of communication such as the use of non-verbal means to convey meaning. Effective use of gestures and facial expressions are effective means to transmit a message but not to support language acquisition. Professionals use all these resources to get their message across to the children when they comply to OPOL. However, it could be simpler and more efficient to

just tap into their linguistic resources, which include English to get immediate responses from children and to ensure a rich interaction.

It has to be clarified that at this particular moment, the professional has seen the advantage of using her knowledge in English but has not yet acted. In the subsequent extracts and the scenarios described in the preceding section, changes in her approach with the language are apparent. While still maintaining French, she finds more liberty in switching to English for more specific terms when she has to address children who are dominant in English.

Example 1:

*“She facilitated the leading songs.... At one point, she had to switch to English, **“Get up” to address K.** Then, she translated the same expression in French.” (Research Diary, 9 January 2014)*

Example 2:

*“While they were preparing to go out...the children needed help to get dressed up warmly. Professional 2 had to address H ((child)) who wasn't ready yet to put on his coat. Initially, she was giving the instructions in French, but when she saw that H wasn't ...doing what was expected of him, with emphatic voice, she said, **“coat”.** (Research Diary, 9 January 2014)*

Example 3:

*“At one point, Professional 2 had to say, **“listen, écoute!”** to K (an English-speaking child). This happened when K started saying something while Professional 4 was leading a song. Why does she need to repeat the same command in two languages?” (Research Diary, 12 March 2014)*

In the first example dated January 9, 2014, the instruction, “Get up” is directed to K. This is a clear digression to her consistent use of French throughout the entire circle time. The same is true with second extract of the same day. This time, she uses a single word, “coat” emphatically to get his message across to H. In both instances, she demands to be heeded and for her instructions to be carried out. Meanwhile, the third example shows somehow a different approach as the instruction comes out twice, in English then in French. It is possibly her way of introducing the child to the French equivalent of “listen” as clearly both words are directed to him. She uses this strategy to ascertain that the child does not only perform what is immediately asked of him, which is to listen, because he clearly comprehends the



instruction but it is an act to help him build his knowledge base in the other language. This is one of the educational advantages of translanguaging (Baker, 2001). It can actually facilitate the strengthening and development of the “weaker” language.

Furthermore, what is evident in the aforementioned examples is the fact that she permitted herself to be more flexible in her implementation of the rigid OPOL policy. Two months ago, this was a simple wish stated loosely, but in these three incidents, she realises that the children’s communicative needs are more important. These children, who are still developing their French, need to be supported. It is imperative that they understand instructions to fully participate in the life of the crèche. This simple act of using some key terms in the language that the children are more comfortable in is an indication of her sincere intent to include them in the activities.

The next account involves the interactions of three professionals: Professional 3, who assigned to English but is actually bilingual; Professional 1 who is assigned to French and with a good comprehension level in English; and Professional 5 who is assigned to French and who has some notions in English. All of them are in the same space, which is multi-functional (Room 5). The initial exchange transpires between the Professionals 3 and 1 while the latter is changing a young child’s diaper. Afterwards, the interaction is between Professional 3 and 5 while the latter is organising some clothes.

*At 10:20, Professional 3 and Professional 1 used their distinct language assignments while talking about children’s concerns while they were in the bathroom while Professional 1 was changing a child’s diaper. At around 10:30, **Professional 3 discussed some concerns with Professional 5 in French.**” (Field Notes, 28 November 2013)*

What needs to be highlighted from this account is the differing language practice of Professional 3 as she deals with the two French-assigned professionals. It has to be pointed out that in both cases, a child is present and if she is keen in following her language role, she should have been consistent in the encounters: that is to speak English “no matter what” especially in the presence of children. However, the choice to speak French with Professional 5 is intentional as the discussion revolves around children’s concerns. Her goals are clear: to be understood and to relay crucial information as fast as possible as she is preparing to accompany another professional and a group of children for a walk outside the crèche, one of the activities they do with children before lunch break. She negotiates the language policy knowing that the language competency of Professional 5 in English is limited. As she is rushing to go out with the children and another staff member waiting for

her, she decides that the most effective and efficient way to transmit information and to avoid miscommunication is to use French, which in fact is a language that she is very much comfortable with.

### 9.5.5 To Validate a Child's Participation

Providing quality care and education to young children does not only mean meeting their basic needs but also catering to the development of their emotional and mental well-being. Fully aware and committed to these objectives, professionals as much as possible make it a point that children's efforts even the smallest do not go unrecognised but are acknowledged. The extract described below shows how the staff members do this in a situation that involves an English-speaking child (K), and two adults who are both proficient in English and French but have distinct language assignments. K has been identified as a special needs child and exhibits developmental language delay, information that Professor 2 previously mentioned to me.

*“K was showing the children and Professional 2 a coloured photo of Thomas, a cartoon character while saying something inaudible to the professional. Since the latter could not decipher what the child was saying, **she sought the help of the association president**, who provided a clarification of what the child wanted to convey. With the assistance of the English speaker, the professional finally understood what the child was saying. She then repeated what seemed to be the exact statement of the child: **‘it broke.’**” (Research Diary, 30 January 2014)*

To understand the speech utterance of K, the two adults work in tandem (Fialais & Reseda, 2018). The French-assigned professional does not hesitate to request the help of the English-dominant adult to make sense of what the child wants to show her and the other children. By using repetition, she lets the child know that she understands him and validates his contribution. It is a positive way of affirming the child, one of the strategies commonly used by parents with young children (Lanza, 1992). In so doing, however she violates the OPOL policy. As a French-assigned professional, her task to model her assigned language to all children, more so to English-dominant children is set aside to meet this specific child's essential needs. Instead of providing the French translation, she intentionally chooses to repeat the child's exact words to make him understand that his participation is important regardless of whether he speaks English or French.

## 9.6 Spontaneous Translanguaging of Multilinguals

In reality, the every day language practice of multilingual speakers is dynamic and fluid. They make use of their diverse linguistic and non-linguistic resources for varied purposes: to express themselves, to convey meaning, to achieve understanding, etc. According to Garcia (2009: 140), the need to activate their full linguistic repertoire is intended “to maximise communication potential.” In this sense, translanguaging is seen as a solution and not as a problem. In fact, professionals in an early childhood education setting in Luxembourg manage linguistic diversity by adapting their language use according to the language choice of their interlocutors or ‘communication partners’ (Neumann, 2015).

However, in the case of this bilingual crèche, the declared language policy in place somehow restricts the full expression of the multilingual professionals’ linguistic repertoire. By functioning monolingually, they switch off the other language to serve as a language referent to children in that identified language. This act of deactivating the other language also means a part of their identity has to be quieted. However, from the perspective of a participant observer, while the one person, one language (OPOL) policy is enforced, this does not actually stop multilingual speakers from their usual ways of languaging. In this section, I present the varied instances when bilingual/multilingual agents’ language in a bilingual mode.

### 9.6.1 Multilingual Professional’s Use of Available Resources

An abundance of books and educational materials in the crèche shows how parents and professionals promote literacy. There is a plethora of reading materials in both English and French as evidenced by a reading corner with books readily available for children and a portable box full of books that professionals move around the vicinity whenever they need it to keep the children busy and entertained. These books, which are gathered in these spaces, are placed in no particular order. English and French books are mixed together. This means that children have access to any book in any language. When a child sits down to read or when he or she asks an adult to read, he or she could choose either an English or a French book. One could deduce from this that the policy regarding literacy acquisition in this crèche is bilingual and does not separate the languages. However, the sequence below illustrates an interesting point regarding OPOL. It includes a bilingual professional who is assigned to English and an English-speaking child.

*“Professional 4 was reading to H (English-speaking child) in English. It was only later when I got hold of the book that I realised that it was written in French.”*  
(Research Diary, 17 April 2014)

This short account reveals the translanguaging practice of the said professional. While going over the book with the child, she is reading and comprehending the story in French but retelling it in English. The source language of the book is French, but the output of her reading is in English. The question that can be asked here is why she does not tell the child the book is in French and either asks him to choose another book which would be in English, or even explain that she is going to read it in English. It seems in this case that the policy overrides the didactic literacy choice to enable her to continue interacting with the child in her assigned language rather than in the language of the book. It is as if the professional cannot provide this child with a model of bilingualism where the two languages are an integral part of the daily life of the crèche and can be used alternatively in different contexts. Children learn very quickly which professionals speak which language and can request one to one time with them, but in this case the object that the child chooses, the book in French, is being translated without any explanation to the child because of the OPOL policy.

In the sequence that follows, the same professional and child are listening to music. Professional 4 is singing an Arabic song. The words to the song are written phonetically so that any non-Arabic speaker can follow through and sing it.

*“ Professional 4 is using an Arabic Book of Songs while singing with H, who is predominantly English-speaking. Scenario: The CD was playing, and Professional 4 was singing along as there were words written that could be deciphered/read/sang phonetically. H was comfortably seated on her lap while she was singing.” (Research Diary, 30 May 2014)*

Three things need to be emphasised from this account. First, aside from English and French, there is actually a space for other languages. In this example, an Arabic book of songs with a CD is a resource readily available for professionals and children to use. From the point of view of a participant-observer, linguistic diversity is accepted and regarded as valuable. The second point focuses on the personal characteristics of Professional 4. Her openness to a new language and her courage to explore and to learn another language through singing are remarkable. Unlike three other professionals, she does not have Arabic in her linguistic repertoire, but her motivation to learn it is visible. As this resource is readily accessible, she takes the opportunity to use it with enthusiasm. It is the same interest that she shares with H, who is seated on her lap comfortably and contentedly as she sings to him. This brings the third point: a childcare professional's attitude towards language can influence how a child will accept or reject a language. As this professional embraces a new language that comes with

a new culture and a new identity, to some extent so will the child develop the same positive outlook towards this language.

### 9.6.2 Multilingual Professionals' Interactions with Interlocutors of the Other Language

This section focuses on the translanguaging practices of English-assigned professionals who are also proficient in the other official language of the crèche. Although they have different levels of French proficiency, what is evident is that they can participate in the life of the crèche using this other language. The different scenarios below provide a glimpse to other unobserved instances when they freely use French as their language of communication to contribute in discussions and to make sense of the other processes in the daily life of this setting.

An important fact that cannot be overemphasised is the need for professionals to establish clear communication with parents to ensure children's well-being. When parents come to collect their children from the crèche, they appreciate to be given some details about their children's day. These exchanges serve as transition from crèche to home. Sometimes professionals report on children's participation in activities, their development, milestones and possible mishaps if there is any.

The excerpt below presents the language switch of Professional 4 from English to French: with her assigned language (English) as she discussed with Parent 27, and consequently in the other language (French) as she spoke with Parent 2.

*“Parent 27 came to pick up HY, who was with the other children and Professional 4. The exchange of information between them was in English. As is usually the case, she updated the parent of the child's behaviour and activities that day. Then, Parent 2 arrived to collect L. From English, Professional 4 spoke to the second parent in French. It was my first time to hear Professional 4 use French during the entire interaction. (Research Diary, 28 April 2014)*

The dominant language of the professional's communication partner or interlocutor becomes her guide in determining which language to use. With Parent 27, English is their usual language of communication. As this parent serves in the crèche for a few hours every week, it is accustomed to see them talk about varied subjects. The focal point of this extract is the staff member's decision to speak with Parent 2 in French, in the presence of children. As emphasised under the section, “declared language policy,” this act of translanguaging

contradicts the declared one person, one language (OPOL) policy. As stipulated in her mandate as an English-assigned speaker, she needs to speak it at all times as the goal is children's exposure to this language at all times. However, as a bilingual, she can easily tap on her French resource so when the Francophone mother approaches her to inquire about her son, the professional spontaneously responds to her in the same language. Their quick conversation transpires entirely in French. It seems that the professional herself is caught off-guard and does not consciously know that she switched language systems as both of these languages are embedded in her linguistic repertoire.

In the next excerpt, three staff members are involved in the conversation that transpires in French. Initially, it is an exchange between two French-assigned professionals. Then, Professional 8 added her contribution in the same language.

*“There was a point that the carers convened by the hall, planning and organizing their schedules for the coming days. Initially, it was just a conversation between Professional 2 and Professional 1. They moved to Room 2, and then went back to Space 7 (the hallway). **Professional 8 at one point participated and spoke in French. This back and forth conversation was in French.**” (Research Diary, Focus on Professional 6, 16 June 2014)*

From the point of view of a participant-observer, the contribution of Professional 8 is a spontaneous response to an on-going discussion in French. Although assigned as a substitute English-speaker, her proficiency in French allows her to easily participate in any discussions, which in this case is in French. She opts to contribute in an on-going exchange in French and not in her assigned language.

This last example shows a translanguaging practice of an English-assigned professional, as she talks to a Francophone speaker over the phone.

*“Professional 3 was talking to someone on the phone in French. From where the phone is placed, the children could hear Professional 3's conversation, but she does not have a choice, **the interlocutor at the other end of the line was speaking in French.**” (Field Notes, 17 October 2013)*

Where the phone is placed in this crèche is very strategic. As it is located at one end of the hallway near the kitchen, facing the two doors leading to the main rooms where the children stay for the most part of their day, staff members and parents can continuously monitor the children while answering calls. This also means that whenever someone answers a call, he

or she can easily be heard from the two rooms and from the kitchen. However as a spontaneous reaction to a French caller, she spoke in French, which is not her assigned language.

### 9.6.3 Spontaneous Translanguaging of Parents and Children

The following excerpts are few of the many different instances that parents and children switched from one language to another. Without any expectations to adhere to the identified language policy, multilingual parents and children are unrestricted in their language practice. Parent 1 for instance, as shown in the excerpt below carries over their home language practice to the crèche.

*“I heard Parent 1 use the term, **“Toda”** with his kids. I asked about it. He explained how the children use the term to mean **“thank you.”** (Field Notes, 27 October 2013)*

Parent 1 serves in the crèche a few hours a week. As a parent on-duty, he cooks, prepares food, feeds the children, cleans up and assists paid staff members. On this particular occasion, he was helping the professionals with the children’s morning snacks. When it was his own children’s turn to be served, he reminded them to say “toda,” which is the Hebrew expression for thank you. Even though this father and his sons are in this public setting, it is clear that he insists on maintaining their usual terms of general politeness, and he is able to do this because the one person, one language policy only concerns the professionals. Multilingual parents like him are encouraged to speak in whatever language and to nurture their home language practices even within the confines of the crèche. As the association president puts it, “it is a nice way to allow them to be natural...a lot of parents do what they do at home” (Appendix C.3).

Similarly, children are given the freedom to speak and respond in any other language. Even as professionals speak to them in their assigned languages, there is no obligation for them to reply that same linguistic code. For this reason, it is common for bilingual/multilingual children spontaneously use of their full linguistic repertoire in a fluid, unrestrained manner.

*Professional 4 facilitated the activity for older children. I assisted her and helped her by doing some errands. Whenever she needed to go out, I stayed with the kids. This gave me the opportunity to observe the group. I noticed that bilingual children automatically switch language codes. **For example, F switched to French when speaking to French-dominant children and to English when speaking to Professional 4.** (Field Notes, 19 February 2014)*

A specific example that is mentioned above is that of a female bilingual child (F), whose father is French and whose mother is British-Canadian. She attends the crèche on Wednesdays but regularly goes to a bilingual nursery the rest of the weekdays. In these settings and at home, she is in contact with the two languages, which are embedded in her linguistic system. Her interactions are characterised by constant and spontaneous translanguaging.

## 9.7 Other Factors that Affect Language Practice

Having an explicit language policy for the professionals in this crèche clearly means that they are expected to comply with their language assignments. Thus, OPOL serves to influence and to control their language practice in order to ensure the children are exposed sufficiently to the two languages. For bilinguals/multilinguals, this implies a kind of “switch-off mechanism” of their other language(s). Although the fundamental concept is the promotion of bilingualism in children, professionals are imposed a practice of monolingualism. However, any given policy is not an isolated phenomenon, in reality, it is a sociocultural, multi-levelled and multi-layered system. In the case of the one person, one language policy adopted in this crèche, the ideas and principles in which a policy is anchored may not be interpreted in the same way by its implementers, who are the professionals. Enforcement of the same policy may differ due to varied factors such as an individual’s upbringing, educational and cultural background and her work status whether her position is temporary or permanent. This subsection considers two determinants that influence professional’s implementation of the said language policy: motivation and information.

### 9.7.1 Motivation

Motivation is considered one of the primary determinants of second or foreign language learning (Dörnyei, 1994). It is a complex interplay of internal and external influences ingrained within an individual (M. Williams & Burden, 1997). In the case of Professional 7, it is the major factor that has led her to sometimes abandon a clearly defined guideline that comes with her role as a French speaker. Owing to her desire to improve in the English language, she deviates from her assigned language role and blurts out expressions in the other language. While her responses to interviews (Appendix D.4, Appendix D.5) are generally in French, she makes an effort to show off her English proficiency when she can every now and then. The following examples of her language practice recorded in the field note and research journal illustrates how her motivation to improve her English affects her



language practice, consequently challenging the language policy ascribed to professionals which is to speak their assigned language at all times.

*“The professional, who is temporarily replacing Professional 7, who is assigned to French, spoke to me in English.” (Field Note, 5 November 2013)*

This note is written after the first encounter with Professional 5, who is recruited to serve as a substitute staff member. As she is replacing a Francophone professional, who is on maternity leave, she is expected to assume the language assignment alongside the other caregiving duties of the former employee. Having a clearly defined policy of how languages should be handled affects expectations of how its members ought to behave, which explains why the act of speaking in English is unexpected.

What follows provides a concrete example of this professional’s eagerness to learn English and uses any opportunity that presents itself.

*“Professional 5 is very open and straightforward in her intention to progress in English. When I approached her she noticed that I was wearing matching clothes. She used the term, ‘marier les couleurs.’ Then, **she asked me how to say it English.**” (Research Diary, 20 March 2014)*

The first sentence of this research journal entry is a by-product of many informal conversations with Professional 5 in which she has categorically mentioned her desire to be better at English. Meanwhile, the second part includes a specific expression in French that she would like to be translated to English. This illustrates a change of dynamics in the relationship. Motivated to better her English, she is willing to take on the shoes of a learner with her communication partner as the expert.

The final example below supports the claim of this sub-section: motivation is a force that can powerfully alter a person’s language practice, even to the point of defying a language policy.

*“I noticed more especially with Professional 5 that she would blurt an expression in English. While both of us were tending to KZ, she said **“He sleeps,” and then corrected herself. “He is sleeping.”** (Research Diary, 10 March 2014)*

This excerpt from the research journal not only involves two adults but also a child. Although the child is sleeping, the declared language policy implies she should be using French, but the policy cannot deter her motivation to learn English. Her use of English shows that she

values bilingualism and wants to practice it in this bilingual structure when an opportunity arises for her.

### 9.7.2 As a Result of Information

One interesting aspect of this childcare setting is its network. As earlier pointed out under the section 'Declared Language Policy,' the crèche through its association president has connections with other associations and academics that actively seek to promote bilingualism/multilingualism in early childhood. It is through these channels that she and the staff members are informed of conferences where topics about early literacy and multilingualism among others are highlighted. Access to these kinds of relevant professional development opportunities is vital as research shows that education and training have a great impact on ECEC workers work practice (OECD, 2006).

The year 2014 is marked with significant collaborations between ECEC decision makers in the city, stakeholders and the university. In fact, several conferences were organised. One notable forum that welcomed ECEC players was a conference on translanguaging and bilingualism in the month of May held at the School of Education in Strasbourg (ESPE), where one of the professionals from the crèche was sent to participate. As representative of her ECEC setting, it was imperative that she provided her colleagues and the parents feedback of the salient points raised in the said academic exercise. Whether or not a formal meeting was held within the crèche to report what the professional learned could not be determined, but what was noticeable were changes in some language practices observed after the said event.

The following extracts focus on Professional 1, who is assigned to speak French in the crèche but whose linguistic repertoire includes Arabic and English as well. From September 2013 to May 2014, research note entries focusing on her language practice showed consistent use of French. Meanwhile, it should also be mentioned that her gentle, unimposing ways in dealing with children and her seemingly subordinate role as one of the primary carers for the babies and young children are possible reasons why it is sometimes difficult to notice her. However in June, it seemed that her presence became more visible. This could be attributed to a number of factors but most probably due to the empowering effect of information.

*“Professional 1 asked Parent 3 for the English term of abricot; the parent promptly replied apricot. Moreover, it should be mentioned that for a number of times, I heard Professional 1 speak to K and H in English. I am not certain if she was aware of it or if*

*it was deliberate. Has Professional 2 spoken to them about what she heard from the conference on translanguaging?” (Research Diary, 12 June 2014)*

There are three important points of discussion from this extract: first, the use of a parent as a language resource; second, the translanguaging practice of the professional herself; and finally, my personal reflection of the action of the staff member.

First, asking the help of Parent 3 for an English translation of a French word is a new practice from the perspective of a participant-observer. Past observations reveal the professional's strict adherence to the identified language policy. Her usual language pattern involved continuous use of her assigned language regardless of her interlocutors' language use. However, this extract clearly shows a change in her language practice. Not only is she concerned in the task with providing a French input to children, she also maximises the opportunity of having a parent provide an English equivalent of the French term. It further shows that she acknowledges the presence of a bilingual parent as an immediate language resource.

Second, a more flexible language practice is observed. As she deals with predominantly English speaking children, she allows herself to activate her English repertoire, a practice that was not present at the onset of the year. As I mentioned before I noticed throughout the period of observation that the language practices of professionals evolved in some cases from adhering more or less strictly to OPOL. Whether because of practical instances when it was necessary to translanguage or because of attending a training session on bilingual education, it is obvious language practices in a bilingual setting are dynamic and change all the time, making them difficult to study.

## 9.8 Summary

This section presents a variety of language practice scenarios with the goal of providing detailed and specific examples and at the same time recurrent themes of language policy practices. Under the following major headings: language practices according to particular moments in the crèche, language practice and physical space, language practice in diverse social contexts, negotiating language policy, spontaneous translanguaging of multilinguals and other factors that affect language practice, a number of generalisations can be derived. Primarily, OPOL cannot be adhered strictly at all times. It is an unrealistic ordering and separation of languages, which cannot be applied in practice at all times. It is based on an ideology of bilingualism that sees languaging in monolingual terms and which is based on the separation of languages to avoid language mixing, or translanguaging which again is seen as

deviating from monolingual practices. It assumes a bilingual should function like two native speakers who separate their languages at all times rather than languaging from one integrated competence that allows for the production of both languages according to interlocutor, place or the nature of the interaction.

With the one person, one language policy (OPOL) as the declared language policy of the crèche, the professionals are expected to serve as “soldiers who carry out orders by internalising the policy ideology and its agendas” (Shohamy, 2006, p. 78) by maintaining their assigned languages at all times and in all the spaces of the crèche except in the kitchen (see for Section 9.3.1 for a detailed explanation). However in practice as illustrated exhaustively in this chapter, translanguaging (Garcia & Li, 2014; Ofelia García, Panagiotopoulou, & Kirsch, 2016; Otheguy et al., 2015) occurs any time and anywhere.

In practice, bi- or multilingual professionals intentionally and unintentionally tap into their bilingual linguistic resources. On the one hand, they are intentional in their use of their language because of their awareness of their language mandate. Concrete evidences, especially during collective activities, have shown that professionals make an effort to use their assigned languages and to balance children’s exposure to the languages through music and literacy activities. Working in tandem or tandem caring is another manner in which they are able to maintain the use of their language without taking children’s needs for granted. Furthermore, the act of negotiating the language policy is necessary to ascertain children’s welfare.

In reality, the extent of how they interpret, implement and negotiate the language policy varies based on what they know from available information and resources on bilingualism; what they believe and their motivations; their prior experiences and the extent to which they feel they have agency to language as they wish. On the other hand, there are rich moments of unintentional language use or spontaneous translanguaging in the crèche as bilinguals continuously function in a bilingual mode. In point of fact, the OPOL policy does not and cannot stop bi- or multilinguals from reverting to their bilingual languaging in a bilingual structure, where the two languages cohabit on a daily basis.

The OPOL policy was chosen with good intentions, ensuring enough contact for the children with the English language, which is not the dominant language of the environment, and similarly to make sure the children who did not have any contact with French on entering the crèche would acquire the societal language. The issue here is understanding on the part of professionals that a declared policy will always be negotiated differently in practice and that professionals should not feel guilty when they translanguage. Professionals should also be

made aware that policing one's language practice at all times demands a kind of energy which might prevent them from seeing other priorities in the care of young children.

# Chapter 10 Conclusion, Extended Discussions and Implications

## 10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I recapitulate the research questions and objectives and discuss the main findings, conclusions and the implications of this doctoral inquiry. Moreover, I provide extended discussions of the following: the limitation of the methodological approach chosen, a conceptualised framework for understanding the different components of language policy, and the diverse interpretations of the one person, one language policy.

### 10.1.1 Important Points to Remember About the Case Study

In the introductory chapters, I presented the case of the first English-French crèche, established in the multilingual city of Strasbourg. It is an ECEC setting with a particularity of being a parental crèche, that is to say, it was created, organised and managed by parents. As a parent initiative, the one person, one language (OPOL) policy is based on a family language policy. The goal of putting it in place in an ECEC structure is to assure an extended space in which the language policy is reinforced. The professionals are seen as carrying out the same objectives as far as languages as parents and are thus assigned to either English or French. They are mandated to ensure that the children have equal inputs in both languages. Additionally, the choice of OPOL is also based on the examples provided by other bilingual structures in the city that insist on the principle of strict language separation.

Similar to other childcare structures in the city, this crèche is financially supported by local and national funding agencies. In keeping with the commitment of state-funded institutions, this bilingual crèche has to ascertain “equal opportunity” to all. In other words, in accepting children, the parent association necessarily devised a set of criteria that needs to be fair to all families regardless of linguistic, cultural or racial backgrounds. While this is a clear top-down policy coming from the city to cater for children from different language backgrounds, the reality is that the data shows that many of the families being served in this childcare structure are of three categories: transnational families, bilingual families and socio-economically advantaged families. As previously clarified, as a parent-managed childcare setting, parents are expected to serve in the crèche a few hours a week. The families that are able to make

this commitment have at least one parent who has the time to serve in the crèche for some duty hours and help in at least one of the work assignments called “commissions” such as security, hygiene, menu planning, etc. To make this possible, either one parent is working full-time and the other parent has flexible working hours. For instance, a parent who is a dentist or a manager of a family business is able to work around her schedule to cover a “duty” schedule in the crèche.

Furthermore, as Strasbourg continuously builds its international dimension, the need to accommodate international families means childcare centres that promote English. Thus, on one hand, this crèche serves the city government’s purpose.

### 10.1.2 Why Study Language Policy in ECEC?

I have previously explained that this research endeavour aims to address a gap in language policy studies that to a certain extent have focused on either family settings or formal educational settings. I argue that a language policy study in early childhood education and care settings is necessary and beneficial to understand how language policy processes are approached and how very young children’s language development is supported, bilingually and multilingually.

A language policy study in an ECEC setting aims to bridge the home and the school, informal to the formal language acquisition and learning settings. I have considered a study of this nature to be relevant in the ever-changing linguistic terrains of the modern world and with multilingualism and diversity becoming the norm in many cities. As we tackle superdiversity, very young children’s education, more specifically language education, is essentially part of the discourses not just concerning the economic reverberations for the future but linguistic, cultural and emotional links that could possibly be maintained through language transmission and language maintenance.

To delve into this language policy inquiry in ECEC, the following main questions were formulated:

*How does a bilingual educational structure for early childhood work from the point of view of language policies? What are the implications of the choice of the one person, one language (OPOL) policy on the practices of educational actors and families within the crèche in question? What is the link between the declared bilingualism of the structure and the multilingualism of families? Finally, does the study of language choices in a context such as early childhood bring a new understanding of the concept of language education policy?*

To derive more specific responses, the following questions have been adapted from McCarthy (2011):

1. How does OPOL manifest itself in a multilingual parental crèche? Who enacts does it, with what purposes, to and for whom, and with what consequences?
2. Are there gaps between intended policy and what is possible to implement? If so, how do parents and professionals understand the gaps between their choice of policy and their practices?
3. What model of LP analysis can be used to understand a multilingual ECEC institution? Do the models described in the scientific literature offer a clear analysis of their language practices?
4. How do the LP actors understand their multilingual reality? How do they act on their multilingual reality? What do they want for the children in their care as far as language competences are concerned? How about the workers and the parents?
5. How are the language users and practices “disciplined” or regulated through explicit and implicit policies? How are the members of the crèche defined through these policy processes? Whose interests do these policy-making processes serve?
6. From a methodological perspective, how does one conduct a study involving small children in a parental ECEC setting?

### 10.1.3 The Choice of Ethnography as Methodological Approach

In chapter 6, I discussed and provided justifications of my choice to conduct an ethnographic study. Also, I outlined the different challenges that I encountered in a research conducted with babies and young children in a small setting with professionals who are expected to speak their assigned languages to the children and with parents who are ever actively engaged in the life of this ECEC setting. Through extensive participant observation, I gathered following data: field notes, research diary entries, photos, documents, audio-recordings and interviews.

### 10.1.4 Limitations of the Spolsky’s Language Policy Model

Using the language policy conceptualisation of Spolsky (2004) as my theoretical basis was useful in the analysis and treatment of the data for this research. With an abundance of collected data, a systematic way of organising and sense making was crucial. To distinguish



the *declared language policy*, I used the interview transcripts of the crèche founder/associate president and the official documents of the crèche. To identify the *perceived language policy*, I focused on the interviews conducted with parents and professionals. To present and explain the *practiced language policy*, I went over the field notes, research diary entries and audio-recordings.

While to some extent, the following classification provided by Spolsky: *what they say*, *what they believe*, and *what they do* offer a framework on how to understand the different levels of language policy and allowed me to propose a first analysis, it posed some challenges and limitations. At some point, the manner in which I applied theory to data became problematic. There were data sets that were difficult to classify. A concrete example is the reported language policy that could fall in any of the three categories depending on the presentation and the angle in which the data is presented.

It was Johnson's (2013) language policy definition that provided a better understanding of the above-mentioned dilemma. According to him,

*“(L) Language policies: (1) are created, interpreted, and appropriated across multiple levels and layers; (2) it can be written down in the form of a de jure policy but do not have to be, especially if they are de facto or unofficial policies; and (3) may be generated by an agent or agency who has some intention or they may be unintentional. (Johnson, 2013, p. 24)*

The multi-layered and multi-levelled dimension of language policy serves to explain why data could overlap and could be categorised in a variety of ways.

### 10.1.5 New LP Conceptual Framework

Whilst the three-levelled analysis is not without problems as explained in the preceding section, it allows for a comprehensive study of the bilingual crèche's language policy. The *one person, one language policy (OPOL)* is referred to as the 'only' language policy. However, in reality, to make sense of this policy, 'other policies' are put in place to manage the multilingual complexity of the crèche. Thus, under the *declared language policy* discussed in Chapter 7, there are policies according to space and according to people. For instance, special space is designated as 'free space.' It is where professionals are allowed to translanguage.

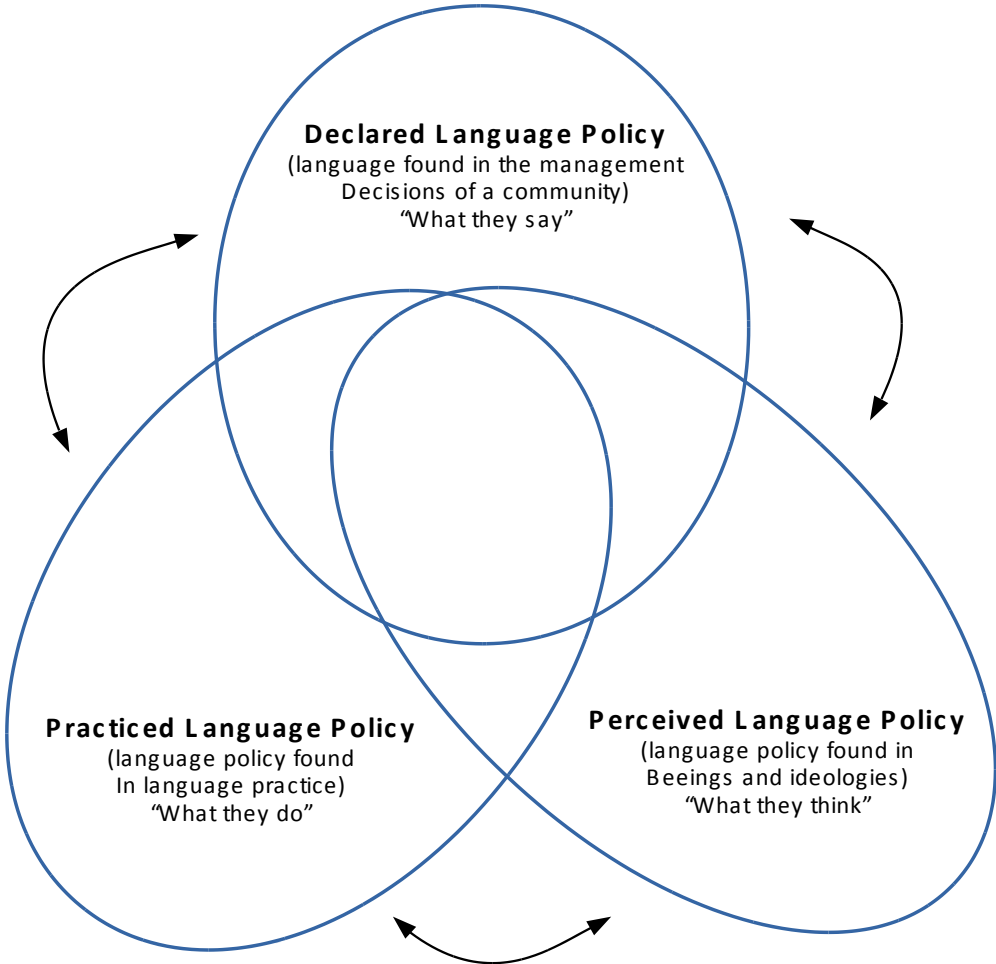
With regards the *perceived language policy*, a close examination of the ideologies and beliefs show some contradictions. One example is the belief that the crèche should function

differently from a formal learning centre, but then, it uses the same language policy employed by other educational bilingual structures in the city. The same is true with the data found under *practiced language policy*. There are consistencies and inconsistencies.

Furthermore, a close scrutiny of the relationships of the three levels of analysis provides a clear view of the congruities and incongruities. Hence, I put forward a new conceptual framework in a form of a diagram in an attempt to explain the generalisations derived from this study.

Figure 8 Conceptual Framework of Language Policy

### Conceptual Framework of Language Policy



This newly proposed framework use the three conceptualisations of Spolsky’s LP as basis. Where there are intersections and overlapping loops, consistencies on what is said, what is

believed and what is practiced are observed. On the other hand, instances of incompatibilities and inconsistencies are also shown through the spaces where there is no overlapping. In other words, a declared language policy may not be translated into practice, or the beliefs may not be consistent with what was said. This framework also shows that each level may reveal a different language policy. Hence, it is necessary to differentiate the three conceptualisations.

Meanwhile, the double-ended arrows indicate the influence that one classification could have on the other. This means, a declared policy may inform beliefs and practices, beliefs may inform practice; practice may inform beliefs and again other possible combinations. Having explained this, I now present the general findings of this research.

## 10.2 General Research Findings

This research has yielded the following generalisations:

- The crèche is the result of a personal commitment by a group of families who wanted to create an educational structure that met their needs (Caporal-Ebersold, 2018). Their choice of OPOL policy was to ensure continuity of family language policies (Curdt-Christiansen 2013, King and Fogle 2013).
- By choosing to implement the OPOL policy in an early childhood educational structure, stakeholders should be made aware that language policy is multi-levelled (Johnson 2013). Although imposing a specific language policy seems to be an effective way to manage two or more languages and to ensure that linguistic objectives such as bilingualism are achieved, data shows that they do not always make sense.
- Moreover, it should be emphasised that the language concerned, alongside French, is English, a dominant European language, which offers its speakers a certain linguistic and cultural capital. It is therefore clear that English has a very important place in this establishment. With French as the societal language, the founding members of the nursery emphasise a language policy that allows children to be adequately exposed to English.
- It should be noted that there are disproportionate claims between the perceptions of a language in relation to the generally accepted notions of OPOL policy. On the one hand, OPOL has been identified to ensure that parents' languages are maintained and passed on to their children; however, English and French are not the family

languages in all cases. It must be emphasised that the linguistic reality of the nursery is more complex and complicated than it was envisaged when it was created.

- It is impossible to rigidly apply language separation in an environment where multiple languages are spoken. The idea of having barriers between languages is not realistic but purely ideological. Even among individuals who claim to be monolingual, coming into contact with another language or other languages influences and enriches their linguistic experiences, which, most of the time, changes linguistic patterns and practices, and therefore questions the language policy in place.
- In reality, language policies are negotiated (Menken and Garcia, 2010) in practice, which does not mean rejecting, challenging, resisting, or ignoring a linguistic policy originally identified, but rather means that actors reinterpret the policies to suit the situation of interaction. It is reflected in their practices to satisfy the needs of communication in a given situation.
- When the well-being of children is at stake, it is not uncommon for a declared language policy to no longer be meaningful. This is probably the point that professionals working in a bilingual structure should understand first. They should not feel guilty when they break or challenge the declared language policy. Also, the idea of imposing boundaries between languages or linguistic prohibitions is ideological and deserves to be deconstructed, both by professionals and by parents and it is in this area that a researcher could intervene to help a multilingual structure to consider a more flexible and dynamic language policy.
- Concrete examples of language interactions in the crèche show great fluidity in the use of languages, as well as many examples of phenomena described today in terms of "translanguaging." This notion needs further investigation in an ECEC context where children are acquiring language through multiples codes. Its pedagogical possibilities (Garcia, 2018) certainly should be exposed to professionals to prevent them from feeling guilty when they translanguage themselves and more importantly to make sure they do not forbid such practices in young bi/plurilingual children.
- In practice, bi-or multilingual professionals use their language resources depending on whom they are speaking to. With monolinguals, they are intentional with their language choice. Moreover, because of their awareness of their linguistic mandate, they deliberately use only one language. On the other hand, with fellow bilinguals,

they do not make choices all the time. The nature of the interaction, the interlocutors or the context make them use the other language and therefore language bilingually.

- In reality, the extent through which professionals interpret, implement and negotiate the language policies vary according to their knowledge and available resources; what they believe and their motives; their past experiences and their agentivity. On the other hand, there are rich moments of flexible linguistic practices or spontaneous translanguaging of bilinguals in this crèche. Indeed, OPOL does not prevent and cannot prevent bi- or multilingual people from using their own way of living their multilingualism and thus from using their languages (linguaging).
- The decision to strictly adopt a language policy such as the "one person, one language" reveals the underlying existence of a "persistent monolingual ideology," which permeates the whole of French society and the French education system. Even if the nursery is outside the traditional school setting, widespread notions such as the purity of the language, the separation of languages and the need for "native speakers" as referents or language educators are ubiquitous. These beliefs influence the linguistic policies of many institutions and of the crèche in question (Caporal-Ebersold and Young, 2016). In other words, it is ideology, which is the driving factor behind the implementation of a strict separation of languages in a multilingual setting, an impossibility to move beyond a monoglossic (Garcia, 2009) vision of the bilingual individual and of languaging in multilingual contexts.

## 10.3 Extended Discussions

### 10.3.1 OPOL: For Whom?

To examine the policy in the current political and societal context is crucial in understanding the purpose it serves not only to its direct recipients but also to the society in a larger sense. The question, whose interest is served in the creation of this crèche, has a direct and indirect answer. Directly, it serves the parents' desire to transmit, maintain and expose their children to two important languages, regarded with equal status. Indirectly, it helps the international and Euro-centred image that Strasbourg City wishes to promote.

### 10.3.2 One Policy, Diverse Interpretations

One person, one language (OPOL) as the policy identified and implemented in this ECEC setting is highly favoured as most of the parents reportedly use the same strategy at home.

They believe that effective bilingual acquisition could only be achieved in an environment where children are confronted with the two languages at all times and each language is spoken by the same person, thus, serving as reference of that particular language. From the responses of parents and professionals, OPOL seems to be the only language strategy possible to effectively transmit the languages of the parents, especially those with two different first languages.

In this setting where parents themselves are the decision makers, the choice of implementing this policy is not surprising. Their perceived success in transmitting their languages with their own children at home became the basis of their decision regarding the most appropriate language approach to use in this collective setting. As parents freely discuss with other parents within the structure and outside, the use of this policy is propagated as the only and surest way to reach their linguistic goals for their children.

Although, there is unity in discourse among parents, there are clear differences in their interpretations and rationale of why they have chosen OPOL. At times, these reasons seem inconsistent. At times, the discourses contradict one another, and there are instances that the individuals we interviewed contradicted their previous statements. It reveals that this policy is the result of a hodgepodge of scientific findings from the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic fields, of beliefs and ideologies, of discourses of parents and of mainstream discourses from health care and childcare professionals.

### 10.3.3 The multilingual crèche as a by-product of migration

The case of this multilingual crèche could be logically analysed as a microcosm of our modern society, where people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds thrive and build a community. While it is true that this early year's setting is officially bilingual, which gives priority to English and French, in its composition and in its daily functioning, the presence of a multiplicity of languages and cultures enriches the experiences of the parents, professionals and children.

As pointed out in the other sections of this thesis, the fact that it is established through the initiative of a parent sets this crèche apart from other existing crèches in the city of Strasbourg. Unlike the other bilingual crèches especially the ones highlighting the German-French languages, based on the regional language policy favouring German, the choice of English is out of a parent's desire to transmit her "heart language" (Appendix C.1, p. 17) to her offspring. Her motivation was personal. Remarkably, there were no political or economic interests but only genuine aspirations to mitigate the inevitable effects of migration: heritage

language loss and cultural alienation. The same primary motivation arises in the interviews of migrant parents whose first language or the common language between spouses is English. For them, English serves as a link to their countries of origin. They envision their children to have the necessary language competence that will pave the way for continuous connection with their countries of origin. Competence in English seems to mean membership or citizenship to their countries where for the most part this language is essential, as well as to the global world thus, preparing their children for mobility, either to return to their original country or to explore the rest of the world.

Another important fact that needs to be stressed is that all the professionals have migration experiences, which are unique to them but which contribute in the crèche to a culture of mobility and multilingualism and to preparing the children to live in a superdiverse world.

#### 10.3.4 Towards a Holistic Understanding of Linguaging

OPOL can never be applied strictly. It is ideological to think that one can separate languages in bilingual people because when two people have several languages at their disposal, they cannot suppress one at all times. They cannot control their languaging at all times. Their languages are integrated within one competence, thus they cannot language like monolinguals. Bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one. This should be understood by educational actors and policy makers involved in bilingual education. In the case of a bilingual ECEC setting, children obviously need to have sufficient input in both languages. However, professionals should think in terms of the notion of languaging and its specificity in bilingual context rather than in terms of separating languages. All the recent work on translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2013; Garcia, 2018; Garcia & Li, 2014, 2014; Garcia & Wei, 2013; García et al., 2016; Otheguy et al., 2015; L. Wei, 2018) has shown that making links between two languages helps bilinguals to construct their bilingual identity. A harmonious bilingual identity means languaging freely without having to “police” one’s language practices at all times.

Moreover, in some contexts of the data presented, the policy of OPOL had to be negotiated. As clearly seen, it is impossible to rigidly implement language separation in an environment where multiple languages are spoken. The point of having boundaries between languages is not realistic but purely ideological. In reality, the linguistic approach is inordinately general and does not account for specific situations where OPOL becomes too difficult to apply. In other words, the staff members have to make sense of how to implement it. Various factors need to be considered: the proficiency of the interlocutors in either English or French, getting the meaning across as fast as possible and children’s safety and well-being. Hence, they

need to interpret this language principle in their interactions with each other, in their contact with children, in their encounters with parents of different linguistic backgrounds and in the performance of their different activities within the crèche. This, in the case of this crèche, language negotiation does not mean rejecting, contesting, resisting nor disregarding the initially identified language policy rather it means that the actors are reinterpreting the policy as reflected in their practices to suit the communicative needs in a particular situation.

When choosing to implement OPOL in an education structure such as this early childhood setting, actors should be aware that LP is multi-layered. Although imposing language rules seem to be an efficient way to manage multiple languages to make sure that language goals are attained, but in point of fact, they do not always make sense. When children's welfare is at stake, the policy has to be set aside. It is probably this point that would be most useful to understand for professionals working in a bilingual structure that they should not feel guilty when they infringe or perhaps contest the policy. Thus, the idea of imposing borders needs to be deconstructed. Concrete examples of languages exchanges in the crèche show a more fluid language use, which we usually call language mixing or as understand today translanguaging. In fact, this notion deviates from the monolingual perspective to the more realistic scenario of language use in a society where superdiversity results to language and cultural diversity, a phenomenon that is common in international cities such as Strasbourg.

Finally, as our data clearly shows that care comes before language policy in many instances and this point perhaps could be explained to professionals, as well as the difference between functioning in a bilingual or monolingual mode and that both modes can be complementary, a monolingual mode being necessary for some activities and a bilingual one in other instances. Most importantly as argued by Hélot and Fialais (2014), children should not be left to develop their bilingual identity on their own. They should from the start understand that they speak two or more languages and these languages are not separate parts of their identity. Therefore, they should not be given a language model where they have to watch which language to call on every time they want to express themselves, but be encouraged to call on all their languaging resources.

## 10.4 Implications of the Study

As the aim of my research is to comprehensively describe how a bilingual early years structure manages several languages (for in reality the setting is multilingual) potentially, the following stakeholders will benefit from it:



For the scientific community, understanding language policies and practice at the level of ECEC will exemplify the complexity of language choices made by multilingual families and ask the question of how educational institutions can offer continuity or not to such family language policies and for the benefit of whom, the children, their families or the city or state institutions funding early childhood education.

For policymakers seeking effective, creative and practical ways to deliver quality early childhood education and care, this research highlights the link between bilingualism and multilingualism. This crèche has chosen to be bilingual in English French while all families are multilingual and speak languages not represented by the language choices of this bilingual setting. We can therefore ask the question of how the language needs of all the children can be met, and whether priority should be given to dominant languages of power such as French and English at the expense of less powerful languages.

For early childhood service providers in general, this thesis should provide a better appreciation of the importance and complexity of implementing a language policy whose central purpose is the acquisition and harmonious development of plurilingualism in a multilingual context, and that language policy is multi-layered and in practice can only be flexible if all languages are to be given the same status and value in an early education setting.

For the parent association, which lies at the heart of this project, this research could be a vehicle for them to re-evaluate their initial objectives and goals as far as bilingualism and multilingualism and thus it could serve as a framework to discuss the extent to which they want their children to be exposed from the youngest age to two or more languages both in the family and in the ECEC setting. Regarding the OPOL policy, the parents could be made to understand the fact that there are always gaps between policy and practice whether at home or in an educational setting, and that children should be given bilingual models of interactions to develop a harmonious bilingual identity, rather than examples of language practices which forbid one language or the other for the sake of avoiding translanguaging. The most recent research on bi/multilingualism today has shown on the contrary that translanguaging is regarded today as a legitimate practice for multilingual individuals.



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<http://drees.social-sante.gouv.fr/etudes-et-statistiques>

[www.education.gouv.fr](http://www.education.gouv.fr)

<http://familangues.org/>

[www.lefuret.org](http://www.lefuret.org)

[www.insee.fr](http://www.insee.fr)

[www.msa.fr](http://www.msa.fr)

[www.mon-enfant.fr](http://www.mon-enfant.fr)

# English Summary

## **Language Policy and Practices in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC): A Case Study of an English-Bilingual Crèche in Strasbourg**

Eloise Caporal-Ebersold

This doctoral thesis focuses on the first parental English-French bilingual crèche established in the multilingual city of Strasbourg, France. With the one person, one language (OPOL) policy as this ECEC setting's identified language policy (LP), it is my aim to understand its language policy processes. Primarily informed by Spolsky's tripartite LP conceptualisation, I seek to analyse the following: the *declared language policy* or what the proponents say about how they manage languages; the *perceived language policy* or what they believe about OPOL; and the *practiced language policy* or what they do and how they implement the said LP. Moreover, following Johnson (2009), I also address the multi-layered dimension of LP and look at the agents, goals, processes and discourses involved in the creation of this crèche. This research endeavour aims to address a gap in LP studies that to a certain extent have focused on either family or formal educational settings.

As a qualitative, longitudinal research, I employed an ethnographic approach (Conteh, 2005; Heller, 2008; Mc Carthy, 2011). During the crèche's first year of operation, I visited and observed at least twice a week for a total of 113 hours and 33 minutes during the year 2013-2014. I gathered the following data: interviews with parents and professionals, audio-recordings of sessions, field notes to record observations, and crèche documents and photos. As entry point to analyse the available data, I used discourse analysis.

The following are some of the major findings:

- There are disproportionate claims between the perceptions of a language in relation to the generally accepted notions of OPOL policy. For instance, OPOL has been identified to ensure that parents' languages are maintained. However, English and French are not the family languages in all cases. The linguistic reality of the crèche is more complex and complicated than it was envisaged when it was created.
- It is impossible to rigidly apply language separation in an environment where multiple languages are spoken. The idea of having barriers between languages is not realistic but purely ideological.

- The decision to strictly adopt a language policy such as the "one person, one language" reveals the underlying existence of a "persistent monolingual ideology," which permeates the whole of French society and the French education system. Even if this ECEC structure is outside the traditional school setting, widespread notions such as the purity of the language, the separation of languages and the need for "native speakers" as referents or language educators are ubiquitous.

In conclusion, our data clearly shows that care comes before language policy in many instances. This point, as well as the difference between functioning in a bilingual or monolingual mode, could be explained to professionals. Both modes can be complementary: a monolingual mode being necessary for some activities and a bilingual one in other instances. Children should not be left to develop their bilingual identity on their own. They should from the start understand that they speak two or more languages. These languages are not separate parts of their identity. Therefore, they should not be given a language model where they have to watch which language to call on every time they want to express themselves, but be encouraged to utilise all their languaging resources.

Keywords: *One person, one language* (OPOL), Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), language policy, *declared language policy*, *perceived language policy*, *practiced language policy*, family language policy, bilingualism, multilingualism, translanguaging.

# French Summary

## **Des politiques aux pratiques linguistiques dans un contexte de petite enfance: étude de cas d'une crèche bilingue anglais-français à Strasbourg**

Eloise Caporal-Ebersold

Ce document est un résumé de la thèse qui porte sur les politiques linguistiques et les pratiques langagières mise en œuvre dans la première crèche bilingue anglais-français à Strasbourg. En suivant la structure de la thèse sur laquelle est basé ce résumé, je présente dix sections principales. Dans la première section, je fournis un bref aperçu de la recherche et une justification de la nécessité d'entreprendre ce travail académique. Je formule ensuite les questions auxquelles cette étude tente de répondre. Dans la seconde section, j'explique les différentes manières dont les politiques linguistiques (PL) sont conceptualisées, en situant la présente recherche dans le contexte plus large des études sur les politiques linguistiques. Dans la troisième section, afin d'offrir une meilleure compréhension de l'état de l'éducation dans le domaine de la petite enfance (PE), je donne un aperçu des contextes européens, français et strasbourgeois de la PE. Dans la quatrième section, en utilisant l'approche déductive, je discute des politiques de la PE au niveau européen, français et au niveau de la ville. Dans la cinquième section, j'introduis l'étude de cas. Je commence en expliquant comment la notion de bilinguisme a été conceptualisée dans la crèche que j'ai choisie d'étudier. Je me concentre ensuite sur les acteurs qui composent cette crèche : le président de l'association, les parents, les professionnels et les enfants. Dans la sixième section, j'explique la façon dont j'ai conduit une recherche ethnographique dans cette crèche multilingue. Dans les septième, huitième et neuvième section, je présente de l'analyse à trois niveaux des données empiriques recueillies, sous les titres suivants : « politique linguistique déclarée », « politique linguistique perçue » et « politique linguistique pratiquée ». Finalement, dans la dixième section, je conclus ce résumé avec quelques généralisations de l'étude, ses implications et plusieurs aspects importants pour de futures recherches.

### **1. Contexte de la recherche**

Les modèles de choix et de pratiques linguistiques au sein de la famille et des institutions éducatives ont été étudiés par des chercheurs travaillant dans le domaine des politiques linguistiques (Ricento 2006 ; Schiffman 2006 ; Shohamy 2006 ; Spolsky 2004 ; Tollefson 2002, entre autres). C'est ce domaine particulier de la sociolinguistique que j'ai choisi



d'étudier afin de mieux comprendre les phénomènes de contacts de langues dans un contexte particulier, celui de la petite enfance, et pourquoi certaines langues sont choisies plutôt que d'autres, et comment des acteurs éducatifs impliqués dans des situations linguistiques complexes conceptualisent le bi- ou le multilinguisme (Baker 2011 ; Garcia 2009 ; Grosjean 2010, Hélot & Erfurt 2016). En tant que domaine d'étude, je situe donc cette recherche dans le champ plus large de la sociolinguistique et du multilinguisme.

Pour ce qui est des enfants et de la politique linguistique dans la famille, (King, Fogle, et Logan-Terry 2008; Schwartz 2010; Spolsky 2012), la mise en œuvre de la politique "une personne, une langue" (UPUL) semble être celle que préfèrent les parents. Cependant, la prévalence de la politique UPUL dans la famille (Leopold 1949; Ronjat 1913) et dans le cadre scolaire (Hélot et Fialais 2014) cache les pratiques réelles des interlocuteurs qui n'adhèrent pas toujours strictement à ces choix linguistiques. Comme l'ont montré les recherches, les bilingues ont leur propre façon de gérer et d'utiliser les deux codes linguistiques à leur disposition. En d'autres termes, les bilingues ne gèrent pas la langue comme les monolingues et ne sont pas deux monolingues en une même personne (Garcia 2009; Grosjean 2001; Grosjean 2008; Grosjean 2010).

Parce que les parents de familles mixtes ont un fort désir d'élever leurs enfants avec deux langues et que ceux-ci deviennent des "bilingues équilibrés" (voir le chapitre 7 pour une discussion sur les bilingues équilibrés), la politique UPUL est considérée depuis les travaux de Ronjat (1913), comme la politique linguistique la plus efficace pour l'acquisition bilingue, et est ainsi la plus répandue encore aujourd'hui. Bien que d'autres politiques linguistiques aient été documentées (Barron-Hauwaert 2004; De Houwer 2009; Döpke 1992; Juan-Garau and Pérez-Vidal 2001; Hélot, 2007, Lanza 1997), la popularité d'UPUL persiste. De plus, elle a, partout dans le monde, souvent été adaptée à des contextes d'éducation formels lorsque l'éducation et l'apprentissage bilingue des langues sont en jeu.

En Alsace, le programme bilingue allemand-français adhère au principe de séparation des langues qui est l'une des caractéristiques principales d'UPUL (Hélot et Fialais 2014; Young 2014). Comme règle générale dans ces contextes, on donne aux personnes des attributions linguistiques auxquelles elles sont censées se tenir dans leurs interactions avec les enfants ou avec les étudiants. La séparation linguistique peut prendre d'autres formes en dehors de la distinction linguistique basée sur la personne. Elle inclue l'utilisation de la langue en fonction de l'espace (salle de classe, espace de jeu) et la gestion des langues en fonction du temps (ex. matin/français, après-midi/anglais) comme en Alsace. Ces pratiques se sont étendues à d'autres contextes bilingues dans la ville de Strasbourg, soit ceux qui concernent les très jeunes enfants qui fréquentent des crèches (Caporal-Ebersold et Young 2016).

Cependant, Gupta (2009, pp. 116-117) remet en question l'efficacité d'UPUL sur la base de données recueillies dans des grandes villes caractérisées par de hauts niveaux de multilinguisme et de multiculturalisme telles que New York, Singapour ou Sydney. Avec la circulation constante et rapide de personnes qui résulte en une diversité linguistique et culturelle sans précédent dans les grandes villes en Europe (King et Carson 2016), il devient pertinent de comprendre comment fonctionne les politiques linguistiques et en particulier UPUL, et quels en sont les effets sur les pratiques linguistiques et la conceptualisation du bilinguisme en contexte éducatif. Le fait est que les situations multilingues sont devenues plus complexes et plus compliquées à gérer. La décision d'adopter ou de mettre en place une politique linguistique a été considérée comme une solution pour gérer ces complexités et les défis du multilinguisme (Tollefson 1991; Tollefson 2001; Tollefson 2001).

Au fil des ans et surtout depuis ces trente dernières années, les politiques linguistiques ont été conceptualisées de différentes manières afin de répondre à des questions diverses concernant la gestion de situations multilingues complexes. De plus, cette problématique a été étudiée dans différents contextes en parallèle avec d'autres questions de recherche. Dans les divers contextes éducatifs, que ce soit aux niveaux macro ou micro, le secteur de la PE a peu été étudié par les chercheurs. En France, l'éducation de la PE s'adresse principalement à deux groupes d'enfants, des enfants âgés de 3-6 ans et des enfants plus jeunes, âgés de 0-3 ans; la plupart des chercheurs se sont intéressés au groupe d'enfants plus âgés scolarisés en école maternelle et relevant de l'institution éducation nationale. C'est donc ce déficit de recherche que je tente de combler dans cette thèse: conduire une étude sur les politiques linguistiques dans le contexte des premières années de socialisation de jeunes enfants âgés de 0 à 3 grandissant dans des familles multilingues et à qui les parents veulent transmettre leur héritage langagier pluriel.

Au cours des dix dernières années, des preuves des effets bénéfiques de l'éducation de la petite enfance ont afflué. Par exemple, les conclusions de Burger (2010) indiquent des effets bénéfiques à court et à long terme sur le développement cognitif d'enfants de milieux sociaux défavorisés (voir Burger pour plus de détails sur l'étude). Par conséquent, il semble impératif de comprendre les processus de planification et de politiques linguistiques dans une crèche. Les enfants de cet âge acquièrent le langage et la compréhension de leur place dans la société par le biais de leur interaction avec les personnes qui s'occupent d'eux (Siraj-Blatchford et Clarke 2000). Les implications d'une étude conduite durant ces jeunes années ont donc une portée considérable pour le champ des politiques linguistiques et celui de l'éducation bi/multilingue dans la petite enfance.

Étudier une crèche parentale bilingue anglais-français, permet d'acquérir une compréhension plus approfondie des motivations et des processus complexes à l'œuvre dans l'élaboration d'une politique linguistique éducative dans un contexte donné. Compte tenu du fait que cette crèche a été créée en France, soit dans le cadre d'un état-nation de tradition monolingue, et en Alsace, région marquée par une longue histoire de conflits avec son voisin, il a été essentiel de s'intéresser au contexte sociopolitique de la structure en question et à la planification des langues choisies, le français et l'anglais, en relation avec les acteurs concernés, les professionnels de la petite enfance, les enfants et leurs parents. Comme la plupart des parents qui fréquentent cette crèche sont des individus transnationaux ou des migrants, cette recherche est aussi l'histoire de leur migration, de leur désir de s'intégrer dans une société nouvelle tout en gardant des liens avec leurs cultures d'origine par le biais d'une transmission linguistique et culturelle à leurs enfants. Notre recherche a révélé le fort désir et l'engagement des parents dans une éducation bilingue qui mène à un bilinguisme « équilibré », ce qui explique le choix d'une politique linguistique éducative basée sur la notion de « une personne, une langue » (UPUL). Nous avons considéré ce principe ou cette pratique ou encore cette stratégie comme un exemple de politiques linguistiques dont nous avons choisi de comprendre les enjeux.

En conséquence, notre problématique de recherche a été formulée ainsi: ***comment fonctionne une structure éducative bilingue dédiée à la petite enfance du point de vue des politiques linguistiques, quelles sont les implications du choix de la politique UPUL sur les pratiques des acteurs éducatifs et des familles au sein de la crèche en question, et quel est le lien entre le bilinguisme déclaré de la structure et le multilinguisme des familles ? Enfin l'étude des choix de langues dans un contexte tel que celui de la petite enfance apporte-t-elle une compréhension nouvelle de la notion de politique linguistique éducative?***

Pour aller plus loin dans la compréhension des politiques linguistiques mises en œuvre au sein de cette crèche, les questions suivantes ont été élaborées à partir des travaux de McCarthy (2011) :

- 1) À quoi ressemble la politique linguistique (PL) Une Personne, Une Langue (UPUL) dans une crèche parentale multilingue ? Qui en sont les acteurs, quels sont leurs objectifs, à qui et pour qui ces politiques sont mises en œuvre et quelles en sont les conséquences ?
- 2) Existe-t-il des écarts entre la politique telle qu'elle a été conceptualisée et ce qu'il est possible de mettre en œuvre ? Comment les parents et les professionnels comprennent-ils l'écart entre leur choix de politique linguistique et leurs pratiques ?

- 3) Quel modèle d'analyse des politiques linguistiques peut être utilisé pour comprendre une institution multilingue au service de la petite enfance ? Les modèles décrits dans la littérature scientifique peuvent-ils être appliqués à ce contexte ?
- 4) Comment les acteurs de la PL comprennent-ils leur réalité multilingue ? Comment agissent-ils sur leur réalité multilingue ? Que souhaitent-ils pour les enfants dont ils s'occupent en matière de compétence linguistique ? Qu'en est-il de la relation entre les professionnels et les parents sur ces questions linguistiques ?
- 5) Comment les usagers et leurs pratiques linguistiques sont-ils « régulés » par les politiques linguistiques, explicites et implicites ? Comment les professionnels de la crèche sont-ils définis au travers de ces processus de politiques linguistiques ? Quels intérêts servent ces processus d'élaboration de politiques linguistiques ?
- (6) D'un point de vue méthodologique, comment peut-on conduire une étude impliquant des enfants en très bas âge dans une structure éducative dédiée à la petite enfance ?

## **2. Conceptualisations de la politique linguistique**

Les recherches sur les politiques linguistiques (PL) ou la politique et la planification linguistiques (PPL) ont pris de l'ampleur au cours des dernières décennies et ont été appréhendées à partir de divers points de vue (Hornberger, 2006; Johnson, 2013; T. K. Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; T. Ricento, 2000, 2006; H. Schiffman, 2012; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004; Tollefson, 1991). Même si les études sur les politiques linguistiques se sont amplifiées par l'examen de cas aux niveaux micro et macro, Cooper (1989) pense qu'il est impossible d'établir un modèle qui engloberait les questions complexes liées à la planification linguistique. C'est pourquoi il considère nécessaire d'examiner les processus de planification linguistique à partir de cas spécifiques soit au niveau micro pour que des théories importantes puissent être élaborées.

Dans la même veine, Ricento (2006) prétend qu'il n'y a toujours pas de théorie globale sur les politiques linguistiques. Johnson (2013), quant à lui, met davantage l'accent sur la collecte de données empiriques sur les politiques linguistiques, qu'il considère manquantes par rapport à son dynamisme théorique et conceptuel. Il recommande donc d'étudier les politiques linguistiques au niveau micro au travers de l'analyse de textes et de discours portant sur des domaines que la PPL n'a pas encore explorés. En tenant compte de l'apport de Cooper (1989) et de Johnson (2013), la présente recherche se focalise sur la compréhension des politiques linguistiques au niveau micro, soit dans le cas spécifique d'un centre d'éducation de la petite enfance (PE) bi/multilingue.

En ce qui concerne les termes de *planification linguistique* et de *politique linguistique*, les chercheurs se sont accordés clairement sur le fait que les deux concepts sont liés mais recouvrent des activités claires et bien définies. Cependant, déterminer si la planification linguistique est un concept plus vaste que la politique linguistique ou vice versa est une question en continuelle discussion. Le terme *planification linguistique* s'est développé dans les années 1960 et 1970 lorsque des chercheurs ont examiné comment les nations pouvaient délibérément prôner un changement linguistique. Ceci est cohérent avec la définition de Cooper (1989) selon laquelle la planification linguistique est une tentative déterminée à affecter la manière dont la (ou les) langue est acquise, structurée, et utilisée au sein d'une entité politique. Plus récemment, Shohamy (2006) pense que la planification linguistique concernent les visées interventionnistes de décideurs politiques dans les années 1950 et 1960, dont les efforts avaient pour but de prescrire des comportements linguistiques.

Pour Ricento (2006), la politique linguistique est un terme générique qui "a pour but de traiter des problèmes sociaux qui souvent comprennent les langues....et propose des solutions réalistes" (p. 11). Il considère les études sur les PL comme un moyen par lequel des individus prennent conscience que des environnements et contextes variés contribuent à des différences dans l'utilisation de la langue. De plus, il souligne que "...les politiques – explicites ou implicites – peuvent renforcer ou opposer les inégalités sociales et économiques liées aux différences de genre, d'ethnie, de race, de tribu, de religion, de culture, de région et de politique". (p. 18). Deux réalités importantes au sujet des politiques linguistiques doivent être soulignées sur la base de cette affirmation. Premièrement, que les politiques linguistiques peuvent être soit implicites soit explicites, ce qu'a clarifié Spolsky (2004) plus tôt, "...la politique linguistique existe même lorsqu'elle n'a pas été rendue explicite ou établie par une autorité...Même lorsqu'il y a une politique linguistique formelle écrite, son effet sur les pratiques linguistiques n'est ni garanti ni constant" (p. 8). Deuxièmement, les politiques linguistiques peuvent avoir des conséquences soit favorables soit défavorables sur divers problèmes sociétaux. De plus, ceci met en exergue l'influence puissante que les politiques linguistiques ont sur la vie de tous les jours, qu'on le reconnaisse ou non.

D'autre part, Ricento (2006) considère la planification linguistique comme une série de processus qui comprennent "le développement, la mise en œuvre et l'évaluation de politiques linguistiques spécifiques" (p.8). Basé sur cette définition, on pourrait en déduire que, pour qu'une politique linguistique soit réussie, la planification linguistique doit être efficace.

Au fur et à mesure que le domaine des politiques linguistiques évolue, de nouveaux termes sont proposés. La forme abrégée PPL peut vouloir dire soit politique et planification linguistiques comme utilisée par Hornberger (2006) et Ricento (2000) soit planification et politique linguistiques, également PPL, comme employé par Johnson (2013). Canagarajah (2006) considère la PPL comme une étude qui dépeint typiquement les perspectives des décideurs politiques et des spécialistes, la caractérisant comme étant programmatique et prescriptive. Son but est de montrer comment la langue devrait être utilisée, opérant ainsi au niveau macro de l'état. Entre temps, Hornberger (2006) pense que la formulation politique et planification linguistiques permet de comprendre qu'il est possible de séparer les deux termes et qu'ils sont liés entre eux.

Récemment, Johnson (2013) accepte le terme PPL pour souligner les processus de "création, interprétation, et appropriation" qui, selon lui, peuvent être présents à chaque niveau d'élaboration des politiques linguistiques. Par ailleurs, McCarty (2011b: 8), utilisant l'approche socioculturelle, s'intéresse aux "interactions humaines, négociations, et production conditionnées par des relations de pouvoir". Ceci est lié à la définition des politiques linguistiques de Johnson (2009) qui met l'accent sur ses multiples niveaux de processus impliquant de multiples agents dans sa mise en œuvre.

Cependant, Bonacina considère (2010, 2012) la conceptualisation de la politique linguistique de Spolsky (2009) comme étant la plus élaborée. Déterminer les trois éléments formant une politique linguistique est essentiel pour une compréhension globale des phénomènes linguistiques en jeu.

«Un premier pas utile est de distinguer les trois composantes de la politique linguistique d'une communauté linguistique : ses pratiques linguistiques - le modèle habituel de sélection parmi les variétés qui composent son répertoire linguistique : ses croyances ou son idéologie linguistiques - les représentations au sujet de la langue et de son utilisation ; et tout effort spécifique pour modifier ou influencer cette pratique par tout type d'intervention, de planification ou de gestion linguistiques.» (Spolsky, 2004:5).

De plus, Spolsky (2004) affirme qu'il y a des aspects politiques à chacun des trois niveaux qui peuvent ne pas être cohérents.

"Les pratiques, les croyances et la gestion linguistiques ne sont pas nécessairement concordantes, [chacun de ces aspects] peut révéler une politique linguistique différente" (Spolsky, 2004:217).

Il est donc intéressant d'examiner de près et de différencier les trois conceptualisations: *La politique linguistique pratiquée* (Bonacina, 2010, 2012) se réfère aux politiques linguistiques telle qu'elles se réalisent dans la pratique linguistique, plus spécifiquement ce que Spolsky nomme le modèle linguistique et les modèles de choix linguistiques; *la politique linguistique perçue*, se réfère à la politique linguistique trouvée dans les croyances et idéologies (Shohamy, 2006), et *la politique linguistique déclarée*, qui est un concept proposé par Shohamy (2006: 68) pour se référer aux politiques linguistiques choisies pour les décisions de gestion d'une communauté.

En ce qui concerne le titre de cette recherche, plutôt que d'utiliser le terme générique de *politiques linguistiques* pour y inclure les trois composantes élaborées par Spolsky (2004, 2006, 2009) et réaffirmées par Bonacina (2012), j'ai choisi d'utiliser le terme *politiques et pratiques linguistiques* pour mettre l'accent sur une partie significative de ma recherche qui est l'observation des pratiques linguistiques réelles au sein de la crèche.

### **3. Éducation de la petite enfance (PE): Contextes macro et micro**

#### *La PE: une priorité européenne*

Au cours des dernières années, l'Europe et ses pays membres ont identifié le secteur de la PE comme politique prioritaire. Ses implications au regard du futur socio-économique de l'Europe, son potentiel pour réduire les inégalités sociales et culturelles et son rôle crucial dans le développement des enfants sont reconnus (COM: 2011, 66 final; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat: 2014). En fait, l'éducation de la PE est évoquée dans le contexte de discussions sur l'égalité des chances entre hommes et femmes, la stabilité économique et le bien-être des enfants. Il est largement reconnu que les questions autour de l'éducation de la petite enfance sont reliées à des questions sociales et économiques plus larges. Plus concrètement, en réponse à la forte demande de places dans les institutions de PE et l'apparente faible fréquentation des structures PE par des enfants de moins de 3 ans (dans certains états européens), les pays européens se sont accordés sur ce qui est désormais connu sous le nom d'Objectifs de Barcelone, mettant au point des priorités pour améliorer l'accessibilité et la qualité des services de la PE. Dans cet accord, les états membres ont fixé comme objectifs d'augmenter le nombre de place pour accueillir au moins 33% d'enfants en-dessous de 3 ans d'ici à 2010.

#### *La PE en France*

La France a une longue tradition de services PE depuis les années 1800 (OCDE: 2004). Les services de la petite enfance sont au cœur de la politique familiale française et disposent de

financements importants. En 2006, ce secteur a bénéficié d'un budget de 10.2 milliards d'euros, alors que plus récemment en 2013 la PE a été dotée d'un budget de 15.1 milliards d'euros, ce qui correspond à 1% du PIB du pays. En France, "la petite enfance" couvre des services s'adressant aux enfants de 0 jusqu'à 6 ans, avant qu'ils ne commencent l'école obligatoire. Cependant, il convient de clarifier que, comme beaucoup d'autres pays européens, la France a mis en place un "système divisé" où des ministères différents sont responsables des services offerts aux enfants âgés de 0-3 ans et de 3-6 ans. Comme cette étude se concentre sur les dispositifs de PE pour le groupe des plus jeunes enfants, des informations spécifiques portant sur les 0-3 ans seront discutés dans cette section.

Au niveau national, il existe des agences gouvernementales centralisées qui sont en charge des politiques, du financement, et de l'organisation générale du système de la PE, y compris la formation et l'agrémentation de son personnel. La PE non-scolaire, qui s'adresse aux enfants en-dessous de 3 ans, est sous l'auspice du Ministère des Familles, de l'Enfance et des Droits des Femmes, (2016) qui élabore les règlements pour les différentes formes de service de la PE. Trois acteurs principaux sont impliqués dans le financement des institutions PE. Le Ministère des familles, la Caisse nationale des allocations familiales (CNAF) qui définit les objectifs, le budget et le financement des allocations familiales au niveau régional. La caisse d'allocations familiales locale (CAF) est un acteur clé pour soutenir le développement de la politique locale en concert avec l'administration de la ville qui pourvoit également au financement des services de PE dans les communes respectives. La protection maternelle et infantile (PMI), quant à elle, supervise les services d'agrémentation et de surveillance. Toute structure PE, comme une crèche, a besoin de l'approbation de la PMI avant de démarrer ses opérations.

### *Le service PE à Strasbourg*

Au niveau de la ville de Strasbourg, trois organismes importants sont responsables des services de la PE: la *Caisse d'Allocations Familiales (CAF) du Bas-Rhin* qui travaille en partenariat avec l'administration de la ville de Strasbourg et la *Protection Maternelle et Infantile (PMI)*. La CAF, en coopération avec l'administration de la ville, aide les parents à trouver un équilibre entre la vie professionnelle et la vie de famille (Guide: 2013). A partir d'un système de calcul prédéterminé de la CAF et sur la base de leur situation économique et sociale spécifique, les familles touchent des allocations familiales, bénéficient de réductions d'impôts ou de remises d'impôt. La même entité alloue les fonds pour soutenir les centres de PE et en déterminer le coût pour chaque famille.



L'administration de la ville est, par ailleurs, responsable de la fourniture des services PE dans la ville par le biais du "service famille et petite enfance", placé sous la direction d'un adjoint au maire nommé. Ce bureau détermine les politiques de la ville, les directives et les projets de la petite enfance pour les prochaines six années, ce qui correspond à la durée du mandat de l'élu. Les propositions faites à ce niveau sont alors présentées au conseil municipal pour approbation. Bien que la plupart des employés dans ce service soient non-élus, les objectifs des services de la ville en matière de PE s'harmonisent en quelque sorte avec les priorités et stratégies de l'administration. Même si les services dans ce secteur sont maintenus quel que soit le parti au pouvoir, les politiques sont influencées par les convictions et persuasions de l'administration. Finalement, le rôle de la PMI est indispensable. Elle détermine si un centre PE répond aux exigences nécessaires pour obtenir un agrément et pour fonctionner et accueillir des enfants dans son environnement.

Ces dernières années, la PE a été identifiée comme l'une des priorités de la ville de Strasbourg. En cohérence avec les objectifs européens, la ville a fait de grands pas pour améliorer la qualité des services PE et augmenter les places et les options de garde à la disposition des parents. En 2014, 66 établissements collectifs étaient gérés par la ville, alors que 25 établissements étaient gérés de façon privée avec un total de 3100 places disponibles pour les enfants. La même année, cinq centres pour la petite enfance ont été ouverts (voir Annexe F). Ces efforts au niveau de la ville reflètent d'une certaine façon l'influence de la Commission européenne sur les états-nations et sur les villes européennes. Située au cœur de l'Europe et hébergeant un nombre significatif d'institutions européennes et internationales, la petite enfance et les politiques semblent résonner avec les objectifs et aspirations de l'Europe. Le fondateur de la crèche parentale bilingue objet de cette étude a fait la même observation, "...les politiques sont aujourd'hui très euro-centrées..." (Annexe C.4, 16 juin 2014).

A bien des égards, les discours au niveau de la ville sont parallèles aux discours sur la PE au niveau européen en mettant l'accent sur la quantité et la qualité. La même attention est donnée à la *quantité*, c'est à dire créer plus de centres PE et d'options de garde pour les familles et à la *qualité* de l'accueil dans ces structures. En fait, le 21 juin 2011, le conseil municipal a approuvé à l'unanimité la charte de qualité qui sert de ligne directrice pour les opérations des centres de PE pour assurer un service efficace et effectif. Cette charte est apparue bien plus tôt que le code de qualité de l'éducation et de l'accueil de la petite enfance (2015) au niveau européen. On peut dire aisément que Strasbourg fait des pas de géant pour améliorer et institutionnaliser ses services d'éducation et d'accueil de la petite enfance. Cependant, dans les deux cas (au niveau européen et au niveau des villes), le code de

qualité ne sert que de guide pour les centres individuels d'accueil des enfants dans la ville. En d'autres termes, la mise en œuvre et l'interprétation des points d'action principaux décrits dans le code dépendent largement des professionnels et des parents, comme c'est le cas pour les crèches et garderies parentales.

#### **4. Politique linguistique et éducation dans le secteur de la petite enfance**

##### *Politique linguistique européenne dans le secteur PE*

Alors que l'Europe fait face à la réalité d'une diversité linguistique et d'une migration croissantes qui inclut bien évidemment aussi le secteur de l'éducation de la petite enfance, des questions spécifiques doivent être prises en compte au niveau européen. En réponse à ces récents développements, le Conseil de l'UE, par le biais de la Présidence du Luxembourg, a organisé une conférence sur la diversité et le multilinguisme dans l'éducation de la petite enfance (PE) en septembre 2015<sup>26</sup>. La conférence a traité de sujets très importants repris dans la proposition présentant les principes clés pour un code de qualité de la PE<sup>27</sup> en mettant l'accent sur le développement linguistique des jeunes enfants et la valorisation de la diversité dans l'éducation de la petite enfance.

La politique linguistique dans l'éducation de la petite enfance en Europe est influencée par la manière dont les langues, la diversité linguistique, l'apprentissage des langues et leur enseignement sont considérés par deux entités supranationales d'importance: l'Union européenne (UE) et le Conseil de l'Europe (CdE), soit directement, soit indirectement. Les deux organisations considèrent la diversité linguistique en Europe comme une ressource pour fournir aux enfants une meilleure compréhension de différentes cultures. Les travaux sur les PL menés par des experts nommés auprès de ces institutions est pertinent pour la conceptualisation du multilinguisme dans des centres de la PE.

##### *La politique linguistique éducative en France*

La Constitution française mentionne clairement que la langue de la République est le français (article 2 de la Constitution, Assemblée Nationale, 1958<sup>28</sup>). Cependant, avec l'influence croissante de l'anglais dans de nombreux aspects de la vie en France, le ministre

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/agenda/2015/09/10-11-conf-education-petite-enfance/index.html>

<sup>27</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/ecec/ecec-quality-framework\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2011-2013/ecec/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Copie complète en ligne de la Constitution du 4 octobre 1958 : [http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/root/bank\\_mm/anglais/constiution\\_anglais\\_juillet2008.pdf](http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/root/bank_mm/anglais/constiution_anglais_juillet2008.pdf)

de la culture Jacques Toubon, a proposé une loi à l'Assemblée Nationale française rendant obligatoire l'usage du français dans cinq domaines: l'emploi, les médias audiovisuels, le commerce, les réunions publiques telles que les conférences et congrès, et plus important encore, l'éducation. Selon Ager (1999), cette loi, connue sous le nom de loi Toubon de 1994<sup>29</sup> montre trois motifs sous-jacents qui peuvent être résumés comme suit : "insécurité ou peur des autres, identité ou fierté de sa propre communauté, et création et projection d'une image, ou désir de s'assurer que d'autres adoptent ou au moins reconnaissent la force de cette identité."

Bien que cette position protectionniste envers sa langue soit en place, l'état français doit négocier sa position au vu de sa qualité de membre et ses obligations envers des organisations supranationales comme l'UE et le Conseil de l'Europe. Comme les politiques européennes recommandent la promotion du plurilinguisme et l'éducation interculturelle (Cavalli, Coste, Crisan & van de Ven, 2009), le Ministère de l'Éducation nationale (M.E.N.) a récemment clarifié spécifiquement qu'il était nécessaire de reconsidérer les pratiques linguistiques réelles des professionnels dans la sphère éducative. Par conséquent, selon le rapport annuel 2009 des Inspecteurs de l'Éducation Nationale publié par le M.E.N. en 2010 et réitéré en 2015, même si le français est la langue officielle du pays, ceci ne devrait pas empêcher les enseignants et éducateurs "de prendre en compte ou de travailler avec les langues parlées par les enfants dont ils ont la charge" (Caporal-Ebersold & Young, 2016: p. 8).

#### *La politique linguistique éducative pour les enfants de 0-3 ans*

Il n'y a pas de PL spécifique relative au secteur de la petite enfance au niveau national autre que la PL générale de la France d'insister sur la maîtrise du français à l'école et pour l'intégration des enfants dit allophones. La politique sociale actuelle concernant la PE à Strasbourg donne priorité aux enfants de familles socio économiquement défavorisées. De ce fait, les centres de la petite enfance dans la ville ont tendance à accueillir majoritairement des enfants issus de l'immigration, qui peuvent parler chez eux des "langues de statut inférieur" (Hélot, 2008). Les règles de fonctionnement des centres collectifs à Strasbourg (La Petite Enfance, La Ville de Strasbourg, 2012), indiquent spécifiquement que la priorité est donnée aux enfants pour raisons sociales et de santé. Les situations suivantes sont mentionnées dans cette catégorie: premièrement, des enfants de familles dont les revenus sont sous le seuil de pauvreté et dont les parents sont employés ou recherchent activement

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<sup>29</sup> Voir le texte de la loi Toubon en anglais à La Délégation Générale à la Langue Française: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/Thematiques/Langue-francaise-et-langues-de-France>

un emploi; deuxièmement, des enfants ayant un handicap ou une maladie chronique; troisièmement, des enfants vulnérables identifiés par la PMI (Protection maternelle infantile). Les critères susmentionnés ouvrent la voie pour accueillir les enfants de familles migrantes qui ne sont pas seulement multiculturels mais aussi multilingues.

### *Évolution de la politique linguistique de la ville de Strasbourg suite à des travaux de recherche*

Un autre point qui mérite d'être souligné ici est la manière dont la politique linguistique peut évoluer sous l'influence de la recherche. Comme toute autre initiative de recherche, les questions qui sont posées aux agents et les rencontres avec eux peuvent influencer, avoir un impact et créer une coopération. L'interview que j'ai eue avec la fonctionnaire de la ville a donné lieu à un échange de nos coordonnées de contact, ce qui a ouvert la voie à une collaboration avec l'université de Strasbourg par le biais de la Professeure des Universités Christine Hélot qui a rencontré le Service Famille et Petite Enfance de la ville. Il est intéressant de constater que ce rapprochement entre les services PE de la ville et l'UdS a commencé grâce à un projet européen précédent portant sur les villes multilingues en Europe. La présente thèse a fait suite à ce projet et la recherche a bénéficié de ce premier contact tout comme le service PE. En effet des rencontres et une collaboration ont été initiées et ont ensuite débouché sur différentes conférences sur le thème du multilinguisme, du bilinguisme précoce et de l'éducation linguistique. De 2013 à 2016, des séries de séminaires ont été organisés par le biais du département de la mairie qui promeut et fournit les services de la PE (Service Famille et Petite Enfance) avec la collaboration active de l'Université de Strasbourg et d'autres acteurs de la PE dans la ville telle que l'association Le Furet<sup>30</sup>. On peut dire sans retenue que l'administration de la ville de Strasbourg, et plus spécifiquement le secteur de la petite enfance, se sont repositionnés face à la situation multilingue de Strasbourg et l'ont donné à voir au travers d'actions collaboratives d'importance avec l'université. Ainsi, c'est suite à ces discussions et à la réflexion de l'adjointe au maire en charge de la petite enfance à Strasbourg qu'elle a, à plusieurs reprises, annoncé publiquement que la charte de qualité serait révisée et inclurait un point spécifique sur les langues.

## **5. L'étude de cas**

L'étude de cas se concentre sur une structure parentale de la petite enfance<sup>31</sup>, incluant des enfants de 0 à 3 ans, mettant l'accent sur l'utilisation de l'anglais et du français. Ces deux

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.lefuret.org/>

<sup>31</sup> Une crèche créée, organisée gérée par les parents.

langues sont employées dans le cadre de la politique *une personne, une langue* (UPUL), politique selon laquelle les professionnels sont censés travailler en utilisant une seule langue d'attribution. Par conséquent, dans l'environnement de la crèche en question, il y a de fait séparation de langues selon la personne même si, en réalité, les parents, le personnel et les enfants sont tous non seulement bilingues, mais multilingues.

### *Les principaux acteurs de la crèche*

#### *De fondateur de la crèche à présidente de l'association*

La personne qui est à l'origine de cette crèche bilingue est britannique et canadienne et a grandi dans le nord des États-Unis d'Amérique. Au moment de la recherche, elle vivait en France depuis plus de 20 ans. En tant que migrante, elle avait elle-même expérimenté comment s'intégrer dans une nouvelle culture et appris une nouvelle langue. Mariée à un Français employé dans l'une de ces institutions européennes, elle a immédiatement eu accès à d'autres personnes de même statut qu'elle dans la ville. Le fait que ses deux enfants – un garçon et une fille – aient tous deux été accueillis dans des structures d'éducation bilingue explique aussi pourquoi elle avait un si vaste réseau de parents internationaux. Son engagement personnel pour ce projet est tout à fait remarquable dans le sens où il lui a fallu presque sept années pour ouvrir cette crèche. Ceci illustre comment certains parents s'investissent dans des projets relatifs à la question de la transmission des langues et des cultures. Elle-même bilingue et scolarisée dans un programme bilingue elle s'est basée sur sa propre expérience du bilinguisme et sur celle de ses enfants. Son désir fort de s'assurer que ses deux langues, l'anglais et le français soient transmises à ses enfants était pour elle une évidence. Sans structure existante à Strasbourg offrant ces deux langues, elle a décidé de créer avec d'autres parents une crèche bilingue français anglais.

### *Les parents*

Les données pour cette recherche incluaient 15 familles ou 30 parents, dont deux travaillaient de manière permanente dans la structure. Toutes les familles résidaient à Strasbourg, ce qui est une exigence pour obtenir une place dans n'importe lequel des structures PE dans la ville. Deux familles ont déménagé à Strasbourg en raison de leurs obligations professionnelles auprès des institutions européennes. Deux pères travaillaient à l'étranger et voyageaient à Strasbourg régulièrement pour rejoindre leur famille. Un des pères était un chercheur basé à Paris qui rentrait à Strasbourg les week-ends, alors qu'un autre père était basé aux États-Unis et avait un contact limité avec son enfant.

Table 1. Répertoire linguistique des parents

Code Parent	Nationalité	Langues	Code Conjoint	Nationalité du conjoint	Langues du conjoint	Langue du foyer
1	Français	Français Hébreu Anglais Portugais (un peu) Turque (un peu)	2	Français	Français Hébreu Allemand Arabe Anglais Italien	Français Hébreu pour des mots affectueux
3	Français	Français Anglais	4 (Père de son enfant)	Américain	Anglais	Français (chants en anglais)
5	Grec	Grec Anglais Français	6	Américain	Anglais quelques notions de français	Anglais
7	Français	Français Anglais	8	Français	Français Anglais	Français
9	Français	Français Anglais Allemand	10	Canadien Français	Anglais Français	Français
11	Britannique	Anglais Français	12	Français	Français Anglais	Anglais Français
13	Britannique	Anglais	14	Britannique	Anglais	Anglais
15	Algérien	Arabe Français Anglais	16	Algérien Français	Arabe Français	Arabe Français
17	Français	Français Anglais	18	Indien- Français	Anglais Punjabi Hindi Français	Français (un peu d'anglais)
19	Français	Français Anglais	20	Néo-Zélandais	Anglais	Français Anglais (lorsque le mari est présent)
21	Britannique	Anglais Espagnol Français	22	Finlandais	Finnois Anglais Suédois	Anglais Finnois (mère à l'enfant)
23	Français	Français Anglais	24	Français	Français Anglais Espagnol	Français un peu d'anglais
25	Français	Français Anglais	26	Français	Français Anglais	Français
27	Américain - Français	Anglais Français Espagnol	28	Français	Français Anglais	Français Anglais
29	Autrichien	Anglais Autrichien Allemand	30	Autrichien	Anglais Allemand	Autrichien Allemand Anglais

Comme le montre clairement le tableau ci-dessus, les familles étudiées sont multilingues et multiculturelles. 13 langues composent le répertoire linguistique des familles: l'arabe, l'anglais, le français, le finnois, l'allemand, le grec, l'hébreu, le hindi, l'italien, le portugais, le

punjabi, l'espagnol et le suédois. Il faut préciser qu'il s'agit des langues mentionnées durant les entretiens formels et informels que j'ai menés auprès des parents.

### *Les professionnelles*

Pour des raisons de cohérence, tous les adultes ou membres du personnel travaillant dans la crèche sont collectivement désignés comme des professionnelles au féminin puisqu'elles étaient toutes des femmes. Cette étude a inclus huit professionnelles qui ont travaillé dans la crèche durant les neuf mois de la période de recherche, de septembre 2013 à juin 2014. Le statut de travail des membres du personnel peut être classé dans les catégories suivantes: plein temps, remplaçant et temps partiel. Il y avait cinq membres du personnel à plein temps, deux remplaçants et une personne à temps partiel.

Bien que la crèche ne paye que quatre éducatrices à plein temps, j'ai considéré la présidente de l'association comme une employée à plein temps non rémunérée. Elle travaillait régulièrement à la crèche comme seconde locutrice d'anglais et comme cuisinière. Durant la période de l'étude, il y a eu deux congés de maternité, d'où l'inclusion de personnel remplaçant. Ces professionnelles n'ont pas seulement rempli les responsabilités d'accueil et d'éducation des employées en congé mais ont aussi repris leurs attributions linguistiques. Un locuteur anglais à temps partiel est venu renforcer la composante langue anglaise de la crèche.

*Table 2. Tableau informatif concernant les professionnels*

Codes	Statut professionnel	Tranche d'âge	Nationalité	Année d'arrivée en France
1	Plein temps	25-30	Algérien	2009
2	Plein temps	25-30	Polonais	Début des années 2000
3	Plein temps (en congé maternité à partir d'avril 2014)	30-35	Britannique	1980 (à l'âge de 4 ans)
4	Temps partiel	25-30	Canadien	2013
5	Remplaçant	40-45	Français (d'origine algérienne)	Années 1980 (arrivée en France en tant que petite fille)
6	Plein temps	40-45	Britannique-Canadienne	Fin des années 1990
7	Plein temps (en congé maternité à partir d'octobre 2013)	25-30	Française (d'origine maghrébine)	Née et élevée en France
8	Remplaçant (depuis avril)	25-30	Irlandais	2011

Table 3 Répertoire linguistique des professionnels par rapport aux langues attribuées

Codes	Répertoire linguistique déclaré	Langues Attribuées
1	Français, Anglais (B1-B2 level)	<b>Français</b>
2	Polonais, Français, Anglais	<b>Français</b>
3	Anglais, Français	<b>Anglais</b>
4	Anglais, Français	<b>Anglais</b>
5	Français, Arabe, Anglais (A2 level)	<b>Français</b>
6	Anglais, Français	<b>Anglais</b>
7	Français, Arabe	<b>Français</b>
8	Anglais, Français	<b>Anglais</b>

### *Les enfants*

Bien que cette étude ait été conduite dans une structure pour de jeunes enfants au stade crucial de l'acquisition du langage, elle n'avait pas pour objet de décrire les processus d'acquisition du langage par les enfants. L'étude a concerné quinze enfants qui avaient au début de l'enquête entre deux mois et demi et trois ans et qui fréquentaient la crèche tous les jours. Durant les neuf mois d'observation et d'enquête dans la crèche, j'ai également eu l'opportunité d'observer les interactions des professionnels avec un groupe d'enfants plus âgés qui ne fréquentaient la crèche que le mercredi.

Pour ce qui concerne le répertoire linguistique des enfants, à l'instar de leurs parents, la plupart d'entre eux sont multilingues (voir le répertoire linguistique des parents). Par conséquent, la complexité de la crèche réside dans le fait qu'elle se déclare bilingue alors que la plupart des familles et des enfants sont multilingues. En d'autres termes se pose la question du soutien aux langues familiales autres qu'el'anglais et le français et du choix des parents dans certains d'ajouter l'anglais au répertoire déjà plurilingue de leurs enfants.

## **6. Méthodologie**

Ceci est une recherche qualitative, longitudinale, basée sur une approche ethnographique (Conteh, 2005; Heller, 2008; Mc Carthy, 2011). Des visites réelles sur les lieux et des



observations ont été faites au moins deux fois par semaine de septembre 2013 à juin 2014 et une visite finale en août pour un total de 113 heures et 33 minutes durant la première année de fonctionnement de la crèche. J'ai réalisé 24 enregistrements audio d'interviews qui ont duré entre 30 minutes et une heure trente chacune, 45 sessions de 20 minutes chacune ont été enregistrées. Des notes de terrain et des photos ont été prises durant toute la période d'observation de neuf mois.

Pour guider l'analyse des données, nous avons utilisé la définition de la politique linguistique de Spolsky (2004, 2007), qui a été élargie par Bonacina (2012) et nommée les « Trois Conceptualisations de la PL ». Il s'agit de : la politique linguistique déclarée, qui est un concept proposé par Shohamy (2006 : 68) pour se référer aux PL que l'on trouve dans les décisions de gestion d'une communauté ; la politique linguistique pratiquée, PL que l'on trouve dans les pratiques langagières (Bonacina, 2012), et qui se réfère spécifiquement à un modèle linguistique et à des modèles de choix linguistiques (Spolsky, 2007:4) ; la politique linguistique perçue, utilisée pour se référer à la PL telle qu'elle s'exprime dans les croyances et au travers des idéologies. Pour étudier le lien entre les différents acteurs, nous souscrivons à la définition de Johnson (2009, 2011) selon laquelle la politique et la planification linguistiques sont composées de multiples couches et les processus de politique linguistique se déroulent à différents niveaux (Ricento, 2006). Hornberger (2006) utilise la métaphore de l'oignon pour décrire les diverses couches successives des PLE. Cet agencement des différents éléments a aussi été considéré comme offrant une conception holistique de l'ensemble du processus de la politique et de la planification linguistiques (PPL). Le but de cette recherche n'était pas de critiquer les politiques linguistiques et leur mise en œuvre au sein de la crèche étudiée, mais plutôt de comprendre et d'identifier les questions idéologiques et d'examiner les implications de leur choix (Jaffe, 2011; Hornberger and Johnson, 2011).

### *Le choix d'une approche ethnographique*

Le choix de l'ethnographie est également compatible avec ma façon de concevoir les politiques linguistiques. En suivant les conceptualisations de PL de Spolsky (2004, 2007, 2008) et Johnson (2013), je considère la PL comme ayant de multiples couches imbriquées et compliquées et quelquefois incongrues au niveau des croyances, de la gestion et des pratiques. Ainsi, étant donné la nature complexe des PL et des différences d'interprétation d'une personne à une autre, l'emploi d'une méthodologie de recherche traditionnelle ne permettrait pas de capturer la riche interaction des différents facteurs. L'ethnographie permet ce genre de flexibilité. Bien que le temps passé sur le terrain ne donne pas, en soi, une meilleure ethnographie ni n'assure d'aucune façon que le produit final soit ethnographique

(Goodenough, 1976), j'ai décidé, dès le départ, de collecter des données pendant neuf mois, de septembre 2013 à juin 2014 et une visite finale en août pour un total de 113 heures et 33 minutes durant la première année de fonctionnement de la crèche. Ce cadre m'a permis d'observer attentivement, d'apprendre à connaître les sujets et de participer à leurs activités quotidiennes. En vue d'examiner les *modèles prévisibles* ainsi que les réalités plus complexes de leurs expériences, j'ai utilisé les trois modes principaux de collecte de données qui comprennent: l'observation, les entretiens et la recherche dans les documents (Angrosino, 2007).

## **7. Politique linguistique déclarée**

Même si en réalité les frontières des langues sont des catégorisations sociales, il est très commun que des efforts irréguliers, constamment changeants et très personnels soient faits en vue de gérer le multilinguisme; et ceci; pour une variété de raisons. Il arrive que les politiques linguistiques (Spolsky, 2009) soient utilisées comme un instrument par lequel des règles sociales sont établies. Dans des contextes d'éducation, elles sont utilisées pour promouvoir l'acquisition et l'apprentissage des langues. Au niveau international comme celui de l'Europe, elles sont utilisées pour développer un sentiment d'identité. Au niveau national, elles sont utilisées pour soutenir un sentiment d'identité nationale et, au niveau régional, comme l'Alsace, elles peuvent être employées pour contribuer à la réconciliation franco-allemande.

Dans le cas de certains programmes d'immersion, Cummins (2009: 161) explique qu'au Canada, les programmes ont pour but de 'développer la compétence dans la langue d'instruction.' Dans des groupes sociaux, adhérer à une politique linguistique donnée équivaut à adhérer au groupe. Comme le fait remarquer Shohamy (2006), appartenir ou faire partie d'un groupe social signifie souscrire à une manière particulière de pratiquer la/les langue(s) ("languaging"). Que ces initiatives soient totalement ou intentionnellement cachées, ces politiques créent des modèles de comportement parmi des groupes de personnes.

### Une crèche bilingue

La crèche étudiée pour cette thèse a été établie par un parent pour une raison très personnelle. La crèche est donc le résultat d'un engagement personnel visant à créer une structure d'éducation qui répondrait aux besoins de familles semblables à la sienne. Adopter la politique UPUL assure la continuité de la pratique linguistique de la maison. De plus, il convient de souligner que la langue concernée, à côté du français, est l'anglais, une langue loin d'être perçue comme une langue minoritaire en France mais qui offre des un capital

langagier et culturel certain aux locuteurs Il est donc clair que l'anglais prend une place très importante dans cet établissement. Avec le français comme langue sociétale, les membres fondateurs mettent l'accent sur le fait que les enfants soient exposés de façon adéquate à l'anglais pour assurer leur compétence linguistique. Avec UPUL, ils offrent aux enfants un contexte et des opportunités étendues pour parler et interagir dans la langue anglaise quotidiennement. Cet établissement permet aussi aux enfants qui ont l'anglais à la maison de maintenir leur niveau de compétence et de continuellement le développer.

#### La dominance de l'anglais

L'ordre précis dans lequel les langues sont introduites est clair. Dans presque tous les cas, l'anglais précède le français dans toutes les correspondances envoyées à l'administration de la ville et aux agences gouvernementales, sauf dans le cas du logo sur le site Internet. Dans ces documents, la dénomination bilingue est anglais-français et non pas français-anglais. L'utilisation récurrente de la formulation anglais-français avec l'anglais en première position révèle une politique cachée visant à placer l'anglais en premier dans cette écologie des langues. Cela crée du statut et de la distinction. Le symbole de statut vient du fait que l'anglais est considéré comme une langue de prestige et celui de distinction car cette langue se distingue des autres établissements bilingues de la ville qui promeuvent l'allemand.

#### Le choix de la politique Une Personne Une Langue (UPUL)

Le simple fait d'identifier les langues promues par l'établissement d'accueil n'est pas suffisant si le but est d'acquérir le bilinguisme (S. Barron-Hauwaert, 2011; De Houwer, 2009; Dewaele, Housen, & Wei, 2003; Lyon, 1996; Valdés, Poza, & Brooks, 2015; Wei, 2006). Il est impératif qu'il y ait une politique linguistique bien conceptualisée. La fondatrice de la crèche a choisi et plus tard imposé la politique linguistique une personne, une langue, comme étant la "politique linguistique déclarée" de cette crèche. Il convient aussi de mentionner qu'elle est informée des variantes suivantes de la politique en question qui sont "un adulte, une langue" et "un professionnel, une langue."

Le choix de la politique linguistique une personne, une langue (UPUL) est un choix délibéré pour mettre l'accent sur les différents rôles des professionnels, des parents et des enfants dans la crèche. Elle a principalement pour objet de donner des principes directeurs pour l'utilisation des langues par les professionnels dans la crèche. Cependant, les parents et les enfants ont le libre choix de la ou des langues au sein de la crèche. UPUL sert d'instrument ou de moyen par lequel les idéologies linguistiques (discutées sous *Politiques linguistiques perçues*) des parents sont transcrites dans une politique. De plus, il est attendu des professionnels qu'ils transforment cette politique déclarée en pratiques linguistiques réelles

(discuté sous *Politiques linguistiques pratiquées*). Cette politique linguistique qui a trouvé sa place dans les familles où les parents de différents contextes linguistiques recherchent la continuité linguistique (voir Chapitre 1), a souvent été choisie dans des contextes d'éducation comme les écoles. C'est effectivement le cas en Alsace où il existe un vaste programme bilingue avec l'allemand qui est mis en oeuvre dès l'âge de 3 ans dans de nombreuses écoles publiques (Hélot & Fialais, 2014).

Comme dans la plupart des cas, UPUL est une tentative de simplifier des situations multilingues complexes dans les familles et dans des structures d'apprentissage plus formelles. Bien qu'il y ait des dénominateurs communs dans la mise en oeuvre de cette politique, il existe des différences et des spécificités selon le contexte et les personnes impliquées dans la conceptualisation et la mise en oeuvre de ce type de projet.

### **8. Politique linguistique perçue**

Cette section porte sur l'analyse des différentes représentations et idéologies des parents concernant la langue, son acquisition et son apprentissage, son maintien et sa transmission. Dans beaucoup de cas, leurs représentations sont conformes au choix d'UPUL. Cependant, il convient de noter qu'il y a des affirmations disproportionnées entre leur perception de ce qu'est la langue par rapport aux notions généralement acceptées de la politique UPUL. D'une part, la politique est identifiée pour assurer que les langues des parents soient maintenues et transmises à leurs enfants ; cependant, l'anglais et le français ne sont pas les langues des familles dans tous les cas. Il faut souligner que la réalité linguistique de la crèche est plus complexe et compliquée, par exemple dans le cas du parent grec qui souhaiterait transmettre son "héritage linguistique" à son enfant, alors que la langue de son conjoint qui est l'anglais a la possibilité d'être maintenue. La politique UPUL ne répond pas à l'aspect de la diversité linguistique dans cette structure PE. La politique pour assurer le maintien de langues autres que l'anglais et le français n'est pas clairement formulée mais leur soutien fait partie du discours de l'institution.

Ce que les discours relèvent est le fait que les idéologies linguistiques présentes dans les structures d'éducation formelles ont imprégné également les structures de la PE. Même si, en réalité, les structures de crèches sont différentes des écoles, les discours des décideurs politiques sont les mêmes dans les deux types de structures. En d'autres termes, les idéologies linguistiques sont toutes omniprésentes. En tant que politique linguistique, UPUL est présentée comme la meilleure stratégie parce qu'elle a été utilisée depuis des décennies. Elle est si populaire qu'on pourrait penser qu'il n'existe aucune autre alternative et qu'elle sépare nettement les langues. Les éducateurs et les parents n'ont connaissance d'aucune

autre politique bilingue aussi efficace. Elle offre un cadre simplifié pour assurer que les enfants soient exposés aux deux langues. Cependant, dans le cas de la présence de langues multiples où le scénario est plus compliqué, UPUL n'est pas en mesure de gérer le multilinguisme à moins que les professionnelles aient des compétences dans les langues très variées des familles.

La plupart des parents multilingues pensent que cette structure offre un compromis efficace pour la transmission et le maintien de l'une ou de deux de leurs multiples langues. Pour certaines des professionnelles, c'est une opportunité d'être en contact étroit avec l'autre langue. Cependant, il faut clarifier que c'est l'enfant qui est au cœur d'OPOL. L'ancrage est le désir des parents que leurs enfants développent leur répertoire linguistique en anglais et français. Cependant, en raison de la complexité de la situation linguistique de la crèche composée de parents et de professionnels multilingues, cette section montre que la politique linguistique UPUL choisie ne répond pas complètement aux objectifs des parents qui souhaitent transmettre d'autres langues que le français et l'anglais à leurs enfants.

### **9. Politique linguistique pratiquée**

Cette section présente une variété de scénarios de pratiques linguistiques dans le but d'offrir un aperçu et en même temps une vue globale du comportement et des pratiques linguistiques des parents et des professionnels. Un nombre de généralisations peuvent être tirées et classées sous quatre titres principaux: pratique linguistique en fonction du temps, pratique linguistique et espace, pratique linguistique dans diverses situations, et langue et musique.

Avec la politique une personne, une langue (UPUL), comme politique déclarée de la crèche, il est attendu des professionnels qu'ils servent comme "des soldats qui exécutent des ordres en internalisant l'idéologie de la politique et ses programmes" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 78) en gardant les langues qui leur sont attribuées en tout temps et dans tous les lieux de la crèche excepté la cuisine (voir la Section 7.3.1 pour une explication détaillée). Cependant, en pratique, tel qu'illustré exhaustivement dans ce chapitre, le translangage (Garcia & Li, 2014; García, Panagiotopoulou, & Kirsch, 2016; Otheguy, Garcia, & Reid, 2015) se produit à n'importe quel moment et dans n'importe quel endroit.

En pratique, les professionnels bi- ou multilingues exploitent leurs ressources linguistiques de manière intentionnelle ou non intentionnelle. D'une part, ils utilisent délibérément leur langue car ils sont conscients de leur mandat linguistique. Des preuves concrètes, particulièrement durant les activités collectives, ont montré que les professionnels font des efforts pour utiliser leurs langues d'attribution et équilibrer l'exposition des enfants aux deux

langues au travers d'activités musicales et d'alphabétisation. Travailler en tandem ou s'occuper des enfants en tandem est une autre manière de contribuer à maintenir l'utilisation de leur langue sans prendre les besoins des enfants pour acquis. De plus, l'acte de négocier la politique linguistique est nécessaire pour assurer le bien-être des enfants. En réalité, jusqu'à quel point et comment ils interprètent, mettent en oeuvre et négocient la politique linguistique varie en fonction de ce qu'ils savent à partir d'informations et de ressources disponibles; ce qu'ils croient et leurs motivations; leurs expériences passées et leurs agentivité. D'autre part, il y a des moments riches d'utilisation linguistique involontaire ou de translangage spontané étant donné que les bilingues fonctionnent continuellement en mode bilingue. En réalité, UPUL n'empêche pas et ne peut pas empêcher les bi- ou multilingues de recourir à leur pratiques bilingues habituelles, soit en utilisant leurs deux ou plusieurs langues dans des interactions avec des personnes également multilingues. Conclusion et implications de l'étude

Voici quelques conclusions générales que l'on peut tirer de cette étude:

- La crèche est le résultat d'un engagement personnel d'un groupe de familles qui a voulu créer une structure éducative qui répondait à leurs besoins (Caporal-Ebersold, 2018). Leur choix de la politique UPUL consistait à assurer la continuité des politiques linguistiques familiales (Curdt-Christiansen, 2013; King and Fogle, 2013).
- En choisissant de mettre en oeuvre la politique UPUL dans une structure éducative de petite enfance, les acteurs devraient être conscients qu'une PL se décline à plusieurs niveaux (Johnson 2013). Bien qu'imposer une politique linguistique spécifique semble être un moyen efficace pour gérer deux ou plusieurs langues et assurer que des objectifs linguistiques tels que le bilinguisme soit atteint, il ressort de notre étude qu'elles ne font pas toujours sens.
- De plus, il convient de souligner que la langue concernée, à côté du français, est l'anglais, une langue dominante européenne qui offre à ses locuteurs un capital linguistique et culturel certain. Il est donc clair que l'anglais a une place très importante dans cet établissement, qui a été choisi par les parents en relation avec cette langue de pouvoir. Avec le français comme langue sociétale, les membres fondateurs de la crèche mettent l'accent sur une PL qui permet que les enfants soient exposés de façon adéquate à l'anglais et qu'ils enrichissent leur répertoire linguistique plurilingue.

- Il convient de noter qu'il y a des affirmations disproportionnées entre la perception de ce qu'est une langue par rapport aux notions généralement acceptées de la politique UPUL. D'une part, UPUL a été identifiée pour s'assurer que les langues des parents sont maintenues et transmises à leurs enfants; cependant, l'anglais et le français ne sont pas les langues des familles dans tous les cas. Il faut souligner que la réalité linguistique de la crèche est plus complexe et compliquée qu'elle n'a été envisagée lors de sa création.
- Il est impossible d'appliquer de manière rigide la séparation linguistique dans un environnement où de multiples langues sont parlées. L'idée d'avoir des barrières entre les langues n'est pas réaliste mais purement idéologique. Même parmi les individus se disant monolingues, le fait d'entrer en contact avec une autre langue ou d'autres langues influence et enrichit leurs expériences linguistiques, ce qui, la plupart du temps, modifie les modèles et les pratiques linguistiques, et donc questionne les PLs.
- En réalité, les politiques linguistiques se négocient (Menken and Garcia, 2010) dans la pratique ce qui ne signifie pas rejeter, contester, résister, ni ignorer une politique linguistique identifiée initialement, mais signifie plutôt que les acteurs réinterprètent la politique telle qu'elle se reflète dans leurs pratiques pour satisfaire les besoins de la communication dans une situation donnée.
- Lorsque le bien-être des enfants est en jeu, il n'est pas rare que les PLs déclarées ne face plus sens. C'est probablement ce point que les professionnels travaillant dans une structure bilingue devraient comprendre prioritairement; ils ne devraient pas se sentir coupables lorsqu'ils enfreignent ou contestent la politique linguistique déclarée. Aussi, l'idée de s'imposer des frontières entre les langues ou des interdits linguistiques est idéologique et gagnerait à être déconstruite, tant par les professionnels que par les parents et c'est dans ce domaine qu'un chercheur pourrait intervenir pour aider une structure multilingue à mieux penser ses choix de langues.
- Des exemples concrets d'interactions langagières dans la crèche montrent une grande fluidité dans l'utilisation des langues, ainsi que de nombreux exemples de phénomènes aujourd'hui décrits en termes de « translangaging ». Cette notion permet de passer d'une perspective monolingue vers un scénario plus réaliste de l'utilisation de multiples langues dans une structure éducative multilingue où la multiplicité de langues en contact affectent la vie des enfants et des professionnels au jour le jour.

- En pratique, les professionnels bi- ou multilingues exploitent leurs ressources linguistiques de manière intentionnelle ou non-intentionnelle. D'une part, ils peuvent utiliser délibérément une seule langue, car ils sont conscients de leur mandat linguistique. Mais à certains moments ils se voient contraints d'utiliser l'autre langue mais vivent ce passage d'une langue à l'autre comme s'ils enfreignaient une loi établie par l'insitution.
- En réalité, jusqu'à quel point et comment ils interprètent, mettent en œuvre et négocient les politiques linguistiques qu'ils ont choisies varie en fonction de leurs savoirs et de leurs ressources disponibles; ce qu'ils croient et leurs motivations ; leurs expériences passées et leurs agentivité. D'autre part, il y a des moments riches de pratiques linguistiques involontaires ou de translanguaging spontané étant donné que les bilingues fonctionnent continuellement en mode bilingue (Grosjean 2010). En réalité, UPUL n'empêche pas et ne peut pas empêcher les bi- ou multilingues de recourir à leur propre manière de vivre leur multilinguisme et donc d'utiliser leurs langues (languaging).
- La décision d'adopter strictement une politique linguistique « une personne, une langue » révèle l'existence sous-jacente d'une « idéologie monolingue persistante, » qui imprègne l'ensemble de la société française et le système éducatif français. Même si la crèche se situe en dehors du cadre scolaire traditionnel, des notions très répandues telles que la pureté de la langue, la séparation des langues et la nécessité de « locuteurs natifs » comme référents ou éducateurs linguistiques sont omniprésentes et influencent les politiques linguistiques de nombreuses institutions et de la crèche en question (Caporal-Ebersold and Young, 2016).

## **10. Implications**

Ma recherche ayant pour objectif de décrire de façon exhaustive comment fonctionne une structure bilingue pour la petite enfance, les parties prenantes suivantes pourront potentiellement en bénéficier:

Pour la communauté scientifique, comprendre les politiques et les pratiques linguistiques mise en œuvre au niveau de la petite enfance illustre la complexité des choix linguistiques faits par les familles et les institutions multilingues et permet d'approfondir la compréhension de la transmission des langues et du développement du langage chez les très jeunes enfants en dehors de leur contexte familial.



Pour les décideurs politiques qui recherchent des moyens efficaces, créatifs et pratiques d'assurer des services de qualité en matière d'éducation et d'accueil de la petite enfance, cette recherche met en lumière l'articulation entre bilinguisme et multilinguisme. En effet cette crèche a choisi d'être une crèche bilingue français anglais alors que toutes les familles sont multilingues et parlent des langues non représentées par les choix de PL de la crèche. On peut donc se demander ce qu'il en est de la continuité des politiques linguistiques choisies en famille en structure PE et comment assurer un développement langagier multilingue qui ne soit pas marqué par la discontinuité pour les enfants en question.

A Strasbourg, ville en partenariat avec une ville allemande voisine établissant une crèche bilingue allemand-français, ma recherche apportera une analyse approfondie et des preuves basées sur des données factuelles qui peuvent aider les autorités à comprendre les réalités complexes que rencontre une structure bilingue et potentiellement leur fournir des idées pour mettre en oeuvre leurs propres politiques linguistiques.

Pour les praticiens du bilinguisme, cette recherche est une bonne ressource pour acquérir une compréhension plus globale de la réalité d'une structure bi/multilingue dans le contexte de l'EAPE.

Pour les prestataires de service de la petite enfance en général, cette thèse devrait fournir une meilleure appréciation de l'importance et de la complexité à soutenir des PLs qui aient pour objectif central l'acquisition et le développement harmonieux du langage en contexte multilingue, et l'importance de ne pas soutenir uniquement des langues de pouvoir et d'oublier les nombreuses autres langues que les familles désirent transmettre à leurs enfants.

Pour l'association qui est au coeur de ce projet, cette recherche pourrait être un moyen de réévaluer ses objectifs et buts initiaux quant à la politique UPUL et servir de cadre pour évaluer cette PL en rapport avec les pratiques et ne plus imposer aux professionnels d'interdit linguistique, tout en s'assurant que les enfants reçoivent assez d'input langagier dans les deux langues, ainsi que dans leurs langues familiales autres qu'el'anglais et le français.

Mot clés : une personne, une langue (UPUL), petite enfance, politique linguistique, *politique linguistique déclarée*, *politique linguistique perçue*, *politique linguistique pratiquée*, *politique linguistique familiale* (PLF), bilinguisme, multilinguisme, translanguaging

