

Head, shoulders, Knie et pés – singing one’s way into multilingual practices

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While the European Commission (2011) has called for multilingual approaches in preschools and primary schools, their implementation is difficult and has rarely been studied (Kirsch et al. 2020). Multilingual language policies are likely to challenge traditional monolingual language ideologies and language hierarchies (Bergroth & Palviainen 2016).

The present paper looks at the non-formal early childhood education and care sector (ECEC) in multilingual Luxembourg, where a new plurilingual education programme has been implemented in 2017 (MENJE & SNJ 2018). It aims to develop skills in Luxembourgish (or French), familiarize children with French (or Luxembourgish) and value home languages. Furthermore, it encourages collaboration with parents and networking with social institutions (Kirsch & Seele 2020). The project COMPARE examines collaborative language and literacy practices with three-to-four-year-olds in *crèches* (day care centres in Luxembourg). This paper investigates the ways in which the educators in one *crèche*, helped by children’s parents, and the children themselves developed literacy activities in multiple languages and began to overcome monolingual ideologies. The data stem from seven video recordings totalling 29 minutes and fieldnotes written on four days over a period of three months. The data have been analysed with thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Our preliminary results show that the educators included six of the children’s home languages by engaging the children and their parents in a range of activities. They developed an inclusive stance to language diversity and, like the children, learned words in different languages. Thanks to the good collaboration with parents, they received home-recorded videos which they integrated into their daily practices. Finally, they considered children’s, at times, reluctant attitudes towards languages other than the majority languages and found ways of opening up their minds to language diversity. Children became the driving motor for the new multilingual practices (Boyd & Huss 2017). The findings are relevant for policy-makers, researchers and professionals because they show means to develop collaborative and inclusive multilingual practices and overcome possible challenges.

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