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Bilingual Education Includes Far More Aspects Than Developing Language Competence.
A Case Study about Intercultural Competences in Municipal Day Care Centres in Munich.

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Bilingual Education Includes Far More Aspects Than Developing Language Competence.
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Language is one element of bilingual education. Yet, bilingual education includes far more aspects than developing language competence. This research is conducted to understand how the bilingual project *Élysée 2020* enhances intercultural competence. It aims to find how educators and directors conceptualize bilingual education, and how children develop intercultural skills, studying the case of the *Élysée* project in municipal day care centres in Munich, Germany.

The theoretical framework chapter of this study explores the topics of bilingual education and intercultural competence. The first part of the chapter takes the standpoint of sociolinguists, viewing language in relation to society. The term bilingual education is defined within that scope, and the concept is explored supported by the literature of Ofelia Garcia. The second part of the chapter is based on Michael Byram's theory of intercultural competence and how attitudes, knowledge and skills are tools to navigate in a diverse world. Both bilingual education and intercultural competence are explored in the context of early childhood education.

Case study methodology was chosen for this study. The case of the *Élysée* project in the context of municipal day care centres in Munich was in focus, and three types of data were deemed necessary to study this case. Firstly, educators, directors, and a district manager were interviewed in semi-structured interviews to collect their perceptions of the project, of how it was implemented and what they found to be beneficial apart from language acquisition. Secondly, observations of French lessons with children from diverse linguistic backgrounds were made. Lastly, a policy paper *Quality Charter* (2013) gave insight to the objectives and principles of the project. The three types of data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The main findings provide insight how educators and directors initially perceived bilingual education, how it changed over time and how intercultural competence became visible through the *Élysée* project. The findings from the interviews, observation, and a policy document gave a broad picture of the process of establishing the *Élysée* project in the municipal day care centres and the relation of policy and practice. All data captured details how intercultural competences

were strengthened through the project, especially raising awareness and growing appreciation towards linguistic and cultural diversity. The results of the study can support stakeholders to consider, implement, and evaluate bilingual education in the context of early childhood education.

Keywords: bilingual education, language acquisition, culture, intercultural competence, early childhood education, case study methodology.

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Acronyms

Kita	Kindertageseinrichtung	Day care centre
Quality Charter	Deutsch-Französische Qualitäts- charta: für bilinguale Kindertageseinrichtungen	Policy paper for the German and French bilingual day care centres

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1 Introduction

During the master's programme "Education and Globalisation" we have explored numerous matters concerned with equity, equality, and justice for all children. Tackling the field of education in the context of globalisation challenges and issues are immense. On the one hand, political, social, and economic connections across countries have been pushing uneven power relations worldwide and increasing the gap between rich and poor. On the other hand, individual and economic opportunities beyond national border became possible. Both, chances and challenges, have been advancing rapidly through the process of globalisation in the past decades and must be viewed from the sector of education to tackle inequality and achieve more quality education for all.

One of the global matters we are facing is the growing linguistic and cultural diversity. Tourism, job migration, violence, and other factors are source for people leaving their home countries. Advanced technologies enable people from all over the world to connect, overcome national borders, and experience cultural and linguistic contact. Our physical appearance, our beliefs, thoughts, and linguistic repertoire are individual and shape societies (Piller, 2016). Diversity, often a celebrated term, can be pictured as colourful and multiple people and languages connecting and interacting in one place. However, Piller (2016) urges that diversity may create boundaries between the "normal" and the "diverse", explaining that the "normal" are the "default" determining the language, the culture and the attitudes towards gender, race or religion. The "others" are seen outside the mainstream and therefore in a weaker position and lacking equal rights and recognition. Piller stresses, that everyone is equally diverse. Growing multiculturalism within the globalised world requires concepts that help to engage with diversity without leaving anyone behind.

Wherever we have diverse societies, we have multiple languages. Nonetheless, there are many countries built on monolingual ideologies where one standardized and dominant language is determined. Marginalising linguistic groups in a community creates separation. The United Nations emphasis on valuing "language diversity and multilingualism, and their invaluable – but too often underestimated – contribution to peace in the world, harmony among peoples and mutual understanding" (Abelian, 2022). In a similar way, the European council actively promotes plurilingualism, on the one hand for leisure and work, on the other hand for social and political inclusion. The competence of plurilingualism is the "capacity to successively acquire and use

different competences in different languages, at different levels of proficiency and for different functions” (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 51). This approach favours, the heteroglossic language ideologies, which consider ”languages of bilinguals as multiple and co-existing” (García, 2009, p. 246). Nevertheless, García et al. (2017) observe a shift in language conceptualisation in consequence of globalisation, where internationally recognised language, such as English or Chinese, are perceived as indispensable for economic and personal success. Cenoz (2013) argues, “Globalization has increased the value of multilingualism. Speaking different languages has an added value” (p. 5). In a similar way, Marácz and Adamo (2017) point out that minority languages have received more attention in the last decades and space for linguistic diversity is increasing. Obviously, there is a shift from barriers between languages towards building bridges, however this has not reached all parts of the globe and starting in early years can build a strong foundation for future years.

Children are nowadays growing up in a globalised world. In finding a balance between the global challenges and opportunities, education plays an important role. If we could only include all linguistic backgrounds, this would provide a more just education for all. There are various concepts for multilingual education. Some education providers offer bilingual programmes for global competence. Other bilingual programs focus on maintenance and support of endangered and indigenous languages. Mostly private organisations which provide bilingual education cater to privileged groups who can afford paying high fees (Fourcaud & Springer, 2021). García (2009) describes the relevance of bilingual revitalization, for minority languages to recover and become more active and acknowledged. Linguistic interrelationships, meaning that there is no competition among languages, but all linguistic groups are treated equally. The ability to create dialogue between people from different cultural backgrounds and beliefs is indispensable in today’s world (Deardorff, 2020). Hence, intercultural competencies are a key to foster peace building. “It is built on UNESCO’s work to empower learners of all ages, providing them with the sense of empathy and solidarity to act as global citizens in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (Deardorff, 2020, p. 2). The importance of intercultural competences is outlined at many levels and for different purposes. We could therefore provide our children in multilingual education to perfect their global citizenship education.

Changes in the cultural and linguistic landscape call for new pedagogical approaches. This research will explore a bilingual project called “Élysée 2020” to discover how bilingual education is conceptualized and how it can contribute to enhance intercultural competence, more precisely to appreciation and awareness of linguistic diversity. The Élysée project was

established in collaboration by the French and German Ministry of education with the main objective to strengthen mutual communication and understanding, and to build a sustainable relationship of friendship and trust between the two countries (Deutsch-Französische Qualitätscharta, 2013). By initiating French classes in Germany and German classes in France, children have been able to learn the partner language, gain knowledge about the other culture, build networks, and rise an overall interest in intercultural encounters. There has been research in the field of bilingual education and intercultural competences and much literature can be found. Nonetheless, there is a gap in literature about early childhood education and intercultural competence in relation to language. This is where my thesis aims to contribute most. This research relates to the aims of Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education, Goal 10, Reduced Inequality, and Goal 16, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (United Nations, 2022).

2 Research context

2.1 Early childhood education in Munich /Germany

This section provides an overview of early childhood education development in Germany and more precisely, it describes the context of municipal day care centres in Munich, capital of the federal state Bavaria. Germany is a formerly political conservative country with a conservative family image invested primarily in secondary and tertiary education. The total spending in the education sector has been stable around 6 % of GDP. Since the beginning of this century the spending for early childhood education has been raising and is about 1% of GDP (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021). James J. Heckman's and Esping-Anderson's studies influenced the political agenda, emphasising that a demographic change in a country must be tackled by investing more in early years (Bundeszentrale Für Politische Bildung, 2022). Further, bad PISA results required a change in education policy. The political parties put this on their agenda and consequently there has been a change withing the past two decades. Nowadays early childhood education is not only the care of the youngest, but far more a learning field for children to develop their potential and competences. Since 2013 a new law was introduced, for every child to have the right of a day care place, starting age one, as well as more investment in offering these places (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, 2022). Additionally, 2019, a law called "Gute-KiTa-Gesetz" was adopted, to invest in more quality and at the same time lower the fees in early childhood education. There is a strong political will to give parents the chance to work, immigrants to access day care, low-income families to afford a place and therefore equal opportunities and strengthening human capital growth.

In Germany, the sector of education falls into the responsibility of each of 16 federal states (Bundesländer), therefore the systems, investments and approaches vary between the states. Munich, holds more than 1000 early childhood day care centres (Kindertageseinrichtung = **Kita**) provided by public and private organizations. In this research I will focus on Kitas for children aged 0-6 years run by the municipality of Munich (Städtischer Träger = **ST**). According to the overall policy of ST, there are central guidelines and standards to be accomplished, but within these regulations the Kitas are free to develop their individual plans according to their needs, resources, and clientele (Landeshauptstadt München, 2021). In principle all children have the right for a place in a Kita. The application process refers to the stipulation "Kindertageseinrichtungssatzung" (Landeshauptstadt München, 2017) which

regulates the allocation of free places. Certain criteria ensure that single households, fulltime working parents or children in need of social inclusion get access to childcare. Fees are calculated according to the income of parents. In more than 400 Kitas diversity, respect, and tolerance are core values (Landeshauptstadt München, 2021). It should be mentioned that early childhood education is focused on play-based learning and creating a natural environment for children interaction (“Situationsansatz”). Thus, preparing children for primary school is not at core and academic learning is secondary.

Within the educational sector in Munich there has been a shift towards more internationalization in the past years. Political interests to strengthen the European idea and connect beyond national borders throughout educational settings have been in focus (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2022). Several strategies have been developed to build more transnational connections, support lifelong learning, professional development, inclusion, and equal education within the European Union. In the field of early childhood education several programs were created to interact between different cultures, countries, and languages. Numerous activities, ideas, projects, and collaboration have been developing (Internationale Bildungsk Kooperationen, 2019). The city council resolution 2018 determines the expansion of bilingual Kitas in order to be able to participate in a more globalised world, where social and economic participation is relevant (Höbl & Schütze, 2022). The Élysée-Kitas exemplify one approach to implement more bilingual education in the sector.

2.2 The Élysée 2020 project

The Élysée 2020 project refers to the Élysée Treaty, signed 1963 by Germany and France, outlining the future of a Franco-German friendship. Besides a close political cooperation, culture, and youth policy, with language exchange and learning were encouraged. The aim of growing a shared European educational space is determined in the so-called *Deutsch-Französische Qualitätscharta* (= **Quality Charter**) (Fourcaud & Springer, 2021, p. 41). Beyond focusing on vocational training, the field of early childhood was put in focus and bilingual French-German education institutions were established. A network of 200 bilingual “écoles maternelles” (pre-primary schools) on the French side, and “Kitas” on the German side were initiated to strengthen the French–German relationship and contribute to more multilingualism within Europe (Fourcaud & Springer, 2021, p. 41). Several cities in France and Germany are participating in this Élysée programme, especially in the border regions Elsaß and Saarland.

The Quality Charter emphasises that language is essential to develop cognitive and social skills and therefore build one's identity (Quality Charter, 2013). It also outlines that interaction with the partner language (French and German) on regular bases encourages children to learn foreign languages, contribute to multilingualism within Europe, join a network, enable children to learn the partner language, learn about the social and cultural characteristics and raise interest for linguistic and intercultural experience and knowledge (Quality Charter, 2013). Focusing here on the German side, Kitas which apply to be part of the network *Élysée 2020* need to provide French speaking personnel (at least near native speakers), ideally using the principle of one-person-one-situation. The teacher speaks only French during one activity or conversation, not switching languages within that situation. Assuring continuity and evaluating the project regularly is of importance. The application process for a Kita to join the project goes through the local ministries and will be decided in collaboration of a bilateral expert commission. The implementation of the project can be carried out in various forms and there is a long list of participating Kitas all over Germany (French Institut, 2020).

The Bavarian educational plan promotes multilingualism (Fthenakis, 2012, p. 129). Based on the right for every child to get access to equal and inclusive education, the city of Munich implemented the *Élysée* project in 2014 starting with five *Élysée*Kitas. It should be mentioned, that in contrast to most private Kitas, the municipal Kitas do not incur any cost for families and therefore children, regardless of their families' financial situation can participate (Fourcaud & Springer, 2021, p. 42). Based on giving equal access to all children, the municipal Kitas aim to reflect the diversity seen in the society. More than 50 % of the children in the public Kitas have migration background (Höbl & Schütze, 2022, p. 2). The aim for the city of Munich is to reduce barriers for underprivileged children and establish equal opportunities for their future learning, one way is by teaching key competences (Höbl & Schütze, 2022). The *Élysée* project was established in cooperation with the French Institute in Munich. According to the Quality Charter the Kitas should adjust their pedagogical concepts and create it in line with the criteria of the charter. French teachers come to the Kitas for a few hours per week to speak, sing and play in French with the children. The *Élysée* project was introduced to the Kitas as a bilingual project with a French teacher coming to the Kitas once a week to provide French lessons on an age adequate level. Kitas had the possibility to implement the project suitable for their needs, without following any strict guidelines.

Wherever there is French speaking staff in the Kita, there might be more activities in addition to the lessons by the external French teachers. Besides the French lessons, either separately or

in integrated everyday activities, there are more actions relating to the project. The responsible persons from the municipality meet on regular bases with the responsible persons from the French Institute, with the French teachers, and the staff from the *Élysée Kitas* to reflect, exchange ideas and plan together. Workshops and further training are provided to gain knowledge and skills about topics concerning language and more. On binational level the *Kitas* and ST have been building up a network with France, finding partner *Kitas*, welcoming delegations, providing Erasmus + mobilities and recruiting French speaking teachers. More detailed information involving the project can be found in Fourcaud and Springer (2021, p. 51). The city council of Munich, from Bavaria Germany, had announced their wish in 2018, to integrate more bilingual activities in municipal *Kitas* (Höbl & Schütze, 2022). This incentive pushed the *Élysée* project further and build the foundation for expanding bilingual projects and internationalisation in the field of early childhood education. Meanwhile, 2022, there are nine municipal *Élysée Kitas* in Munich and their endeavours are contributing to intercultural education, social inclusion, and support of multilingualism.

In 2018 the city of Munich commissioned an evaluation on the *Élysée* project, carried out by an interdisciplinary research group from the Ludwig-Maximilian-University in Munich (Germany) and LiLPA from the University of Strasbourg (France). The study *Frühkindlicher Fremdsprachenerwerb in den Élysée-Kitas (early language acquisition in Élysée -Kitas)* focuses on the French lessons, questioning how children, parents, teachers perceived the lessons, and what their main take aways were. The research explored three main topics: social and political participation, psychological development, and how children build metalinguistic awareness even with little contact to a foreign language (Fourcaud & Springer, 2021, p. 66). Interesting results supporting my research will be discussed more in detail in the theoretical framework.

2.3 Researcher background and position

For the past five years I have been part of the department of personal development in Munich (KITA-ST), in charge of coordinating European projects and progressing internationalisation. My tasks included recruiting and supporting teachers from abroad (mainly Spain), coordinating Erasmus+ projects for educators from Munich to go abroad, supervising internships for students and exchange programs for practitioners. From this position I got broad insight on perspectives from network partners, administration, professionals, leadership, and management. There is a

strong emphasis from the city council to strengthen the European identity. Since I was involved in several projects, I could observe many different attitudes towards internationalisation among the employees in administration, management and Kitas. Some individuals were strongly involved and motivated, others rejected this development and implementing bilingual activities made prejudices visible. As a master's student at the University of Oulu, I deepened my insight on certain topics and in this thesis, I will apply my new knowledge to explore how bilingual activities are not only serving the acquisition of language but contributing to the connection of people across national borders.

2.4 Assumptions and research question

Looking back on my work experience within the municipal day care centres, I remember situations where prejudice towards the *Élysée* project became obvious. I recall negative reactions from colleagues when the *Élysée* project was introduced or presented. Firstly, French lessons were at times judged as something "elitist", French perceived as prestige language, not linked to equal access for all children. This can be attributed to growing marketisation in the field of bilingual activities in the early childhood sector. Private institutions often promote bilingual education to build competences for future careers. Further, some educators expressed concern about children with other home languages than German. They feared increasing stress for children to learn a new language, whereby the standard language (German) might still be on a beginner's level. In Germany language policy in schools is still monolingual orientated and therefore preschool institutions must prepare children to learn German. Surely, these observations rely on my personal experience and are not backed up with evidence. However, those encounters made me aware, that more insight and awareness in the field of bilingual education is vital.

My starting points for this research were mainly about the question of the effects of bilingual activities. How do children experience other cultures and languages? How do children "learn" cross cultural understanding? Why is language acquisition perceived as most important? How do children cope with more than one language? How are different linguistic backgrounds affected by bilingual activities?

I assume that bilingual activities in early childhood day care centres include far more than language acquisition and strengthen intercultural competence for children and staff, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background. I expect the *Élysée*-project to be one approach to

advance intercultural competence while valuing and appreciating linguistic and cultural diversity.

The purpose of this study is to explore bilingual education in the light of intercultural competences. I conducted a case study, to investigate the *Élysée* project in the municipal day care centres (Kitas). The collected data consists of interviews from educators, directors and a district manager, an observation of French lessons and a policy document. I expect to gain a holistic picture of the case to answer following research question:

How does the bilingual project *Élysée* 2020 enhance intercultural competence?

Supporting my inquiry, I also question how Kitas (represented by educators and directors) conceptualize bilingual education generally and how has it changed over time? Further, I am interested to explore how intercultural competence appears through the *Élysée* project.

3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework includes a perspective on language from the perspective of sociolinguistics. Further, bilingual education is defined, especially in context of early childhood education. Additionally, intercultural competence with focus on early childhood education is explored.

3.1 Multilingualism and the sociolinguistic standpoint

Language can be studied from different disciplines, such as neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, linguistics, or sociolinguistics. This research takes the sociolinguistic standpoint, as it does not look at the individual native speaker but at the multilingual setting at whole. Sociolinguistic is described as a discipline of “the interrelationship of language and society” (García et al., 2017, p.1). A common definition of multilingualism by the European Commission (2007) is, “The ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives” (Cenoz, 2013, p. 6). Cenoz (2013, p. 13) highlights that there has been a shift from a monolingual view towards a multilingual perspective on language in recent years. Nation building and political constructs shaped language conceptualisation widely. The postmodern standpoint referred to standardizing language in order to adopt to the boundaries of nation states, where a dominant language diminished minority language (García et al., 2017). From that perspective, multilingualism was a sum of several monolinguals, such as using one language at a time, in contrast to a fluid practice of using language (Cenoz, 2013, p. 13). “The result was the imposition of static and homogenous languages and their connection to static and homogenous ethnic identities- an imposition that fundamentally changed the social relations of these societies” (García et al., 2017, p 528). In several post-colonial countries or monolingual countries these ideologies are still at present. However, global changes have also shifted sociolinguistic standpoints, where the whole language repertoire is seen in relation to the context and the interaction within societies. Garcia pinpoints this perspective as the “realization of multiple co-existing norms” (García, 2009, p 117). Multilingual speakers have many options to use language and communicate. We should value and include these resources in educational practice far more.

3.2 Bilingual education

Engaging with the topic of bilingual education I came across numerous definitions and terms which all contribute to understanding and mapping the field. Often bilingualism is interpreted as either learning two languages to a proficiency level according to the standard norm (1+1=2), or adding a second language, aiming for monolingual proficiency. According to Cenoz (2013, p. 7) bilingualism can be included in the definition of multilingualism, referring to two or more languages. Bilingual education is the “formal use of at least two languages for literacy and instruction” (Ball, 2011, p. 59). It’s ideal form is seen as introducing L2 (second language/ non-native language/ foreign language) in addition to L1 (first language/ native language/ mother tongue, home language, local language -all refer to the language learned from birth). The line between the definitions is narrow and, in my research, I will use the term bilingual education, as it examines explicitly a project with focus on two languages.

Where we hear language, we hear sounds, tones, and voices. Where language is, there is communication, dynamic and emotion. Language shapes individuals and societies. Piller (2016) stresses, that categorizing languages is a theoretical approach that creates barriers between them. Actual language practices of speakers usually are not bounded or autonomous systems but strategies to make sense in everyday communication. Cenoz (2013, p. 9) explains, that the choice of using one or the other language is not only based on the ability of speaking the language, but also a gesture of identity. The flexible and fluid use of communication is referred to “translanguaging”. It describes the natural and dynamic way speakers use their linguistic repertoire (García et al., 2017).

García emphasises that bilingual education is not to be seen as abstract practice but the reality of teachers and students in which they use multiple communication strategies depending on context and situation. “Language is an important aspect, although by no means the most important, in considering the topic of bilingual education” (García, 2009, p. 40). Far more, she highlights that teaching in two or more languages, enhances appreciation for other languages and cultures. Including multiple multilingual practices will “foster and develop tolerance towards linguistic differences, as well as appreciation of languages and bilingual proficiency” (García, 2009, S.9). Her approach takes different levels of development and proficiency into account, by providing equitable education. Helot and Young (2002, p. 110) support this perspective, as they understand different languages as a tool to interpret reality, perceive the

world and master social encounters. It is crucial, that teachers include the students multiple and diverse linguistic belongings in the classroom.

Garcia differentiates bilingual education from second/ foreign language education. Second language education aims for building competence in an additional language and becoming familiar with an additional culture. The pedagogical goal is to instruct in the target language, which is taught as a subject. In contrast, bilingual education aims to educate meaningfully, using bilingual instruction, to enhance the ability to function across cultures. Pedagogical emphasis lies on the integration of language and content, where language acquisition is not at core, but the media of instruction. Language should be “in contact and cooperate within the same linguistic sphere rather than compete” (Helot & Young, 2002, p. 109). When teaching in multilingual classrooms, it is essential to built tolerance and appreciation for linguistic diversity.

3.3 Bilingual education in early childhood

The early years in childhood are a phase of great development of a child, and language is one important milestone. Several studies have shown that there are more advantages than disadvantages of learning a second language from early age (Jenkin, 2014, p. 130). However, according to Dolean (2015, p. 712) there are mixed results concerning bilingual education in early years. To achieve full language proficiency, it more successful to learn L2 around puberty age, whereas preschool children benefit from phonemic awareness, basic communication skills, and ability for later language acquisition. In comparison to monolingual children, bilingual children show better interaction skills, greater cognitive performance, increased creativity, and flexibility in problem solving and a more open attitude towards other people (Jenkin, 2014, p. 130). “Since a second language can be distinguished as early as prenatal period of development, it can be safely assumed that it is never too early to consider children’s exposure and introduction to a foreign language” (Dolean, 2015, p. 714).

There are several factors which influence children’s language learning development. Kersten (2018) examines certain factors which affect language learning, such as institutional environment, cognitive skills, personality and language skills, family, and social environment. All of these factors are interrelated and influence the learning of the child. Fourcaud and Springer (2021, p. 176) assume that children basically have a positive attitude towards language learning, however, they see a strong connection to the quality of interaction between teacher

and child. The reproduction of language is the result of teacher's communication strategies. These findings can be explained by the phenomenon that young children learn by making meaning of their environment in a social interaction instead of explicit rules. "Vygotsky (1978) highlighted the social aspects of cognition and proposed that all learning takes place within the context of relationships" (Garrity et al., 2015, p. 179). Especially in early years the interaction of teacher and child is strongly relevant for building competences.

Educators and directors in early childhood settings come from diverse professional, linguistic and social backgrounds. The study by Fourcaud and Springer (2021, p. 108) also explored these backgrounds to determine a connection to the practice of bilingual education. Results from this specific context show that 74% of early childhood educators were brought up monolingual, in contrast to 28 % bilingual. Only half of the bilingual educators use their home language in everyday praxis. However, participants expressed a positive attitude towards bilingual activities. Participants with a more negative attitude towards bilingual projects were found to fear a higher workload, which adds pressure to an already stressful job. Fourcaud and Springer (2021) describe a subjective interpretation of bilingual education which is not grounded in academic evidence. The motivation and knowledge about bilingual education varies among staff. They conclude that further training and workshops are needed to train and qualify teams more.

Besides the role of the educator, the setting in which bilingual education takes place needs to be considered carefully for early learners. Immersion programs describe the extent to which the second language is used. This can vary from teaching in a second language only on special parts of the day (morning circle), to a predominant use of the language (full immersion) (Dolean, 2015, p. 712). As mentioned above, children at early age learn a language different in comparison to older children. Dolean (2015) points out that early immersion programs foster "incidental learning and holistic processing", in contrast to late immersion programs, that "develop language analysis abilities to decode the meaning of messages" (p.714). Immersion programs instruct language implicitly, while foreign language lessons teach language explicitly. Implicit learning means age-appropriate learning, gaining a general idea of a language and not necessarily achieving full competency. In explicit learning the student acquires accurate language skills, such as vocabulary and grammar, that can be assessed within the class. In line with Garcias' distinction of bilingual education and second language education, it is essential for preschool institutions to carefully consider how to implement bilingual education.

3.4 Intercultural competence

The following chapter will define culture, explore intercultural competence, and view it in the field of early childhood education. Similar to language, culture is often assumed to be something existing in isolation. Piller (2007) claims, that people can belong to various communities and that culture is not a fixed or constant state of being. To share another understanding of culture, UNESCO (2001) defines it as a “set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group, encompassing all the ways of being in that society, at minimum, including art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs” (Deardorff, 2020, p. 4). Piller (2007, p. 218) argues that culture is often seen as a source of misunderstanding, referring to difference in ethnicity or nationality, assuming that people “have a culture” instead of being part of it. She stresses that language misunderstandings (talk itself) should not be mistaken with culture problems.

This brings us to intercultural competence, which is needed to function in a diverse world. “Citizens in this century need the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to function in their cultural communities and beyond their cultural borders” (Banks, 2004, p. 299). Byram highlights language as a central term, as navigating through a diverse world, both is needed, linguistic competence and cultural competence (Byram et al., 2001, p. 5). “Some of the common elements of intercultural competencies across different cultures include respect, self-awareness/identity, seeing from other perspectives/worldviews, listening, adaptation, relationship building, and cultural humility” (UNESCO, 2013, p. 24 in Deardorff, 2020, p 4). Every individual is part of social groups and belongs to a society including certain beliefs and values. To interact among different groups, we need to be able to change perspectives and be conscious of disparity. Byram (2001, p. 5) highlights the aspects of intercultural competence being attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical cultural awareness. Firstly, attitudes refer to openness and curiosity, being able to view from other perspectives, beliefs, and values than one’s own. Byram (2001) calls this the ability to “decentre” (p. 5). Secondly, knowledge includes factual knowledge, to be able to reproduce facts related to others and one owns cultural practices, beliefs, and products. Also language knowledge is mentioned and knowledge about contemporary and historical relations of countries. Lastly, the gain of skills, to be able to compare, relate and interpret from more than one perspective. Discovering other cultures, using verbal or nonverbal communication strategies, mediate and guide others belongs to skills. To grow tolerance and make us aware of our own worldviews and beliefs, we need to critically

reflect our own assumptions. Byram (2001, p. 7) stresses that developing skills, knowledge and awareness for values creates the basis for democratic interaction. To sum it up, “Intercultural competencies in essence are about improving human interactions across difference, whether within a society (differences due to age, gender, religion, socio-economic status, political affiliation, ethnicity, and so on) or across borders” (Deardorff, 2020, p. 6). Intercultural competence should become an integral part in education.

3.5 Intercultural competence in early childhood

In early childhood day care centres children find themselves in close contact with other children and educators, that speak different languages, the children might not understand. As mentioned above, culture shapes expectations of the world. Ramsey (1987) found that children do not understand the concept of culture but do react or reject unfamiliar language or behaviour. She observed that young children play more with culture-same partners (p. 115). Gerlich et al. (2010) informs, that children have several preconditions for successful intercultural interaction. The first one is the biological basis of humans being to act cooperative (p. 142). Further, curiosity and interest lead to an unconsciousness learning process. It was found that children at about age two have the ability of role taking and empathy. Similar to Ramsey, Nesdal’s social identity theory predicts that children have a “ingroup bias (i.e., liking and similarity) and outgroup rejection” (Nesdal & Flessner, 2001, p. 509). Although the theory reveals, that up to the age of three children do not differentiate skin colour or accents. At about the age of five they develop self-identification in relation to their own ethnic. This is also the age, were children start understanding geographic units (Nesdal & Flessner, 2001, p. 143). Based on these assumptions, Gerlich et al. (2010) conducted a study on preschool children’s intercultural competences in bilingual settings. It revealed that young children showed positive attitude, gained knowledge of their own and other cultures, and developed skills for intercultural interaction. According to Gerlich et al. (2010), the bilingual setting of the preschool is an ideal environment to come in touch with different languages naturally and regard learners with other home languages as enriching to a multilingual environment.

It can be said that children actively engage in intercultural encounters and recognise them as such. Issues such as different languages, different places of origins or skin colour attract children's attention and prompt them to explore and negotiate the situations in which they arise. (Gerlich et al., 2010, p. 175)

Nieto (2018, p. 165) reminds, that multicultural education is rather based on beliefs and values, than a fixed program. Therefore, striving for affirmation and solidarity in education, critique can not be avoided (Nieto, 2018, p. 174). “Because multicultural education at this level is concerned with equity and social justice, and because the basic values of different groups are often diametrically opposed, conflict is bound to occur” (Nieto, 2018, p. 174). Giving recognition and value to all languages, irrespective of their social position, is the first step to equality (Helot & Young, 2002, p. 109). Learners need the skills and experience to work in a pluralistic society. With the vision of enabling best possibilities for all children, early day care institution has a great influence to transfer intercultural competences to the youngest learners.

4 Case study – methodology and data

Case studies usually focus on specific programmes, bounded units, or smaller groups. In this research I am using case study methodology to investigate the case of the *Élysée 2020* project. This methodology enables to gain insight into beliefs, perspectives and perceptions of the participants and explore contexts, relationships, and practices (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Regarding the perspective of “the nature of reality (ontology) and how we can know or understand that reality (epistemology)” (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013, p. 24), researchers need to establish their paradigm. I position my research within the interpretative paradigm, as I examine a phenomenon in relation to the perceptions and experiences of the participants and data within a bounded system. Language and intercultural competence are concepts created by social interaction and experience of human beings, where individual statements explain their values and beliefs. The interpretative path understands research to move from a “micro” to a “macro” level. Given this, I am aiming for a holistic picture of the case, how the phenomenon relates to each other, determining effects on social performance.

A case study investigates a phenomenon, a case, in a real-world context to gain an in depth understanding of it. “Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. XI). A case study investigates for instance an event, a decision, an action, a person, an organisation, or a location with the aim of informing practitioners or policymakers to make decisions or judgments (Bassegy, 1999). The *Élysée* project is an ongoing, bilingual project within a specific context. I am focusing on the municipal day care centres, which have been introduced in chapter 2.1. Creswell (2009) points out that case study research takes place in a bounded system within limited time and space. The researcher has minimum control over the case. I expect the results of the study to help educators, directors, or policymakers to evaluate, adjust or expand this project or similar projects.

Case studies aim to provide a holistic picture by examining an empirical unit. Yin (2018, p. 18) highlights three applications for the use of Case Study. Firstly, to explain a real-world case, which is too complex to gather in a survey or experiment. Secondly, to describe and illustrate within an evaluation. Lastly, to enlighten situations where there is “no clear, single set of outcomes” (p.18). In the light of these formats, I find my case study to be a complex real-world case, that aims to achieve an in-depth investigation from different angles. As mentioned above, there is a network of about 400 *Élysée Kitas* in France and Germany, whereas I will specifically

view the nine *Élysée* Kitas in the municipality of Munich. This limitation is necessary to investigate on similar samples, however, still too complex to gather in a survey or experiment.

To capture and explain complex links between real-life interventions. Bassey (1999, p. 62) categorizes case study in three sections, which can be related to Yin's and Stake's categories. This thesis is grounded in storytelling approach. Stake calls it intrinsic and Yin descriptive approach. These attempts analyse and explore an event, a project or programme, framed by theories, considering a timeline, and illustrating the sum of results. The *Élysée* project is explored based on theories, however open to find further insights appearing within the timeframe. The interviews and observation collected for data analyses provide a source for rich content to create a "story" of the findings. Evaluative studies examine a programme, system, or project in order "to focus on its worthwhileness" (Bassey, 199, p.19). The aim can be to help developing the programme (formative) or evaluating it in a more summarising way. This research also carries aspects of an evaluative study, as the data reflects the process of the project. Theory-seeking and theory-testing studies, which are an "attempt to find an effective way of communicating research findings to those who may use them" (Bassey, 1999, p. 62). Stake calls it instrumental case study (delimited), with focus on one aspect or issue (Stake, 1995, in Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013, p.12). Yin names it exploratory and explanatory, characterized by looking for patterns in the collected data in relation to theory. Besides these main categories of case studies, the approaches should be distinguished more in detail.

4.1 Steps and stages

Striving for an in-depth investigation, certain steps and stages need to be taken. Bassey (1999) outlines six stages of enquiry, which I follow in my research. Although, he reminds that research is a creative activity and therefore proceeding through stages is not linear but dynamic and unique. However, to ensure trustworthiness every step needs to be engaged and reflected thoroughly. Bassey (1999) describes research as a principle of investigating a case critically, creatively, and systematically to discover something that has not been known before in order to transfer the findings to the audience. Identifying a problem, hypothesis or issue clarifies the perspective on the case. In my case I assume the *Élysée* project to enhance intercultural competence and seek to understand more about the relation of bilingual education and growing awareness towards linguistic diversity. Asking the question of "what is the case" it is important

to reflect on the difference between the studied phenomenon and the studied unit. In the following section the six steps will be described in more detail.

1. Asking research questions and drawing up ethical guidelines.

The research question is usually rather broad at the beginning of data collection to keep open space for the process of further research. Yin (1994) emphasises that the questions “how” and “why” are likely to use for case studies, as they are explanatory and involve different perspectives also in relation to time. The question for this research has developed throughout time, in order to engage with theory and data before determining an exact formulation. The key terms of bilingual education and intercultural competence were clear from the beginning, however, deciding a direction of investigation stayed dynamic. Ethical concerns will be detailed in chapter 6.

2. Collecting and storing data

Advised by Creswell (2009) I have collected extensive data from multiple sources of information. I conducted semi-structured interviews with educators, directors, and a district manager from the Kitas. I have observed French lessons in one Kita and collected a policy paper. The aim is to gain multiple perspectives in relation to the theory of the study in order to answer the research question. As Bassey (1999) suggests I analysed the data during the process of collecting it, instead of waiting for all to be completed. Storing the data on the computer, transcribing, and structuring it became part of the analyses process. Chapter 4.2 informs more on the process of data collection.

3. Generating and testing analytical statements

Analysing the raw data and making sense of it, is a process of coding, identifying categories and finding meaningful statements. “Analysis and data testing is an iterative process which continues until the researcher’s feels confident that the analytical statements are trustworthy” (Bassey, 1999, p. 71). Many qualitative researchers describe the analysis as a continual process, moving back and forth and reflect critically (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013, p. 140). I started analysing the data by listening to all interviews. I reviewed my field notes and read the policy paper. I used thematic analysis, looking for common themes. The method of pattern matching, and timeline analyses supported this process.

4. Interpreting or explaining the analytical statements

For data analysis I chose thematic analysis, as this method is widely used in qualitative research and flexible to use, especially when conducting a case study with broad data.

“Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The process of analysing and interpreting the interviews, observation and policy document was intense and will be explained thoroughly in chapter 4.3.

5. Deciding on the outcome and writing the case report

The data analyses revealed many topics, and it was challenging to limit and focus on the main parts related to the research question and the theoretical framework. I presented the findings in three sections, the interviews, the observation, and the policy paper. Especially in the section with the interviews, I included several quotes to give voice to the participants. The discussion reflects the findings in the light of the theory and provides limitations and further research ideas.

6. Finishing and publishing.

Bassey (1999) reminds to consider different possibilities of publishing the final work. Considering the audience, it could be presented as an article in an audio or video format. My thesis follows a rather standard format to make sure all relevant elements are covered and comprehensible.

4.2 Data

This chapter informs about the process of data collection and gives details to the methods. I chose to use questions, observations, and documents to gain multiple perspectives on the case.

After receiving my approved research proposal in summer 2021, I travelled to Germany, where I did the vast part of data collection. There are about 400 municipal day care centres (Kitas) divided into several districts. Each district has a manager (Stadtquartiersleitung), in charge of about 10-12 Kitas. The eight Élysée Kitas are situated in different districts. Each Kita has a director (Leitung) and a deputy director (stellvertretende Leitung), responsible for the administration, pedagogical concept, and the staff. The staff in Kitas are early childhood educators (Fachkräfte und Ergänzungskräfte) with different qualifications. The differentiation is not relevant for this research, therefore I will refer to them as educators (pädagogisches Personal), as this implies, that they are actively working in everyday pedagogical setting. With permission to do my study in the municipal day care centres, I reached out to the participants to conduct individual and group interviews. Further, I arranged to observe the French lessons.

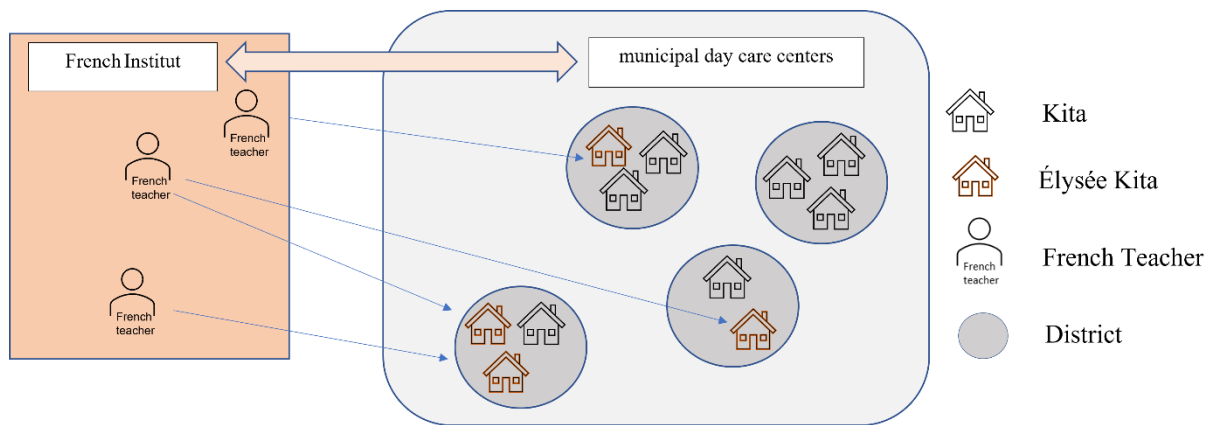


Figure 1: Cooperation between municipal day care centres and the French Institut

4.2.1 Interviews

The participants for the individual interviews were three directors that were active in the Élysée project at that time, but also one former director and one, who hadn't started the project at the time of the interview. These were all held face-to-face. The interview with the district manager was an online interview on Teams. Two group interviews were held in person, with two educators each.

Table 1: Individual Interviews

Participant pseudonym	Position	Since when part of the Élysée project	Linguistic background
Iris	Former director	since the beginning	German, basic French
Laura	Director	since the beginning	French, fluent in German
Kim	Deputy director	since the beginning	German, no French
Andrea	Director	since the beginning, 2016	German, no French
Carolin	Director	just starting	German, basic French
Valerie	District manager	approx. one year	German, fluent in French

Table 2: Group interviews 1

Participant pseudonym	Position	Since when part of the Élysée project	Linguistic background
Asya	educator	approx. one year	Turkish and German, advanced French
Melanie	educator	since the beginning	German, no French

Table 3: Group interviews 2

Participant pseudonym	Position	Since when part of the Élysée project	Linguistic background
Filiz	educator	since the beginning	Turkish and German
Esmā	educator	four years	Arabian and Kurdish, advanced German, no French

Interviews are defined as “a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempt to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons” (Brinkmann in Denzin and Lincoln, p 578). I organised face-to face interviews in the Kitas, where we used the office or a separate room to not be disturbed. Approximately 30 minutes were scheduled for each interview. I assured that participation is voluntary, and that data will be interpreted honestly to avoid falsification. Further, a written consent was provided, which was signed by both, the researcher and participant. I asked the interviewees, if I could record the interviews, which all agreed on. In addition, I took some notes. As semi structured interviews were conducted, I had questions outlined, and key themes prepared. After a short introduction and explanation about my master thesis I asked them how long they had been working with the Élysée project, what their linguistic background was and how they perceived the project. It was interesting for me to find out which topics they emphasised and often the questions I prepared were not that relevant. All interviews were held in German, as that was the language both sides could have a dialog best. After the interview I thanked the participant and told them, that I would inform them about the further process of the thesis and that they could contact me, if any concerns arose. I explained, how I would continue working with the data and that it would be stored safely. After collecting all interview data, I chose to transcribe it myself (instead of automated softwares), to make sure I familiarize even more with the content. Further, spoken language was not always clear to comprehend, as participant’s thoughts came up in a middle of a sentence, or they spoke dialect or created sentences which could only be

interpreted correctly by listening to the intonation. The quotes I used in the findings were translated by myself and slightly adjusted if the original sentence was too complex, due to spoken language.

4.2.2 Observation and field notes

The observation of French lessons also took place in summer 2021 in Munich. Like the interviews, I contacted the director of the Kita to arrange a suitable time. The French teacher is an external teacher from the French Institute. She comes once a week, explicitly for the Élysée project. She teaches four groups every Tuesday morning. The director asked the French teacher to get her consent on participating in research. The French teacher allowed me to spend one Tuesday with her and the children.

Table 4: Observation Children

Group	Age	Activities	Duration	Linguistic backgrounds
7 children	3-6 years	Songs with movements, picture cards with vocabulary, short dialogs	45 minutes	diverse
9 children	3-6 years		45 minutes	
6 children	3-6 years		45 minutes	
6 children	3-6 years		45 minutes	

Table 5: Observation Teacher

Teacher Pseudonym	Position	Since when in the Kita	Linguistic background
Marie	External teacher from the French Institute, once a week in the Kita	Teaching since the beginning of the Élysée project	French and German

Observing the French lessons for children gave a new perspective to the case and provided me with data not based on conversation, but on the dynamic, atmosphere, and more unexpected aspects. This was an opportunity for me to watch the teacher’s engagement with the group over a longer period of time and collect detailed observation data. During her lessons she was facing the children, that were sitting in a half circle. I sat on a chair at the side, able to see her and the group. I introduced myself shortly and from that tried not to disturb. The children did not pay a

lot of attention to me, just in the end they waved goodbye or said something very briefly. I did not take to many notes, as I wanted to watch and see what was going on rather than write a lot.

4.2.3 Policy document

The third part of my data was a policy paper called *Deutsch–Französische Qualitätscharta (Quality Charter)*. This is the political foundation of the Élysée network, which was signed in 2013 by the French Minister of Education, Vincent Peillon, and the German Commissioner for Cultural Affairs, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer. The overall goal is to take one step towards a more multilingual Europe, by providing a network of bilingual early childhood day care centres in France and Germany. The document introduces the idea of the Élysée Kitas, provides objectives, quality criteria of the project and explains the application for joining the network. The Charter is 11 pages long. As it serves as a framework for all Élysée Kitas, it helped me clarify the objectives and put it in context of the municipal day care centres. From reading the policy paper, I perceived a different way of looking at the case and captured new notions.

The data was stored on the server of the University of Oulu for the time of working on the thesis.

4.3 Data analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 86) give a guideline for data analysis through six phases, beginning with familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, and searching for themes. Further, reviewing themes, defining, and naming them. Lastly, producing a report. However, “analysis is not a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next. Instead, it is more recursive process, where movement is back and forth as needed, throughout the phases” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). The phases described by Braun and Clark (2006) were a helpful guideline and gave orientation when analyzing the data. In the next section I will provide insight in the analysis of interviews, observation, and policy paper separately.

4.3.1 Interviews

In the interviews, I wanted to understand how the project was implemented and how it was perceived by the participants. I tried to find out what the participants main take aways were and what they would see as fruitful and positive. I focused on the attitude the participants showed

and how they explained what motivated them and how they engaged with the project. Aside of their opinion, I also heard what they said about the Kita in general, including colleagues, children, parents.

To familiarize with the interviews, I listened to each one and made some initial notes. After that, I transcribed them, which enabled to grasp certain parts more intensively and hear the tone of voice clearly. The next step was to read all interviews, highlight words, statements, or sentences to generate first codes. From this I found similar matters interviewees talked about. Overall topics that emerged were about language, children, parents, practical issues. Further, they all spoke about their own expectations, participation, and views on the project. Most interviewees reflected on the aims and objectives of the project and how it was put in practise. Issues that occurred were the organisation of lessons, and corona. Besides this very broad variety of themes, I could identify a process they all described. Firstly, their initial expectations. Secondly, the implementation of the project. Lastly, a certain change in mindset. I was interested how they perceived the project within this development and what their main take aways were. In consequence, I re-read the interviews with a narrowed view to find more specific information.

Reading the interviews from the perspective of educators, directors, former director, future director, and district manager, it became obvious, that each one had an individual perspective. However, I found more similarities than differences regarding my inquiry with focus on the research question. Therefore, I didn't analyse the interviews separately, but used the interview from the former director as a guideline. She had not been a manager in the Kita for 6 months, which gave her the opportunity to look at the project from a distance, to evaluate it critically and not be biased by her employment relationship. The other interviews complemented her statements.

The following section presents the codes that emerged from the interview data. In total there are 17 codes, some are illustrated by a quote to make it more definite.

- *Motivation and attitude towards the project*

Mainly participants showed a positive attitude and motivation towards the project, when it was introduced in their Kita. “And then we said, of course we are going to participate (in the project)” (Iris).

- *Playful language acquisition*

French lessons, as a central part of the Élysée project, were mentioned very often. It was pointed out that learning a language playful is essential in early childhood education. “As I said, you shouldn’t imagine that they are being taught like in school. It’s all playful” (Andrea).

- *Different opinions about learning a second language*

It was reported that there were different opinions about second language acquisition within the team, mostly based on the fear that children with another home language than German would not learn German well enough. “Yes, we have that too, those different opinions (within the team)” (Asya).

- *Separate French lessons*

In the beginning of the project, Kitas organised the French lessons mainly in sperate groups. A certain number of children was registered, and the lessons took place once a week at the same time, with the same children. “The French teacher took the kids out of the groups and did the French lessons with them in separate groups” (Kim).

- *Organisation*

The organisation and the coordination were challenging at times, especially in the beginning of the project. As the teacher is an external teacher, they had to find a suitable schedule. The decision process, which children would participate, was also described as difficult. Further, the communication with parents and information about the project was complex.

- *Equal access*

The arrangement of separate groups excluded some children. Kitas reported, that they sometimes had morning circles for all children together. “In our daily routine we had the morning gathering in French. Great. For all!” (Melanie).

- *Linguistic tolerance*

When asking about the development of the project, I heard interviewees reporting of raising linguistic awareness and the importance of linguistic tolerance for all languages. “I want the children to learn French on a playful level, but it’s also about becoming more open towards other languages and therefore become more openminded. For them to gain intercultural competences” (Laura).

- *Different cultures*

Openness for cultural diversity was mentioned as well. Participants linked it to the project, which could strength the interest. “I think we should be open for other cultures and languages. It is important and therefore it is important that we have the French project in our Kita” (Kim).

- *Changes in mindset*

The participants described a development of the project, how they realised that there was more than language acquisition. Individually, but also within the team discussions and reflections took place, that enhanced a change in mindset.

- *Inspiration*

Participating and identifying with the project inspired the participants for more activities. “If we are open for the Élysée project, then we can also be open for other projects” (Carolin).

- *Integration in everyday routine*

Throughout the interviews I noticed a change of managing the French lessons. The Kitas tried to include French more in daily routine. “It affects the team members, if French happens actively in everyday situations” (Valerie).

- *Own participation*

Especially participants, that were proficient in French included this more and more in their work with the children or described other activities regarding the project. Also, educators with other home languages were using their languages more actively and conscious than before the project.

- *Incentive to explore other languages*

Integrating more languages on daily bases, became more natural. The focus from French language became wider and educators included activities in several languages. “I have Arabic books, which I sometimes read out. In Arabic and German. They (the children) listen well” (Esma).

- *Sustainable concept*

Especially the district manager and directors emphasised on the importance of continuation and sustainability of the project. The political background of the project was mentioned as an important aspect to guarantee stability.

- *Corona*

All educators and directors brought up corona, as it was a great challenge to keep up with the project. “Maybe it’s good to know, that at some stage during the pandemic, the Kita was completely closed for external people. Everything was difficult” (Andrea).

- *French speaking staff*

Another difficulty for the project was the lack of French speaking staff. The Kitas wished for more, but said it was difficult to find educators. “If we had more French speaking staff, we could expand the project, and everyone would participate more” (Asya).

- *Visions*

Especially the district manager and the future director formulated visions. These were about ensuring equity, multiplying the project, creating greater networks, enabling more inclusion and making bilingual education more self-evident.

Based on the codes above, I created themes and an overall topic, displayed in the following table. This part of the analysis helped me to answer one part of the research question. The theme, that emerged the strongest to answer the essential part of my research question was the *change of mindset and growing awareness towards language and culture*, which I will explain more in the next section.

Table 6: Data analysis interviews 1

Implementation and Conceptualisation of the Élysée project	
Theme	Code
Initial Perceptions and Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation and attitude towards the project • Playful language acquisition • Different opinions about learning a second language
Management of the early French lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First steps • Separate French lessons • Organisation • Equal access
Changes in mindset and growing awareness towards language and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linguistic tolerance • Openness for cultures • Change in mindset • Inspiration
Integration of bilingual education in daily routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration in everyday routine • Own participation • Authentic and natural • Incentive to explore more languages • Sustainable concept
Hurdles and hopes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corona • French speaking staff • Visions

Focusing on increasing awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, I read through the material once more, this time based on deductive coding, inspired from Gerlich et al. (2010). They adjusted the framework on intercultural competence to the model by Byram, which was introduced in the theoretical part of this thesis. I focused on the main categories, attitude, knowledge, and skills, however, came up with less and slightly different codes. I looked for codes in relation to the children and to the team members.

Table 7: Data analysis interviews 2, children

Bilingual education shifting attitudes	
Theme	Code
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tolerance • Interest • Motivation • Awareness
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factual knowledge • Language knowledge • Empathy
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal and nonverbal communication • Skill to discover

Table 8: Data analysis interviews 2, team members

Bilingual education shifting attitudes	
Theme	Code
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest • Openness • Widen the horizon
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factual knowledge • Engaging more with different systems and cultures
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonverbal communication • Skill to discover • Skill to transfer

4.3.2 Observation

My observation of the French lessons added on to get a deeper impression of what the project was about, to see how the French teacher engaged with the children, how the children participated in the lessons, and how this was embedded in the Kita. The French teacher gave a brief introduction of her persona and what I would be expecting of the lessons. She explained that she had worked in the Kita for approximately 7 years and came once a week for four groups. During the lessons she asked me to sit at the side of the room, so I would be able to observe everything. In the beginning of each class, she introduced me shortly, then I explained briefly

what I was doing and for the rest of the lesson I was just a silent observer. I took notes, I got an impression of the atmosphere and the structure and content of her lessons.

Analysing the data, involved reviewing the field notes as well as reflecting my impressions and memories. From that I mapped following analysis:

Table 9: Data analysis observation

Theme	Code
Children learning French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using French/ using German • Motivation and joy • Attitude • Interaction with the French teacher
French teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods • Empathy • Using French/ German • Attitude • Interaction with the children
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group setting • Different linguistic backgrounds • Concentration

4.3.3 Policy document

Analysing the Quality Charter brought light to aspects, that helped me to relate policy and practice and especially reflect how the implementation of the project echoed the quality charter. Overall, the Quality Charter outlines the objectives of the Élysée project, describes quality criteria, names special aspects, explains the application process, and displays principles and modalities of implementation. To analyse the paper, I read all of it and marked the relevant paragraphs. I re-read and translated those. Firstly, I focused on the *objectives*, mainly to identify aspects not directly related to language acquisition, but more to intercultural competence. Secondly, I searched for codes in relation to *principals and modalities of implementation of the project*. The table shows the codes and themes that emerged from the paper and will be examined more in detail in the findings.

Table 10: Data analysis policy paper

Themes	Codes
Objectives of the Élysée project, which are not directly related to learning a second language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribution to multilingualism and linguistic and cultural diversity• Appreciation and awareness of languages besides French• Knowledge of social and cultural characteristics• Intercultural experience and knowledge
Principals and modality of implementation of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involving/ informing team members• Individual learning process of the children• Requirements for French teacher• Connection of language and culture• Network with partners in France• Appreciation of diversity• Continuity of the project

After analysing the Quality Charter, I reviewed the interview with the district manager, which gave insight to the procedures where theory and practice meet. From her interview I could identify that the political background, the network and the cooperation with the French Institute are crucial for continuation and acceptance of the Élysée project.

Finally, the handling, structuring, transcribing, and engaging with the amount of data was extensive. Analysing, coding, categorizing, and comparing required a lot of intentness and determination to build connections, relate themes and draw a story board to be able to present the findings. Theoretical knowledge and previous research in the field helped me to limit, focus, and concentrate on themes to handle the process of doing this research. At times I found myself influenced by my own expectations, experiences, and interpretations, I had to step back once in a while to purely focus on the data and research question. In the next section I will introduce the main findings and bring them to discussion.

5 Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis. Firstly, the interviews are presented, secondly the observation and lastly, the policy paper. Themes in relationship to each other are illustrated by examples and quotes, that emerged from the codes.

5.1 Interviews

5.1.1 Implementation and conceptualisation

This chapter displays results of the data analysis of all interviews. It illustrates *initial perceptions and attitudes, the management of the French lessons, changes in mindset, Integration of bilingual education in daily routine* and lastly, *hurdles and hopes*. Voices of educators, directors and the district manager are presented equally, as all of them contribute to the main theme of conceptualisation and implementation of the Élysée project.

Initial perceptions and attitudes

When participants were asked about their initial expectations about the Élysée project, they generally expressed *motivation* and a positive *attitude* towards the project. Some related their *motivation* to their own experience with language. “I grew up with two languages, I think it’s good if children grow up with other languages. It’s interesting for the kids to learn something new“ (Esma). Most interviewees pointed out the value of learning a language at early age, *playful* and with joy. „I think it’s nice that they (the children) encounter language, that it starts play based and they only have to add on. Language is not seen as an obligation, but simply as something beautiful. Yes” (Filiz). Directors, as well as educators described how they conceptualised bilingual education in the beginning of the project. It was found that the initial understanding of the project was based on *play-based language acquisition*. „First of all, my focus was on play-based language acquisition. That was the first motive I had in mind” (Iris). One director described *contradicting opinions* within the team, when she introduced the project, especially regarding children with another home language than German. “The concern was, that for children with another home language than German it might be too much for them to learn another language, or come in contact with another language” (Iris). The educators underlined that team members had *different opinions*, and some were worried, that a second language could hinder children to learn German accurately. This is linked to the fact, that children need a high

language proficiency to transit to primary school and the pressure to teach German often lays on the Kitas.

Yes, we (the team) also have different opinions. Personally, I would say I don't think it's that bad to learn French once a week, even if German is not quite there yet. Many others say that we should focus on the German language, and if that doesn't work, then we needn't add another language. (Asya)

Participants reported about *concerns* regarding French as a second language. "Of course, the main focus is always- unfortunately- 'what is the child's home language, how is the German skill? Would it be possible to teach French?'" (Melanie). However, the district manager pointed out that the project is a chance to change attitude and experience the value of bilingual education. "In this respect, the *Élysée Kitas* are a living example, because practitioners can experience how children learn with joy and develop language understanding, without harming the German language" (Valerie). Even though the interviewees reported a positive attitude and motivation towards the *Élysée* project, as they expected a play-based language acquisition something fruitful for the children, they verbalised different opinions with their teams about learning a second language. Dealing with fears about bilingual education, the district manager understands the project to be a chance to reflect on one's attitude.

Management of the French lessons

In the interviews I asked about the organisation of the French lessons and the participants illustrated how it was in the beginning of the project and later. They described how French lessons were organised and what issues arose. One Kita illustrated how the *first steps* were made with the French teacher coming to the Kita and communicating play based with the children. "And then the French teacher came to our Kita, I think it was autumn 2015, and she started speaking French with the children on a play-based level. They danced and sang a lot, that's the way the project started very quickly" (Iris). From all the interviews it was described that the *lessons were organised separately* from the everyday routine. This required a lot of organisation and coordination and consequently not all children could take part. Kitas reported how they managed it and what the *difficulties* were.

In the beginning we took the children out of the groups. We had lists where the parents agreed (on participation in French lessons). And then it was a bit difficult depending on what happened in that moment. We took the children from a free play situation or activity. I always said it is on a voluntary basis and if a child doesn't want to, then of course. And some children were not on

the list, but wanted to take part, and we allowed them to take part. ‘No- you are not on the list’ that’s not good for the kids. (Laura)

One director remembered beginning with three *separate groups*, in a Kita where no one else spoke French besides the external teacher. “None of us speak French. And yes- we started in October with three groups of 10 children each. At that time there were only three French units, each 45 minutes” (Andrea). Separate groups hindered educators to take part in the lessons, and observe what was happening, as the children moved to an extra room with the French teacher. „I think in the beginning it was really separate. Usually we (the staff) didn’t participate, because she (the French teacher) actually took the kids out (to a separate room)” (Kim). Not only for the staff it was *difficult to arrange* a good setting, also for the parents, who wanted to sign up their child were stressed out to register in time. „And then there are situations where emails arrive from parents, early March, saying ‘my child has to learn French in September, I will register now’” (Melanie). Participants emphasised the importance for all children to participate in the project equally. „Yes, I think all children should have the same opportunities, there is no better or worse, there is both” (Carolin). On the one hand Kitas had a clear structure for the French lessons, on the other hand it was not the optimal setting, as a lot of organising was involved and not all children could participate equally.

Changes in mindset

Given the above, generally all participants showed a positive attitude towards the project. However, they faced challenges, such as organising the French lessons suitable for all (children, staff, parents). In the interviews all described a process of reflection, questioning and development. One director reflected on her *change in mindset*, becoming *aware* that a second language does not harm first language acquisition, far more she viewed *language from a new perspective*. „First of all, my focus was on play-based language acquisition. That was the first motive I had in mind. But then, over time, I gained completely different insights” (Iris). It was found that language lessons would contribute to a wider *linguistic tolerance* and open space for *different cultures*. “And the awareness for language, I think that’s really, really important. For me it’s also an aspect, to become open towards other cultures in general. I think that’s very, very important, the openness towards other cultures” (Iris). The district manager sees her responsibility to give space to the team, to reflect, talk and become *aware of cultural and linguistic diversity*.

Well, cultural diversity is lived, but some people (staff) are not aware of it. To build this bridge towards openness, by using this language (French); it's just a bit of intellectual translation work due to the fact that a lot of great things happen, but people aren't given the opportunity to actually reflect it in dialogue with others (team members). (Valerie)

Critical reflection was part of the process to achieve stronger *awareness and acceptance towards diversity*. „It's crucial to treat everyone with respect, to think about ones understanding of tolerance, acceptance, forms of encounter – ‘am I tolerant towards others? Do I have prejudices or traps? - those questions help to reflect’” (Valerie). Educators questioned their tendency to always consider the majority first, instead of *raising awareness to minorities*. “Why do I always only consider the majority? Instead of turning it around and saying, ‘let's consider the minority!’” (Melanie). The data displayed a change in mindset. „I think it has changed now. The colleagues, who were a bit sceptical, said that the children had a lot of fun” (Andrea). A reflection from one Kita was, that team members, who could identify with the project inspired others and the project became more visible.

This diversity of characters, nations, and personalities, that fitted so incredibly well to our Kita. When I look back, I see the diversity of staff reflected in the Kita. It was ideal. And what I also notice in retrospect, it developed. It's not stagnating, it's getting more and more involved in everyday life. (Iris)

Educators and directors observed that there was more to the French lessons, than language learning. Observing a growing awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity made them reflect critically on their own mindsets. The changes in mindset led to higher motivation, which strengthened the project.

Integration of bilingual education in daily routine

Over time, Kitas adjusted the management of French lessons to make it more tangible and to enable access for all children equally. One Kita described that instead of having separate groups, they *integrated French more and more in their daily routine*. The French teacher interacted with the children in everyday situations. “Back then, the French teacher took the children out of the group, and they had the French lesson separately. That changed with the next teacher who came. She then actively went into the groups and taught through play” (Kim). Not only the external teacher taught French, also some *team members participated actively* and started to do French activities.

Whenever she (Laura) was in the group, she would do the morning circle in French, from time to time. That was just the beginning. You could clearly see the development of the children back then. How it has changed and how French was practiced more actively in everyday situations. (Kim)

The following quote illustrates a situation in daily routine.

And then we changed it and integrated it into everyday situations. I do that too. When I was more involved in group activities, I actually accompanied the children's breakfast in French 'Ça va? Qu'est-ce que tu veux? Tu veux du pain, du lait, de l'eau?' Or during morning circle, or a game in French..... (Laura)

The participants realised that it's more authentic and natural to integrate language in everyday-based situations, especially for young children.

You don't say 'now we do English or Italian.'- more authentic! It's my experience that children learn the most and best through play, without realising it, with joy. At that age there is no other way. If we just push them, they will refuse. In that way, everyone is there, it's more natural and authentic and in my opinion, with better results. (Laura)

One of the educators realised, that she had the intention to speak French, but didn't feel confident enough. Although, through the project her interest grew to *participate* more.

Interesting, that you're bringing this up, because I have always been interested, especially lately. I'd love to refresh my French. I had C1, at school. I was good and was able to have conversations. Well, if one doesn't have the practice for years, then you lose it. That's why I think it would be really nice if I could brush up and get more involved to speak French with the children. Now I just don't feel confident. (Asya)

As the educators realised, that the French language is like an *incentive to explore other languages* they discussed the idea of including books with different languages and contribute to the project. Two of them had following conversation:

I have this ,friends' picture book. I have it in German and in Turkish. Why don't I read in German and you read it in Turkish?...I also have it in Arabic. (Melanie)

Well, yes. But I cannot read Arabic... (Asya)

Sure, but Si can read it (laughs). (Melanie)

The district manager talked about supervising a Kita during the process of implementing the project and working with the team to create a *sustainable concept*.

Well, with one of the Kitas I developed a really great cooperation. Everyone got enthusiastic because the project is going so well and the children are having so much fun, that the staff built up such a desire to visualize and make the project more present and include it in everyday life. (Valerie)

Hurdles and hopes

A positive development of the project appeared from the data. Nonetheless, there was a lot of coaching, reflecting and personal motivation involved. A huge hurdle was the *pandemic*, described by all interviewees as a turning point, where Kitas faced difficulties to carry on and keep motivated. “It was very challenging and difficult during corona ... for the past 2-3 months the project hasn’t been an issue anymore” (Kim). Another topic that challenged the Kitas, was the *lack of French speaking educators*. To reach more language immersion during all days it would be good to have educators speaking French, not only the external French teacher. However, one Kita was awaiting a colleague from France for an exchange programme soon, which gave them hope to expand the project more. “I think it’s so nice that we are going to have a colleague who speaks French with the children in daily situations. I also think it’s nice that we get to know a little bit more through that. That’s great” (Filiz). In connection to equal access, mentioned before, Kitas had hopes that all children could benefit, not only the children that were registered.

I am happy, that a teacher from France is coming soon. She will be here more often, and all children can participate, not only the ones from the French group. I am happy about that because they (children) all want. They’re all interested, but now they cannot participate. (Esma)

The future director formulated her vision like this,

I would like to multiply experiences to everyone who is interested. We are open, people can come in, they can take a look at the project, so that they see how it can be implemented. All would benefit. That would be my vision. (Carolin)

Although the project involves challenges, there were always positives perspectives and hopes to motivate to carry on.

Summarising the first part of the interview analysis, I see openness towards the bilingual project. Even though different opinions and challenges in managing the French lessons were described, bilingual education as such was perceived as playful, joyful, and enriching. This influenced a change in mindsets and the project was expanded to be more inclusive and

accessible for all children. These findings support to answer the research question. Anyhow, the next part of interview analysis explores shifting attitudes towards bilingual education more closely, to capture more information on intercultural competence.

5.1.2 Bilingual education shifting attitudes

So far, the data analysed enlightened the Kitas' *conception and implementation of bilingual education*, and how the development was throughout time, based on critical reflection. Engaging more deeply with the project, rethinking, and questioning bilingual education highlighted that there was more than language acquisition to it. A *change in mindset*, regarding bilingual education, rose awareness towards *linguistic and cultural diversity*. It is not easy to grasp all attributes of the outputs of the project, anyhow, following categories illustrate how *attitudes, knowledge and skills* developed through bilingual activities. Firstly, children's growing awareness and appreciation towards linguistic diversity will be examined. Secondly, competences that team members had achieved will be presented.

Children

Participants agreed, that the aim of the Élysée project was not to learn a new language to full proficiency, but to encounter a new experience. Besides gaining *knowledge* of the language and culture, children developed *skills* and educators identified several aspects in relation to *attitude*, pointing out, that the project transmitted more than language acquisition.

- *Attitude*

All participants observed that the children benefited from the French lessons in a way, that it made them more *aware and conscious* of different languages and cultures:

I also noticed that the children benefit far more than only French. Since we included it into everyday situations the children gained a wider spectrum of knowledge, such as the experience of linguistic diversity. Also learning about different nations, different lifestyles, different ways of having breakfast and so on. And they perceived their language as language. And they perceived other languages as languages. Especially interculturally they gained awareness. The children with other home languages than German perceived their language in a new light, and I got the impression, they appreciated it more. (Iris)

This example illustrates growing *openness and interest* towards other languages. Children with diverse linguistic backgrounds were integrated in activities and active to share their knowledge.

We experienced, that the children sang birthday songs in French, of course, then in German, then they came up with their own languages and said: ‘I also know it in Chinese, or I also know it in Turkish’. And that was a very interesting aspect for me, which became more and more relevant, this social emotional aspect and awareness for everything related to language- that was very interesting. (Iris)

Participants reported about children’s *motivation*, the joy and fun, and how this effected the educators’ emotions, too. “I have to say, that’s a really great thing. The children have fun, and we have fun” (Melanie). One educator highlighted the *tolerance* among the group, regardless of their home language, all children learnt together equally.

When the children are there (in French class) they all speak French und learn together. They don’t feel fear and their home language doesn’t matter at all. Because they learn together- cooperatively. It’s not about language competence but about the interest in language. (Filiz)

Tolerance, awareness, interest, and motivation were key aspects that were highlighted in the interviews when talking about benefits of bilingual education.

- *Knowledge*

Knowledge was gained on a *factual* level and *language knowledge*.

Even though the French lessons were only once a week, the children were able to pick up the language and reproduce it. One of the directors remembered parents telling her about the *language knowledge* the daughter developed and singing French lullabies to the baby-sister at home. „We got interesting feedback from parents about what the children did at home. We were fascinated about that. A mother talked about her daughter who was about 4 or 5 years at that time, she sang lullabies to her baby-sister” (Iris).

Besides learning the language, the children also gained *factual knowledge* about France. Over time most Kitas build partnerships to *ecole maternelles* in France. The contact brought new insights and contributed to further expertise. „Project work is displayed, the children report a lot, and we also have the cooperation with France. We get to know a lot, which is also very interesting. How they celebrate Christmas, their national holidays – that’s completely different” (Filiz). One of the directors thought about different aspects, that the project provided. “Well, what else is beneficial apart from language, culture, and tradition? (thinks) Understanding for people with different backgrounds in general, not only French” (Andrea).

Beyond factual knowledge, it was described that children would realise how other children feel, when not understanding a language and it made them more *empathic*.

Conversely, I could also say, because many children do not understand French and especially a child who has migration background and is not as proficient in German as another child, the other child would notice: ‘Wait, now I feel like (makes up a name), now I feel the same way he feels, now I don’t understand a word either.’. (Kim)

The findings display a variety of *knowledge* and *empathy*, that appeared through bilingual activities in the Kitas.

- *Skills*

Skills on a *verbal and nonverbal* level were found, and the skill to *discover* new things in connection with language and culture.

The French lessons were an incentive for the children to *discover* languages as such, by exploring beyond French and German. They discovered meanings of words in many different languages. “One becomes more open, not only speaking German all the time, but also to ask: ‘what is this called in your language?’ As we have many cultures and languages here” (Asya). For children with other home languages than German, the French lessons seemed to support in a way, that all children had the same level of *verbal skills*, and they were not in a deficit position. The examples show that children with different linguistic backgrounds interacted on a same verbal language level in the French lessons. “I see their progress...then the kids are on the same level as other kids. Because they're all beginners. And I can tell that they're showing interest and having fun” (Iris). Educators and directors reported that they were surprised to see, how the French lessons benefited these children especially. Interactions between all children were based on new ground and enabled new experience. Using *nonverbal skills* included children with less verbal skills.

They (the children) watch and listen, they are interested, and the nice thing is, they imitate what they have learnt from French class. And children, who aren’t as proficient in German, join the group and observe. It is easier for the children to engage and play with each other. (Andrea)

It stood out, that learning French does not affect learning German in a negative way. “The parents ask about that too. They ask if it (French) hinders learning German, whether it got worse or not. But we can always deny that” (Andrea).

On the contrary, it was even reported, that French might influence learning German in a positive way. Two educators had a conversation about one child, which had very little German, but they supported that he could attend the French lessons and his *verbal skills* improved.

If you compare on what level he is cognitively and on what level he is linguistically. I think he made a lot of progress. Maybe because of that (French). So, if you think about it. He came when he was three years old and couldn't speak a word of German. And compared to that I think he has totally improved. He took up French so well, maybe it has also influenced it. (Asya)

The educators draw the conclusion, that the French lesson was a trigger for improving German. They emphasised, that mastering German strengthened children's confidence and they would be easier included in play situations. *Skills* that were gained had a lot to do with development of *verbal and nonverbal communication* and children *discovering* the whole range of languages. What stood out, was that children from diverse linguistic backgrounds were on the same level than others and were included more equally in play situations.

Team

Educators, directors, and the district manager emphasised that the *Élysée* project had changed their mindsets and also the mindsets of team members. Aspects, underlining the finding, can be seen in their *attitudes, skill, and knowledge* development, described in the following part of the study.

- *Attitude*

As presented above, the critical reflection of team members helped develop the project towards more integration in everyday learning and developing a stronger understanding how to implement bilingual education.

This process gave more confidence to the staff and raised *openness and interest*.

I remember when we started, it was very different. Also, the children perceived it differently. And now, after four or three years, you can see how the French teacher comes in and how it has developed, the way they interact. I noticed when participating (in the project) for a longer time, then one is more involved and committed. (Filiz)

The district manager emphasised that a *positive attitude and openness* is crucial for dealing with diversity. "I see it positively; the diversity enables a real enrichment for one's own understanding of values, a clearer demarcation of what works and what doesn't work at all. And that has nothing to do where someone comes from" (Valerie). The project is an opportunity for

the staff to act beyond their everyday work, they can *widen their horizon*, develop professionally, and receive more recognition for the work they are doing.

We also had inquiries from the Ministry of Social Affairs and from everywhere. That is due to the fact that we are open minded and all the nationalities which are/ were part of our team. There was a spirit of openness. We had team members from several nations. I think that reflects when there is a mental and emotional openness. (Iris)

It was found that engaging with the project, observing, and reflecting *widened the horizon* of team members and forwarded *openness and interest*, which reflected in a positive *attitude* towards linguistic and cultural diversity.

- *Knowledge*

The project required to explore and understand the topic of bilingual education more deeply in terms of gaining *knowledge* about it.

The Élysée project seemed like an incentive for gaining more *factual knowledge* and digging deeper.

We didn't know much about cognitive language acquisition at the beginning. It was only over time that we paid more attention to it, through studies, exchange with other directors, further training in the French Institute, information from Dr. Fourcaud and so on. (Iris)

One director looked back on her *change of mindset by learning more about facts and evidence*. "I found this seminar really good. We got input and learnt how we can implement the project- a handout, a seminar. For me the project is also education- not only for the children- also for us/ me" (Carolin). Besides gaining *knowledge about bilingual education*, educators appreciated learning about French culture, habits, and traditions.

We learn a lot about French background, and national holidays. For example, I didn't know that Epiphany is even more important than Christmas, and all those things. To get to know such things apart from language. That's very interesting, I learn a lot. (Melanie)

A director reported that she could see her staff *engaging more with different systems and cultures* beyond their own.

I think it was the impulse from the French lessons in our Kita....the willingness to learn about other cultures and other educational systems has also grown. Also, to reflect on the own in order to be able to present to the outside. (Iris)

Another director reported about a study trip to France. She compared the two systems and questions the similarities and differences. “They (the French system) stick to their school program, that is very very regulated. Not, that I find it bad. There are certain ways, which are good for the children, that they hang on more intensive- in contrast to Germany” (Andrea). Team members mainly *learned* about bilingual education to be able to adjust their projects to make them meaningful. Engaging with French language and culture *widen the horizon* of participants and gave them the opportunity to *explore different system*.

- *Skill*

The project also provided space to gain new *skills and discover* language and culture from a new perspective.

From an interview with a director, it was found that the Élysée project enabled to *discover* new things, beyond everyday life in the Kita.

I find it enriching to enable your staff to look outside of their box. Well, the image of an educator is not necessarily that one is engaged in a French project and widens the horizon for example in Strasbourg, Nice or Quebec. To raise awareness that there are these opportunities to be active and to develop oneself intellectually, that is what I find very remarkable. (Iris)

The *skill to transfer* experience from a French-German project to other languages and cultures was seen as a benefit, that would enable cross-cultural understanding. This skill should be used for everyday situations apart from a predetermined activity.

In my opinion the most important, in a broad sense, is cross-cultural understanding, German French is only a partial aspect. Based on this German French aspect, one can experience that there is more than French speaking people, there are more cultures and languages. And I can make it interesting in different fields, I can include Turkish, Italian, Chinese, Vietnamese- depending on the situation, I can include everyone, especially in regard to the team and children. (Valerie)

Further, the ability of learning *non-verbal communication* was highlighted.

Another enriching side effect is, even if it is challenging, to have the courage and desire to create a dialogue with other people. No matter how, with mimic, gesture, I don't know, pictures- it doesn't always have to be language. The meaning of language changes, because I can feel the limit not being able to talk to everyone, therefore I need other tools. (Valerie)

Especially directors pointed out the chance that the project empowered to develop *skills* that would rise beyond daily routine and familiar communication structures.

5.2 Observation

The observation of French lessons provided a different perspective on the case and three main themes came up. Firstly, the *setting* was interesting in connection to the findings from the interviews. Secondly, the *attitude of the French teacher*, as this influences the *learning and participation of the children*.

The *setting* for the French lessons included a group size of about 12 children, a duration of 45 min, placed in a separate room in the Kita. The children participating were 3-6 years old and had slightly different levels of French language proficiency. Some had learnt French for almost three years, others only for one year. The teacher followed a similar structure in each lesson, where she had games, songs and activities prepared. Children from *diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds* took part in the French lesson. They sat in a circle with the teacher and were *concentrated* but relaxed. The teacher used only French to communicate, supported by illustrations, gesture, toys etc. She encouraged the children to repeat and join her songs and games. When children spoke German, she replied in French, however appreciating the children's participation.

The French teacher showed a positive and friendly *attitude*. She had a soft toy to support the lesson and communicated playfully with the children individually and as a group. Her teaching *method* was flexible, and active. Games, songs, and picture cards helped the children to involve and stay interested. Whenever introducing new vocabulary, she encouraged the group to listen and repeat. I could observe a strong *interaction* between teacher and children, as soon as there was a disruption, she did not pay attention to it, but caught the children's attention with another activity. *Empathy* was found in her awareness of every individual, if there was a shy child, that did not want to speak out loud, she would respect that.

I observed, that all children participated in the lesson, some more active, and others more passive, but none of them seemed to be stressed when not understanding her language. Several children repeated the French words or short sentences, and some were courageous and used their repertoire outside set activities. My observation underlines the fact, that regardless of the linguistic background all children participated equally during the French lesson. There was no issue about differences or proficiency. Listening to the songs was a great joy as most of the group tried to sing French and raised their voices whenever they knew the part of the song very well. At this point I would like to add an observation, which took place after the lessons. Children had returned to their groups and met with their educators in the lunchroom. The French

teacher and I walked past the lunchroom, where the children were waiting for the food. As soon as they saw the teacher, they started to sing “Bonjour”. The teacher waved at the children, smiled, and said “goodbye, see you next week” to them. A small, but very inspiring moment, to understand how the children are *motivated, joyful, and eager to explore a new language*.

Summing up, my observation was worthwhile, as it gave a very deep insight into the French lessons and the arranged *setting, the attitude of the French teacher and the participation of the children*.

5.3 Policy paper

The quality charter informs mainly about the French- German cooperation and implementation of French language in Germany and German language in France. Aspects were found in the quality charter regarding the *objectives in terms of linguistic diversity and intercultural competence*, as well as *principals and modalities for the implementation of the project*.

Four out of five aims in the quality charter refer to *aspects that go beyond learning French*. Firstly, learning a language at early age is a “contribution to the development of a multilingual Europe” (Quality Charter). Here French is seen as one part of a variety of languages within Europe and can be understood as “one piece in a puzzle”. Secondly, the document points out, that although French is at core of the project, all institutions need to assure, that . This takes the contribution to multilingualism even further, as appreciation and value includes full respect. Further, the paper emphasises on creating

a structure which, gradually and taking the age and development of the children into account, arouses interest and offers opportunities to acquire a high level of competence in the partner language and basic knowledge of the social and cultural characteristics of the neighbouring country. (Quality Charter)

This feature focuses on the two partner countries France and Germany, to build knowledge beyond language, but also culture and social topics. The last objective refers to intercultural experience and knowledge. “With the acquisition of this languages, to stimulate a gradual, lifelong development of competence in other languages and the development of an interest in linguistic and intercultural experiences and knowledge” (Quality Charter). Intercultural experience is not linked to a specific context, far more, by learning about one new country, children can develop interest to other cultures, languages, and countries. Laying a positive

foundation in early years gives them the chance to extend their competence throughout their life.

Principles and modalities for the implementation of the project can be found in the sections “quality criteria”. There are five basic principles listed. One of the principles emphasises to use “an age and development adequate language teaching method” (Quality Charter), where the level of language is considered in order to provide pedagogical appropriate teaching. Another feature stresses, that the person teaching French should be a *native speaker or have at least the level of C1* according to the European Framework. Further, the *method* of “one-person-one-situation” is suggested. This implies that the teacher should speak in one language throughout one activity/ situation, but within another situation can use another language. The aspect of *continuity* includes *continuity of activities*, *continuity of personnel* and *continuity from moving from pre-school to primary school*. Even though the Élysée project is described as a project, it aims to be implemented sustainable and not limited to a certain time frame. This involves supporting children transition to primary school, where they might have the chance to continue learning French. Lastly, objectives must be reflected and *evaluated*. This can be understood recurrent, according to changing circumstances within a Kita.

In a separate subsection, the quality charter points out five “special features” regarding the implementation of the project in early childhood institutions. Firstly, it is stressed, that all *pedagogical staff must be informed* in detail about the project to ensure “respectful implementation of all goals and basic principles of early childhood acquisition of a foreign language” (Quality Charter). The second feature explains “to develop a pedagogical system that takes up the children's interests in a situation-oriented manner and supports the autonomous learning process” (Quality Charter). This is in line with the principle named in the section above, therefore seems very central. Further, “linking language and cultural aspects of the neighbouring and partner country” (Quality Charter) is brought up to connect partnerships between the two countries France and Germany and make the project more tangible for the participants. This leads to a stronger contact to “engaging with speakers of the target language” (Quality Charter) and open the learning space beyond the classroom. The bilateral contact is certainly a special feature, as it focuses on two specific countries. Finally, it is emphasised to be aware of linguistic and cultural diversity and develop and implement a project that forwards “education for more appreciation of diversity” (Quality Charter).

The Quality Charter sums up the aspects, by formulating a fundamental quality criterion regarding the whole team. “The successful implementation of this concept requires that all employees of the day-care centre identify with the pedagogical concept and the bilingual profile of the facility” (Quality Charter).

Concluding, the objectives named in the policy paper are formulated widely, leave space for institutions to implement it according to their specific context. The quality criteria are a list of features and special features, that guide Kitas to build their conception and build basic principles for implementing the project. Overall, it was not clearly comprehensible why some of the “special features” were highlighted in comparison to the other quality criteria, as they did not link to the *Élysée* project specifically. However, it was found that all aspects leave space to create a holistic, sustainable, creative, and meaningful project.

5.4 Summary of the findings

The interviews brought to light, that the project developed throughout time. Educators and directors gained a more holistic picture of the project in comparison to the beginning, where most of them thought of second language acquisition. They could observe growing awareness towards linguistic and cultural diversity and reflected on a change in mindset. Changing the management of the lessons, including it more in daily routine and participating stronger, gave them confidence, motivation, and inspiration. The project grew and captured more aspects beyond language and words. A milestone was to realise, that children with other linguistic and cultural backgrounds than German, benefited from the project very much.

Given the above, educators and directors found that more integration on every day bases was important to give equal access to all children. However, from my observation of the separate French classes I found the lessons to be very beneficial. They were well structured, the content was adequate to the age of the children, the group atmosphere was concentrated, and the children cheerful. Especially, the fact that all children equally participated with joy and interest gave me the impression of great quality and high professionalism of the French teacher. Children with less German proficiency had the chance to interact on the same level than all other children, as their French is all on the same starting level, and they develop skills, knowledge, and attitude together. The linguistic diversity among the group appeared to be significant in terms of equality.

The Quality Charter outlines objectives and modalities for implementation of the project thoroughly but leaves space to connect these to the specific concept of the Kitas. The objectives in the charter relate to the bilateral relationship between France and Germany, however, highlight the relevance of other languages and cultures, such as contributing to a multilingual Europe. It was found that the document provides helpful guidelines to support Kitas by establishing the project. Nonetheless, in connection to the findings from the interviews, the Quality Charter still needs more attention from the Kitas implementing the Élysée project. I can be questioned, if the outlines from the charter would have supported the Kitas to have a clearer picture from the start.

6 Ethical considerations and quality of research

Ethical considerations are relevant throughout the process of research. Whether regarding the choice of a topic, deciding on a methodology and following the procedures, or conducting and reporting the findings; all have influence on the quality of a research. “Ethics is how we behave or should behave in relation to the people with whom we interact” (Simons, 2009, p. 96) Ethical principles are situated in the context and not always straightforward. Simons (2009) speaks of a fundamental principal of “doing no harm”, which seems obvious, however can be interpreted differently. She draws attention to doing research “with” the participants and building trust and respect. On this basis a relationship can be established, to speak openly, share concerns and involve the participants issues. As mentioned in the introduction, I had been involved in the *Élysée* project before starting my master studies. I was responsible to support the Kitas with Erasmus + mobilities and coordinating the contact to the French Kitas. Since starting my studies at the University of Oulu, I have still been employed at the municipality of Munich, but with very limited work hours and not actively part of the project. However, some of the participants I interviewed, knew me from those times, which is two sided. On the one hand a basis of trust had been built and willingness to participate in the study was there. On the other hand, I was in a new role, as a researcher, approaching them with the aim of conducting answers for my thesis. Confirmability explains the degree of neutrality by the researcher, in a way that others can come to similar conclusions. Since I knew the project and some of the interviewees, I had to carefully reflect my questions, interpretations, and guarantee transparency. Bracketing is important when interviewing and giving voice to the participants. Additionally, to ensure confirmability, my supervisor guided the process and gave helpful feedback. The process of analysing and establishing the findings, from the interviews and observation, required a thoughtful and careful approach to assure giving voice to the participants. Credibility applies, when participants feel, that the findings represent their experience. The case study also involved an observation with children. “Children may be less able to defend their privacy” (Simons, 2009, p. 108). For this reason, I chose not to record, take a video, or interview the children. I based my focus on the overall interaction of the group, to guarantee anonymity to the children. In the thesis I did not mention individual children, but summarized the observation in a way, that there can be no conclusions drawn to the children. However, the formal process of applying for permission to collect data within the Kitas was provided and a research consent was signed by both sides. I chose to use pseudonyms for interview participants to guarantee anonymity. With the methodology of case study, I proved dependability, by presenting a clear method, following

steps based on theory, and described the process in detail. My thesis aims to raise attention to linguistic diversity, using different methods of data collection to provide various perspectives and connect and compare the results. It should be possible to transfer and repeat the research and receive similar findings. The municipal day care centres give a right of a place to every child and therefore they are comparable with any other public day cares, where no group is preferred. This fact supports that the research could be done in any other similar setting, that pertains to the same research question. Mutual dialog and trust, in the complexity of a case study, is an ethical principal to consider throughout the process of research.

7 Discussion

This case study investigated the *Élysée* project in municipal day care centres in Munich, aiming to find out *how the bilingual project Élysée 2020 enhances intercultural competence*. In relation to this question the data provided insight *how Kitas conceptualize bilingual education in general, how it changed over time and how intercultural competence became visible through the Élysée project*. The findings from the interviews, an observation, and a policy document gave a broad picture of the process of establishing the *Élysée* project in the municipal Kitas and the relation of policy and practice. All data captured details how intercultural competences were strengthened through the project, especially raising awareness and growing appreciation towards multilingualism. Challenges, changes, and chances of the *Élysée* project will be discussed in the following section, based on the theory in chapter 3.

Reviewing my initial assumptions based on personal encounters where the *Élysée* project had been expected to be elite, not enabling equal access for all children, and fear that second language acquisition would weaken children with other home languages than German, this research demonstrated that the bilingual project *Élysée 2020* in fact does enhance intercultural competence among children and staff.

Bilingual education does not necessarily mean second language education. According to García (2009) bilingual education is a more integrated concept with emphasis on a holistic approach, versus separate language lessons, which transmit language instruction explicitly. The interviews brought to light that there is no standardized way of implementing bilingual education in municipal day care centres. The Quality Charter was hardly mentioned in the interviews, and I presume, that most of the Kitas were not familiar with the content of the paper. The findings explored how educators and directors conceptualized bilingual education initially and most of the interviewees stated that the main objective was expected to be learning a second language. They thought of bilingual education as a play-based method for children to develop skills in French and be able to gain new verbal competences and encounter a positive experience with a foreign language. The term "bilingual" stresses the focus on two languages, which might be misleading and generate certain associations. The theory explains that bilingualism is one step towards multilingualism and does not exclude more than two languages (Conoz, 2013). Based on these initial perceptions the bilingual project was implemented in the Kitas. In the beginning of the project the main focus was on organising the French lessons for a predetermined group, which took part usually once a week. Explicit language lessons are to

teach accurate language and to develop competence in a foreign language. According to Dolean (2015, p. 715) this model is not entirely appropriate for early childhood education, as young children benefit more from an integrated model to develop skills in terms of phonetic sound and the tone of the voice, rather than vocabulary and grammar. In the interviews participants described a change throughout time. Besides organisational issues, they also wanted to make the bilingual activities more accessible for all children. Positive effects from the French lessons caught their attention and led to a change in mindset. Children brought interest and motivation for language to the classrooms, they explored other languages and showed openness towards linguistic diversity. In consequence, Kitas reacted to the positive changes and included bilingual activities more on daily bases. Results from Fourcaud and Springer (2021, p. 177) show, that also a small number of bilingual activities influence children's development, however increasing the input would provide even better output. In line with Garcia's perspective, that bilingual education has far more aspects, than language, Kitas valued that more children could participate in exploring a new language from different angles. Educators and directors experienced that French was an incentive, but all other languages were included stronger. They were motivated to participate stronger in the project, and also share their native language skills and resources. One educator stated, "Finally, my language skills become visible and valued" (Laura). In my opinion the linguistic diversity among educators is a great potential in the field of early childhood education. Especially, in a monolingual country like Germany, where the standard language is mostly in focus, these abilities could be included more in contribution to multilingualism. By implementing the French lessons, questioning structures and concept, and enabling access and equality for all, bilingual education became more meaningful within the Kitas.

Through this process, a director highlighted, "I want the children to take out as much as possible, to develop the competence, the intercultural, the language competence. It is more. It's learning about culture. It's much more than just words" (Laura). Awareness and appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity was found to be a central outcome from the project. Gerlich et al. (2010) explain that children that encounter foreign languages might "experience a sense of insecurity and disorientation and show responses that range from fear and rejection to curiosity and interest" (p. 141). Young children have the ability to develop strategies to handle these situations by building intercultural competence. Gerlich et al. (2010) prove, that intercultural competence can be measured in young children, as knowledge acquisition does not always involve consciousness. In line with this result, my research found that children developed inter-

cultural competence without realising it. KITAS were convinced by the fact, that playful learning at young age is the most applicable. “It’s been my experience, that children learn the most and best, when it’s playful, without realizing it- with fun. There is no other way at that young age” (Laura). When listening to the educators and directors in the interviews, the French lessons seemed like a motor to start exploring all around language and cultures. They described various observations, that brought new attitudes, knowledge, and skills to light. Children showed interest in their own and in other cultures. They became interested in the languages of their play mates and communicated with them actively. “When celebrating a birthday, we sing in different languages. The children feel and experience: ‘my language is valued, too’. It is important for them to make this experience, that we don’t devalue certain languages” (Laura). Significant was the benefit for children which had other home languages than German. On the one hand it was described that they were improving verbal skills, on the other hand, far more relevant, they were included in more play situations and interaction. The experience of appreciation and affirmation gave children the feeling of being part of the group equally, being socially included. Cenoz (2013) emphasis that language is a strong gesture of identity, which supports the bases for young learners to build confidence for the future. Children who encounter German in KITAS for the first time, are already experts in one (or more) languages. Only when we overcome prejudice and misjudgement, we can shift from deficit orientation to more appreciation (Keim & Tracy, 2006, p. 222).

In the light of the above, my observation found that French lessons supported children to explore all around language. It might not appear obvious, that foreign language lessons lead to intercultural competence. As Nieto (2018) states, there is a great difference between acceptance and tolerance, on the one hand and affirmation and solidarity on the other. Children develop intercultural skills best, when they feel safe and encouraged, when they learn to take different perspectives and when the teacher becomes a learner with the students (Nieto, 2018, p. 177). Certainly, from an observation of a few hours, I cannot draw a conclusion, but I surely got the impression, that children felt comfortable, valued, and equally involved. Children that didn’t speak German as well as others, were taking part in the activities. French was the language of instruction, and this made them all meet on the same level. Helot and Young (2002) assure, that “through language awareness activities, bilingual children can be given the opportunity to share with their peers and their teachers their personal experiences of speaking more than one language and of belonging to more than one culture” (p. 110). Within the group the cultural and linguistic diversity had a great value.

The quality of the teacher plays an important role when teaching children (Fourcaud & Springer, 2021, p. 176). At young age the relationship and interaction between teacher and children forms the bases for gaining competencies. In relation to this aspect, I discovered strong empathy and sensitivity of the teacher. I could witness an intensive, joyful, and respectful interaction between teacher and children. Although she was focused on the lesson and her program, she reacted to the children's feelings and behaviors. Disruptions were led into an activity very gently, not to pay too much attention to the distraction. Shy children were encouraged very carefully to speak out and become active. Her cautiousness towards the children was fascinating, however never losing her goal of teaching French, she really managed the balance to engage the kids, be in contact and transfer new content. It can be stated that she was successful in motivating the group and seemingly they had fun and were proud when they reproduced French words and were rewarded with positive feedback. The quality of the teacher certainly strengthened the children's development.

This study revealed a positive change in attitudes. Educators and directors had expressed interest in learning more about bilingual education and questioned their initial assumptions. They paid more attention to the linguistic repertoire among children, but also their own. Team members with other home languages than German also felt to be more included. The engagement with the *Élysée* project led to stronger awareness and appreciation all over. It can be questioned whether intercultural competencies would have been developed in a Kita without a bilingual project. I would argue that some team members most probably have the attitude to include linguistic diversity in the pedagogical work, without being guided by a project. However, this research shows, that a collaborative effort within the whole Kita is crucial, and it cannot be depended on individual team members. As the district manager points out, it should not be based on "luck" (Valerie) who works in your Kita. For all team members to build intrinsic motivation, she sees the need of extrinsic motivation: "enthusiasm spread, because the project went so well" (Valerie).

The aspect named above, is important regarding the Quality Charter. The Quality Charter is the foundation for the *Élysée* project. It describes objectives referring to a child centered approach of language acquisition, including cultural and social aspects. The goals promote language and intercultural competences: "With the acquisition of this languages, to stimulate a gradual, lifelong development of competence in other languages and the development of an interest in linguistic and intercultural experiences and knowledge" (Quality Charter). According to the European Commission Guide, educational systems need to adapt their policies to "integrated

competence and a consciousness of learners' existing repertoires and of their potential to develop and adapt those repertoires to changing circumstances" (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 41). In this sense the Quality Charter provides practical methods and approaches, however, leaves them rather vague for institutions to create concepts suitable for their situation. The findings showed, that not all the Kitas had a clear idea in the beginning, and it can be questioned if more information, a stricter framework, or additional preparation would have supported the process of implementation better. Fourcaud and Springer (2021, p. 111) found that 65% of the Kita staff did not know the Quality Charter. To me it seems that the aspect of intercultural education as part of the Élysée project is not emphasized strong enough. The initial expectation, that the Élysée project was mainly to teach a second language was refuted through the process of reflection. The district manager emphasized that it is necessary to have a political framework, an incentive, and guide to implement bilingual education. In her opinion, without this frame, Kitas might not include linguistic and cultural diversity in their repertoire.

I believe that language is an important medium of communication and culture. I don't think it's that important who the main actor is (Élysée or others). In this respect it's good (to have an actor), because it's politically underpinned by money and a framework and conditions are provided to ensure continuation and sustainability. It's just a drop in the ocean. Certainly, what we would wish for, to have people from all over the world and a variety of languages being indisputable, for children to experience linguistic and cultural diversity without extra projects. (Valerie)

From my perspective, it seems that the process of reflection was a crucial part when determining the goals and approaches for each Kita individually, for them to recognize that there were more benefits than concerns. Nevertheless, the Quality Charter provides helpful information and instructions, yet it is a policy paper and therefore not very practical. Making it more accessible for Kitas to understand and use it needs "translation". The district manager identified her role clearly to be the mediator and coach when introducing and developing the project. Especially, when there is rejection and scepticism from the Kita. The role of policy and leadership could be detected further, as I assume a strong correlation between policy, leadership, and practice.

It is indispensable to create concepts for diverse societies. The Élysée project can be a strong incentive to build awareness and contribute to linguistic diversity. It builds a foundation that can be extended further. Kitas should provide a space for all children to feel valued and to develop to their best potential. Regarding bilingual education as a set of beliefs, I do see, that there is a correlation between bilingual education and intercultural competence.

8 Conclusion

To sum up, facing growing diversity within our society, we need to rethink our conventional concepts and find new ways of providing equal education for children with different linguistic backgrounds. From first glance, the *Élysée* project might not appear to forward intercultural competence. The interviews with educators, directors and district manager gave insight in the practical aspects of the project, how it is perceived and put in practise. Several seemingly little situations and observations revealed that the project enhances intercultural competence among children and staff. The observation shed light on the French lessons and how children from different linguistic backgrounds benefit from participating in second language lessons. Although a stronger focus is on teaching French, meaningful interaction between children arose. The Quality Charter outlined important aspects considering multilingual education. This case study revealed that bilingual projects have a great potential. Nonetheless, to make them successful, it needs motivation, courage, persistence, and visions. The strongest force to commit to such projects is to provide quality education for all children equally and equip them with the skills they need for their future.

One limitation of this study pertains to the method of data collection in relation to the objective of the research. The research question aims to answer how the bilingual *Élysée* project enhances intercultural competence. The objective is to find how these competences become visible through the implementation of the project. Although a case study includes a wide set of data, this study relies heavily on interviews. Therefore, the findings were mostly extracted from observations, which the participants reported. To identify intercultural competence, it would have been better to include more observations of the children in their daily routine and in interaction with different classmates. Even though the French lessons were part of data collection, they did not provide a holistic picture of children's behaviour in an everyday setting. Another limitation is the use of literature in the theoretical framework. With the two key themes *bilingual education* and *intercultural competence* the field of literature was very broad. The use of scholars and previous research on those topics had to be limited and could have been contrasted stronger. Lastly, the research investigated a bilingual project with a very Eurocentric view. Although the intercultural competence is not tied to a specific context, the research related mostly to policies based on European perspectives.

Further research could unravel further questions around bilingual education and intercultural competence. As mentioned in the text, the linguistic potential of educators is a resource, that

seems underestimated. I presume that a stronger focus on the language variety within a Kita would strengthen linguistic equality and social inclusion. Also, shortly mentioned in the discussion, the role of leadership in relation to the implementation of projects is crucial. I assume that the success of such projects is dependent on the motivation, engagement and cooperation of leadership and team. Further, the imbalance of children with different linguistic backgrounds could be researched more. This thesis found that building language awareness and intercultural competence enables inclusion for all children. However, a focus on the development of identity and belonging would give deeper insight on the topic.

Coming to an end of this thesis, I look back on where I came from. With my professional background, I was eager to learn, understand and find out more about topics related to my field of work in early childhood education. The journey through the master's program of Edglo was an enriching and meaningful experience. It made me confident to conduct a research and draw attention to the topic of bilingual education and the strength of intercultural encounter. There is one sentence that sums it up for me best, "it's more than just words" (Laura). It expresses the power of bilingual education. I have built this thesis to draw attention to the relevance of intercultural encounter in early childhood education, which gives hope for the future.

Finally, after graduating from the University of Oulu I will return to my job in Munich. I wish to share the knowledge, experience and insights I gained during the past two years with colleagues, parents, or any other stakeholders in the field. I could create a booklet with the main parts of my thesis, translated to German, for Kitas to find out more about bilingual projects. I might prepare a workshop or presentation for network partners, for them to learn more about the Élysée project. I am thinking of making the Quality Charter more accessible for Kitas to use it as a guide. No matter how, Edglo provided a strong foundation for future ideas and plans, which is one small step in the right direction.

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Appendix

Interviewleitfaden

Fragen an die Führungsebene:

Welche Bedeutung hat das Élysée-Projekt für Sie als Führungskraft?

Wie nehmen Sie das Projekt wahr, mit Blick auf den Umgang mit Mehrsprachigkeit und interkultureller Vielfalt? (sowohl bei den Kindern als auch im Team)

Wie nehmen Ihre Mitarbeiter*innen das Projekt an?

Welchen Stellenwert hat das Projekt im Austausch mit anderen Führungskräften?

Werden auch andere Sprachen in Ihren Einrichtungen aktiv im Alltag einbezogen?

Fragen an die Erzieher*innen:

Was ist Ihre Muttersprache/ Herkunftssprache?

Welche Bedeutung hat das Élysée-Projekt für Sie?

Wenn Sie die Wahl hätten, würden Sie sich dann bewusst für die Arbeit in einer Élysée -Kita bewerben?

Beschreiben Sie, wie das Projekt in Ihrem Haus umgesetzt wird und wie sie persönlich eingebunden wurden und sind.

Wie erleben die Kinder das Projekt aus Ihrer Sicht?

Gibt es eine Situation/ Erlebnis oder Beobachtung, die spezifisch auf das Projekt zurückzuführen ist.

Hat das Projekt Auswirkungen auf das Team oder die Arbeit im Haus?

Zusätzliche Fragen an Französisch sprechende Kolleg*innen:

Wie setzen Sie Französisch ein?

Wie erleben Sie Mehrsprachigkeit? (bei sich und bei den Kindern)

Zusätzliche Fragen an Erzieher*innen mit weiteren Sprachen:

Bringen Sie Ihre Muttersprache/ Herkunftssprache im Alltag ein?

Ist dies in Ihrer Einrichtung gewünscht/ anerkannt?

Interviews, guiding questions

Questions for the management:

What does the Élysée project mean to you as a manager?

How do you perceive the project in terms of multilingualism and intercultural diversity? (Regarding children and team)

How do your employees accept the project?

How important is the project in cooperation with other managers?

Are other languages also actively included in everyday situations?

Questions for educators:

What is your mother tongue/ home language?

What does the Élysée project mean to you?

If you had the choice, would you apply to work in a Élysée Kita?

Can you describe how the project is implemented in your Kita and how you are personally involved?

How do the children experience the project from your point of view?

Is there a situation or experience or observation that you consider specific in relation to the project?

What kind of impact does the project have on the team?

Additional questions for French speaking educators:

How/when do you use French?

How do you experience multilingualism? (For yourself and regarding the children)

Additional questions for educators with other languages than French or German:

Do you use your mother tongue/ native language in the work with children?

Is this asked for? Is it appreciated in your Kita?