

*How is the plurilingual education policy in Luxembourg implemented  
in non-formal early childhood and care facilities?*

*Which role does the objective of reducing inequalities play in that?*

**A policy field analysis confronting perspectives from policy and practice level experts  
by using a mixed-method approach.**

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## **PROWEL Presentation**

Given that educational inequalities in Luxembourg frequently emerge due to its multilingual curriculum, promoting multilingualism – as one of the key factors to educational success – is at the centre of the early childhood by capitalizing on the linguistic repertoires and practices of children. The objective of my research is to offer meaningful insights about how the plurilingual education policy established in 2017 is being implemented in non-formal early childhood education and care facilities. By employing a mixed-method approach on the basis of a policy document analysis, expert interviews, and an online questionnaire, this research confronts perspectives from policy and practice level experts. In order to gain systematic knowledge about the policy implementation and the salience of the aspect of reducing educational inequalities, this research combines conceptual resources from the theory of meritocracy, neo-institutionalism, and system theory.

While the national curriculum included several sections dealing with the issues of linguistic diversity and plurilingual education (see e.g. MENJE 2018a: 24), the implementation of the programme *éducation plurilingue* ‘early plurilingual education’ in 2017 has been increasingly strengthened these issues and now forms an integral part of the national curriculum for preschool-age non-formal education. This programme is based on a new policy guidance with three main pillars: (1) language development; (2) partnership with the parents; and (3) networking with the cultural, social, and school environment (MENJE 2018b). In the course of this dissertation, the emphasis is primarily placed on explicit references to the first pillar of the plurilingual education policy regarding language development in the non-formal sector of early childhood education and care, but also on the salient of tackling educational inequalities. Within the framework of this presentation, I will be focusing on insights of the policy document analysis, addressing the following questions: (1) What are the intensions behind the plurilingual education policy?; (2) What are the implementation measures of the plurilingual education policy?; (3) What are the monitoring strategies of the plurilingual education policy?

Policies, as guidelines for action, are based on belief systems, presenting and representing political or ideological values. Policy document analysis represents not only a valuable qualitative method in research, but also a practical tool for both policy level agents (e.g. policy making, policy development) and practice level agents (e.g. policy management, policy implementation), enabling a deeper understanding on educational issues in both research and practice (Cardno, 2018). This method focuses on the analysis of the nature and purpose of policy documents to tap into both what lies behind the policies such as the drivers from which

they emerged (e.g. forces that brought the policy into being), and what lies within them such as what purposes are stated and what implementation strategies are being applied to achieve those (Cardno, 2018).

Educational policy documents are complex by nature, involving complex relations among institutions and actors that reflect a spectrum of ideas and goals, which generate a subject to various interpretations (Hard, Lee & Dockett, 2018). The understanding of educational policies thus draws on more than only a written product such as policy documents, as it also requires a familiarity with relevant literature and the policy environment, respectively the social-political context in which they are embedded in, as well as development and implementation processes (Cardno, 2018; Hard, Lee & Dockett, 2018). Policy documents are often intertwined between higher-level strategy instruments that outline guidelines for policy formulation, and operational instruments that focuses on the procedure and process of policy implementation. Retrieving policy documents that are essential for a policy analysis needs therefore to encompass a collection of data at several levels (Cardno, 2018). Accordingly, for this research, relevant policy documents were collected on the basis of a natural approach (see Hard, Lee & Dockett, 2018) by retrieving them from the websites of the government and educational ministry (see Table 1)

Table 1: *Policy documents.*

<b>Type of Document</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Publisher</b>
Legislation	Loi du 29 août 2017 sur la gratuité partielle de l'accueil des enfants âgés de 1 à 4 ans et le programme d'éducation plurilingue	2017	Journal Officiel du grand-duché de Luxembourg
Legislation	Règlement grand-ducal du 28 juillet 2017 portant établissement du cadre de référence national « Éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes »	2017	Journal Officiel du grand-duché de Luxembourg
Legislation	Règlement grand-ducal du 1er mars 2019 portant modification du règlement grand-ducal du 28 juillet 2017 portant établissement du cadre de référence national « Éducation non formelle des enfants et des jeunes »	2019	Journal Officiel du grand-duché de Luxembourg

National curriculum of the non-formal education sector	Nationaler Rahmenplan zur non-formalen Bildung im Kindes- und Jugendalter.	2018	MENJE <sup>1</sup> & SNJ <sup>2</sup>
Information brochure	D'Zukunft fängt éischer un.	2018	MENJE
Guide book for an action conception plan	Services d'éducation et d'accueil pour enfants - Concept local de l'éducation plurilingue pour jeunes enfants. Guide pour la réalisation d'un concept local de l'éducation plurilingue pour jeunes enfants.	2018	SNJ
Press release	L'éducation plurilingue dans les crèches. Faire entendre aux enfants aujourd'hui les langues qu'ils parleront demain.	2017	MENJE
Workbook for parents	Les enfants découvrent les langues.	2017	SNJ
Information brochure	"Méisprochegkeet fërderen!". Faire entendre aux enfants aujourd'hui les langues qu'ils parleront demain.	2017	SNJ
Handout	Pädagogische Handreichung. Frühe Mehrsprachige Bildung.	2017	SNJ
Information brochure	Plurilingual Education in Crèches. Letting children hear the languages they will be speaking tomorrow.	2016	MENJE
Press release	L'accueil de la petite enfance. Une offre de qualité, pour les meilleures chances dès le plus jeune âge. MENJE	2016	MENJE
Press release	L'éducation plurilingue de la petite enfance.	2016	MENJE

Content analysis as a research technique is frequently used as an approach to document analysis (Hard, Lee & Dockett, 2018). Conducting a document content analysis requires to differentiate between content description and drawing inferences from the content. This does not only refer to the analysis of the presence of certain words or phrases within the policy texts, but also the acknowledgment of their absence (Cardno, 2018). The representation and relation of these words or phrases within and among the documents are just as important (Hard, Lee & Dockett, 2018). A common conceptual approach to policy analysis was introduced by Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, and Henry (1997), drawing on from three aspects: (1) policy context (forces and values behind the policy); (2) policy text (content of the policy documents); and policy consequences (policy implementation practice). Applying a policy document analysis is thus

<sup>1</sup> Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse

<sup>2</sup> Service national de la jeunesse

conducted reflecting on the actual policy text with the reference to the critical issues that are raised in the documents concerning the policy environment (Cardno, 2018).

At the very heart of the content analysis is the coding system to categories and themes (Kangas et al., 2020). In the frame of this policy document analysis, an inductive approach was conducted, in which a close reading and re-reading of the policy documents allowed for an extraction of categories that emerged from the data. The analysis of the following coding scheme will be the subject of presentation (see Table 2).

Table 2: *Policy purpose analysis.*

Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multilingualism as a social reality</li> <li>• Multilingualism as an educational challenge</li> </ul>
Implementation measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarization with Luxembourgish</li> <li>• Familiarization with French</li> <li>• Valorization and integration of children's home languages</li> </ul>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition into the multilingual education system</li> <li>• Integration and participation in society</li> <li>• Arousing curiosity for linguistic diversity</li> </ul>

## References

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