

Multilingualism in Luxembourg

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MULTILINGUALISM IN LUXEMBOURG

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative sociolinguistic study of multilingualism and multilingual practices in the country of Luxembourg. Multilingualism is studied as a natural human state or phenomenon, which allows for a deeper understanding of underlying social structures in a given society. The research is based on five approximately one-hour long sociolinguistic interviews with respondents of different nationalities who are long-term residents in Luxembourg, which means that they have been living there for more than six months. The respondents include a Luxembourgish high-school student, a Kuwaiti student at university, a Portuguese official at the European Parliament, a Hungarian head of service at the European Parliament and a Danish translator at the European Parliament. The diversity of the respondents is meant to represent the diversity of the Luxembourgish society and their answers highlight and expose experiences, practices and conflicts which are not visible from the dominant perspective of the idealistic trilingualism. This view focuses on French, German and Luxembourgish and on the portion of the population which speaks these three languages, while marginalizing many recent and historical changes in population structure and the organization of the professional and public sphere in Luxembourg. The aim of this thesis is to expand the observation of multilingualism in Luxembourg to the relevant social aspects, i.e. to question the apparent highly functional multilingualism and analyze its challenges, as well as its positive features. The results are divided into several categories based on how they reflect the various aspects of the dynamics of multilingualism in Luxembourg. These are the demographics and the history of Luxembourg, multilingual education, the presence of EU institutions, the international *linguae francae* (such as English associated with large international companies and French associated with border workers), the expat environment and minorities and finally, language conflict and discrimination. By analyzing these results and placing them in the corresponding theoretical framework, the thesis offers insight into the complex interplay of various language practices in one of the most multilingual countries in Europe. The results have shown that levels of multilingualism in Luxembourg differ according to social spaces and that impressions of its functioning also vary greatly. The research has exposed significant challenges in the multilingual societal structure, as well as the population's openness towards social change.

Key words: multilingualism, Luxembourg, sociolinguistic interview, language conflict

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1. Introduction

Luxembourg is a small European country bordering France, Belgium and Germany. Due to its historical background combined with recent developments, it is a prime example of a highly multilingual country.

In this research, I will explore Luxembourgish multilingualism in order to portray as accurately as possible the dynamics, the advantages and the possible challenges of this multilingual environment and language use in Luxembourg. I will do this by presenting the results of five sociolinguistic interviews conducted with five different respondents, residents of Luxembourg. The aim was to elicit qualitatively analyzable data and connect it to the presented theoretical framework, presented herein according to its pertinence to the results. It should be noted that the interviews were originally conducted with eight people but for the reasons of space, I chose five. All respondents are of different nationality, different age, and different level of education and have been living in Luxembourg for different periods of time. The majority work in the EU institutions and therefore, for the purpose of better representativeness, I chose two respondents who do not and three who do work in the Institutions. I believe the diversity of the respondents provides a more rounded sample and reflects the diversity of Luxembourg.

The first respondent (R2) is a 25-year-old male from Kuwait who has been living in Luxembourg for two years. There he studies French in order to be able to study engineering and computer science. He lives with a German family in Eppeldorf. The reason I chose this respondent is because I was interested in exploring how his non-European background affects his life and language use in Luxembourg, especially considering the fact that people of his nationality (visible minorities) are often subject to discrimination in western countries.

The second respondent (R5) is a 31-year-old from Denmark who has been living in Luxembourg for three years. She was born in Seoul, Korea and was adopted by Danish parents. Her native language is Danish. She works as a rotating terminologist in the European Parliament and holds a master's degree. The reason I chose this respondent is because not only does she have an interesting background, but she also gave some very direct and useful answers regarding language conflict in Luxembourg and the functioning of multilingualism in the European institutions.

The third respondent (R6) is a 35-year-old female from Portugal who has been living in Luxembourg for nine years. She works in the Directorate General for Translation of the European Parliament and holds a master's degree in English and German. I believe she is a crucial respondent because she is a part of the largest national minority in Luxembourg, the Portuguese. She has provided extensive information about the Portuguese in Luxembourg and the challenges that they encounter, giving this research a very valuable minority perspective.

The fourth respondent (R7) is a 47-year-old male from Hungary who has been living in Luxembourg for fifteen years, together with his Hungarian wife and their children. He works as head of service in the European Parliament and holds a master's degree. I chose this respondent because he provided some valuable information on Luxembourgish education and because I believe it was important to include a respondent who is married with children.

The final respondent is (R8) is a native Luxembourgish 19-year-old high school student who has been living in Luxembourg all her life. This respondent's results are immensely valuable since she provided me with current detailed information on Luxembourgish education, Luxembourgish language history and the present functioning of multilingualism, as well as a native perspective on expats, minorities and dominant cultures and languages.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. History and demographics of Luxembourg

Luxembourg is a small country of 2,586 square kilometers and a population of 596,409 (de Bres 2014: 119). “It has been officially trilingual since 1984, with Luxembourgish as the national language, French the language of the law, and French, German and Luxembourgish as the administrative languages” (de Bres and Belling 2015: 2). Over the past 50 years, Luxembourg has developed into one of the most significant financial centers in the world and today it has the highest GDP per capita in Europe. As a result, Luxembourg attracts workforce from all over the world and immigration is very high. According to de Bres and Belling (ibid.), in 2012 people of non-Luxembourgish nationality made up 44% of the resident population. The largest groups include historical long-term migrants such as Portuguese and Italians, EU officials and people working for large international companies, as well as Belgian, French and German cross-border workers making up 40% of the workforce. The coexistence of all these people in one place makes Luxembourg one of the most multilingual countries in the world. Increased migration has favored the use of French, decreased the use of German and caused Luxembourgish to become a marker of national identity. (ibid.)

In the nineteenth century Luxembourgish was a spoken vernacular. It was hardly ever written and it was considered a dialect of German (Wagner and Davies 2009: 116). The status of Luxembourgish started to change in World War II, while intense change started in the 1970s (Horner and Weber 2008: 109). In 1984, Luxembourgish was explicitly named as *langue nationale* (ibid. 112).

The notion of “trilingual Luxembourg” is used as an exemplary model of harmonious multilingualism. However, it contains ambiguities, as it puts emphasis on the three official languages rather than on the actual multilingualism of the entire society. A widely spoken language, e.g. Portuguese, has minimal state and public support. According to de Bres (2014: 124-125), the “trilingual ideology enables the presentation of an open and inclusive multiculturalism, while privileging the three languages the autochthonous population is most likely to master”. The nationalist language ideology “promotes the one linguistic resource that

cross-border workers and foreigners are least likely to possess, while devaluing languages in which they may have considerable skills”. (ibid.)

2.2. Multilingualism and multilingual education in Luxembourg

a) Multilingualism

A crucial theoretical basis for this research is to define the notion of multilingualism. While the definition might seem straightforward, the results have shown that this word is subject to a couple of different interpretations. Multilingualism is “the use of more than one language by a single individual or community” (Gal 2007: 149). It is both an individual’s ability to use several languages and the existence of different linguistic communities in one geographical area at the same time (Krzyżanowski and Wodak 2011: 127).

As Grosjean (2008: 10) points out, bi- or multilingual people have predominantly been observed as two or more monolingual people in one, meaning that their linguistic competency is evaluated as multiple separate competencies, each corresponding to that of one monolingual. This view is called “the monolingual or fractional view of bilingualism” (ibid.). It is related to the ideology of the native speaker according to which the native speaker has a complete competence in the language and is the best representative of the linguistic community (Doerr 2009: 19).

It needs to be kept in mind that there is no such a person as a perfectly balanced bilingual (or multilingual), a “person in whom all languages known are equally developed” (Edwards 1994: 3). Contrary to popular belief, multilingualism cannot be understood as a ‘full competence in different languages’ (Blommaert et al. 2005: 199). Knowledge of language is “rooted in situation and dynamically distributed across individuals as they engage in practices” (ibid. 205). In other words, how people use language is strongly influenced by the situation in which they find themselves. The value and function of a person’s language abilities change according to the space (ibid 211). “Multilingualism is not what individuals have or lack, but what the environment, as structured determination and interactional emergence, enables and disables them to deploy” (ibid. 213).

As a consequence, bilingual and multilingual speakers often practice code switching, defined by Llamas, Mullany and Stockwell (2007: 208) as a situation “when speakers switch between

different codes in the course of a single interaction”. This practice is often stigmatized as impure language and goes against the ideology of the native or monolingual speaker.

Multilingualism arises from the need to communicate across speech communities. To be bilingual or multilingual is a “normal necessity for the majority in the world today” (Edwards 1994: 1).

b) Multilingual education

In Luxembourg, basic literacy skills are taught in standard German in state schools. French is introduced in the second year of primary school and Luxembourgish is taught as a subject for one hour a week in primary school and the first year of secondary school (Horner 2009: 105-106). At the end of their obligatory schooling, all young people are expected to speak all three official languages at a native level.

Weber (2009: 145) believes that the Luxembourgish educational system directly constructs and reproduces social stratification and inequality. The reason is that young people are often not provided with a learning environment that allows them to acquire and develop the linguistic repertoires and literacy skills required on the employment market. For example, the demand for English in the professional sphere is not met in education (Horner 2009: 107). Weber (ibid. 147) suggests that a more flexible educational program structure would allow “moving beyond a state-centric perspective of language planning and towards a full acknowledgement of the linguistic repertoires that people actually deploy in our globalized, late-modern societies”.

2.3. European Union and the policy of multilingualism

As Luxembourg is one of the homes to the institutions of the European Union and as many residents in Luxembourg are EU officials, the language policies and language use within the institutions are important factors in the description of Luxembourgish multilingualism.

Multilingualism is inscribed as one of the primary clauses in the creation of the European Union. Its 28 official languages make it the most multilingual organization in the world. However, since its founding, we have witnessed an incoherence of EU’s multilingualism policies.

According to Krzyzanowski and Wodak (2011: 125), we distinguish “three periods in which the EU’s policy discourse about language and multilingualism underwent substantial change”. In the

first period (1997-2004), language learning and teaching, linguistic diversity and language skills were emphasized, whereas multilingualism as such was not actually debated. The second period (2004-2007) introduced the importance of multilingualism by making it a responsibility of the Union's Commissioner on Education and Culture (ibid. 127). This is when a policy-relevant definition of multilingualism was proposed. The debates in the final period (2007-2010) were limited mostly to economic arguments. Multilingualism is described in terms of economic competitiveness rather than in terms of values and identity, as it had previously been perceived (Krzyzanowski and Wodak 2010: 126).

Moreover, the EU recognizes only one official language for every member state, which could be regarded as "a position at variance with the EU's official display of respect for the language rights of each and every minority language group in Europe" (House 2003: 561). Also, some languages in the EU are (and have always been) more equal than others: French with its historic privilege and English which has become the EU's lingua franca.

The EU has shown interest in minority and lesser-used languages but this is a delicate subject with many challenges to face.

2.4. Lingua franca and language change

The existence of languages which serve to help different groups in mutual understanding – *linguae francae* – is not a rare phenomenon. These languages are usually languages of the dominant group which holds a prestigious status in the society. This is why they are commonly perceived as instruments of suppression of minority languages and diversity. Edwards (1994: 1), however, claims that "lingua francas have not spelled the death of multilingualism so much as they have been a product of it and, indeed, a contributor to it".

According to (House 2003: 561), we are witnessing a diglossia situation developing in Europe – "English for various 'pockets of expertise' and non-private communication on the one hand and national and local varieties for affective, identificatory purposes on the other hand". This means that English exists together with the local languages, without presenting a threat to native languages and multilingualism (ibid. 574).

International organizations and companies, including the numerous international companies in Luxembourg, have increasingly been adopting policies which define the use of official working languages. Many of them have chosen English as the official language of their organizations (Kingsley 2009: 153). Kingsley's research (ibid. 157) has shown that along with mechanisms that favor English, the companies believe in the value of languages other than English for external communication (e.g. communication with clients and external agencies).

The latter mechanism seems to be very important for Luxembourg. It might serve as an explanation on why French is definitely the most important and the most used language in Luxembourg. In comparing the three official languages, it can be concluded that standard German is associated with the classroom, as it is used for teaching basic literacy to all school-children. Widely used French, together with being the language of state administration and legislation, is also the language of prestige. It is "used increasingly as a lingua franca among people living and working in Luxembourg" (Weber 2009: 135).

However, while it might be believed and expected, it is not true that all Luxembourgers speak English, and many not even French, "countering a widespread myth that Luxembourgers are equally confident in (at least) the three main languages of Luxembourg" (de Bres and Belling 2014: 14). For Luxembourgers, Luxembourgish is 'their' language, linked to home and emotions (Wagner and Davies 2009: 127). This is why, thanks to the state efforts, it is growing as a written language and is progressively standardized (de Bres and Belling 2015: 2). And despite the fact that Luxembourg is always presented as multilingual, the link between Luxembourg as a country and the Luxembourgish language is portrayed as "logical in nature" (de Bres 2014: 127), among all groups that live in Luxembourg.

2.5. Expats and minorities

Attitudes towards languages and varieties are tied to attitudes towards groups of people, therefore, "there is a correlation between group stereotypes and linguistic facts" (Wagner and Davies 2009: 120).

As mentioned, there are several myths about language and society in Luxembourg. One of these is the myth of the 'happy accommodator', "the supposed willingness of Luxembourg nationals to accommodate to the languages used by others". Another one is that "all Luxembourgers are

balanced trilinguals, and that Luxembourg is a cultural mosaic where all ethnolinguistic groups co-exist without conflicts”. (de Bres and Belling 2015: 17) The fact that these are just myths can be justified by the existence of nationalist movements such as *Actioun Letzebuergesch*, which was started, among other, “in response to a 26 per cent increase in foreign inhabitants, eighteen percent of whom were Portuguese and were predominantly unskilled workers” (Davis 2009: 176). Weber and Horner (2008: 113) compare the Nazi-German occupation to the current ‘occupation’ of Luxembourg by foreign residents and border-crossing commuters, in the sense that it evokes a similar emotional response from the native population.

The Luxembourgish civil service operates in the official languages, with the knowledge of Luxembourgish as the main prerequisite for employment. It is no surprise that Luxembourgers work mainly in the civil service (Horner 2009: 104), while the majority of the immigrants and commuters have historically occupied manual or low-level service positions. (Davis 2009: 178).

It is impossible to capture the reality of the current Luxembourgish language situation if the French, Belgian and German border workers are not taken into consideration (Horner and Weber 2008: 79). The residents of Luxembourg have diverse perceptions of cross-border workers: some see them as a necessity for the Luxembourgish economy, while some view them as becoming too numerous, representing a threat to their own employment (de Bres 2014: 121).

2.6. Language conflict

Gazzola (2006: 394) reminds us that languages fulfill two functions that are not easily separated: a communicative function (the transmission of information) and a symbolic function, (cultural and political traits). The symbolic function produces and reproduces language ideologies, which can be defined as “socio-culturally motivated ideas, perceptions and expectations of language, manifested in all sorts of language use” (Blommaert 1999: 1). There are competing language ideologies among the residents and border workers in Luxembourg. These include “resentment by some Luxembourg nationals at the increased use of French and the potential minoritisation of Luxembourgish, and resistance by some cross-border workers and foreign residents to the perceived use of Luxembourgish as a vehicle of exclusion” (de Bres and Belling 2015: 2). These ideologies lead to language conflict, which occurs in Luxembourg just like anywhere else, even if on the surface it does not seem that way.

Nelde (1998: 291) points out that neither contact nor conflict can occur between languages, only between speakers of languages. Language conflict can occur anywhere where there is language contact. “Language is a significant secondary sign of fundamental causes of conflict of a socioeconomic, political, religious, or historical sort.” (ibid. 292) However, as Nelde explains further, conflicts do not have to be perceived as only negative, but also as opportunities for minority speakers to build a different social structure with more advantages.

Globalization results in increased cultural contact and conflict, as well as in increased linguistic diversity and tension, which cause “quotidian and formal public challenges to inherited Western assumptions about linguistic uniformity, cultural homogeneity, and national membership” (Blommaert et al. 2005: 201). As Huff’s (2013: 608) research has shown, the ability to direct attention and energy towards cultural differences proved to be very important for expatriates to be successful to adjusting to the foreign environment. The same can be applied to all other social groups.

3. Methodology

The research was conducted in the form of a sociolinguistic interview. Becker (2013: 91) defines the sociolinguistic interview as “a methodology developed within the Labovian variationist paradigm with the goal of systematically eliciting variation across contextual styles for use as the primary evidence for sociolinguistic stratification and linguistic change”. By breaking down this definition, the methodology for this research can be explained.

The systematic eliciting refers to the fact that the interview needs to be structured and coherent. In our case, the interviews had predetermined questions or modules which were designed with the intent to elicit certain facts about the respondents and their surroundings, as well as their opinions and attitudes about the topics observed. Each interview was predicted to last for approximately one hour. The modules were, however, primarily indicative, as the goal was to get the respondent to lead the conversation and reveal new information which could not be predicted. Therefore, the length of the interviews was also only approximate. The respondents were free to cut the interview short or talk for as long as they wished.

Variation can refer to either language in use or, as it is our case, sociolinguistic variation. This means that the type of variation this research was interested in was variation in experiences of language in society. This involved the respondents’ attitudes, beliefs, narratives of personal experience, backgrounds and emotions, all tied to language (Labov 1984: 32).

Contextual styles are another important part of this definition because it is only within a certain context that we can gather and process data. Therefore, it is important to define it in advance and collect the necessary parameters within which the results will be observed. Some of the criteria for this research were the following. All respondents had to be residents in Luxembourg for at least six months. All respondents had to be bi- or multilingual. Both men and women had to be represented, as well as various age groups. The aim was to include as many different nationalities and as many professional occupations as possible. The aim was also to include representatives of the largest social groups in Luxembourg: the Luxembourgish, the Portuguese, the border workers, the EU institutions officials and expats. In the course of the research, it became clear that one of the most important criteria needed to be diversity, primarily national diversity. That is because the society of Luxembourg has proven to be extremely diverse and multicultural and it is only by

attempting to capture a part of this diversity that we can even begin to describe the sociolinguistic environment.

The main evidence used in this research were the results obtained by a qualitative method. As Davis explains, qualitative research is both informed by theory and informs theory in the process of interpretation. Methods are designed to obtain data from “an emic¹ perspective while ensuring credibility and dependability” (1995: 436). In other words, methods are used with the goal of generating theory. The results provided by respondents were the main instruments which provided orientation for the entire research and the methods for analysis are largely based on the structure of the results.

Finally, the phenomena that this research observes are sociolinguistic stratification and linguistic change, geographically limited to the area of Luxembourg and socially limited to long-term residents.

The modules were conceived in a way that the interviews would start with straightforward closed questions on the basic demographic information on the respondents, required to place the results in context and fulfill certain criteria. The rest of the modules are mostly open-ended questions, divided into several larger topics, all considered to be pertinent to the observation of language in the society of Luxembourg. These include the topics of multilingualism in general, multilingual education, language policies of the European Union and its institutions, English and other *linguae francae*, multilingualism in Luxembourg specifically, dialects, speech accommodation, language discrimination and language conflict. The interviews were conducted in an informal setting and were organized to resemble a casual conversation over a cup of coffee. The aim was to minimize the respondents’ feeling that they were being recorded, which then produced a more natural conversation and allowed the respondents to open up more. The venues included a living room, two cafés and two offices.

There were two different methods used to gather respondents. One was by word of mouth among acquaintances and the other was an e-mail from a head of service in the European Parliament to heads of several other units who then forwarded the e-mail to other employees. The e-mail was a

¹ Emic, adj. = of, relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied (Merriam-Webster).

call to participate in the interview and it contained all the necessary details. The respondents would volunteer by responding to the e-mail and agreeing on the time and the location. All respondents were promised they would remain anonymous, which was particularly important to EU officials.

After having conducted and transcribed the interviews, the results were divided into several categories, considered to be the most fruitful and relevant. The theoretical framework was categorized in the corresponding manner. These categories together are meant to represent the main sociolinguistic areas of research which, observed together, provide a glimpse into the sociolinguistic mosaic of multilingual Luxembourg. The diversity of Luxembourg makes it very difficult for researchers to describe it in its entirety using any of the possible methods. A quantitative approach to this type of society would most probably be very limited and misleading as the societal structure is very layered and complex. The qualitative approach in this case seems to elicit at least the main elements and issues, which could later be used to carry out a quantitative study with a larger group of respondents.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Language biographies and self-assessment

All respondents were asked about their linguistic biographies. They were also asked to self-assess the knowledge of the languages that they speak, on the scale from one to five, one being the beginner level and five being the native or native level speaker. This chapter contains the linguistic biographies and the self-assessment tables for the five respondents, in the order in which they were presented in the introduction.

Respondent 2:

The respondent's native language is Arabic, which, together with English, he learned in Kuwait. He learned French, German and Luxembourgish in Luxembourg through language courses. His parents speak Arabic. Later in the interview the respondent explained that he is from Syria but was raised in Kuwait and that he speaks his dialect, the Kuwaiti dialect, Iraqi dialect and Algerian and Tunisian and Moroccan dialect.

SKILL/LANGUAGE	Arabic	English	German	Luxembourgish	French
<i>speaking</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>listening</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>reading</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>writing</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Respondent 5:

The respondent's native language is Danish. She learned Spanish in Spain, French in Luxembourg, German in school and at work, Catalan in Barcelona, Spain (she lived there for five years) and Italian from her ex boyfriend. Her parents speak Danish.

SKILL/LANGUAGE	Danish	English	Spanish	Italian	French	German	Catalan
<i>speaking</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5			
<i>listening</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5			
<i>reading</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5			

<i>writing</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
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Respondent 6:

The respondent's native language is Portuguese. She has a degree in English and German, learned Dutch in language courses at the Parliament and French in courses and from everyday life in Luxembourg. As a Portuguese native speaker she is familiar with Spanish and she is currently learning Italian. Her parents are monolingual Portuguese speakers.

SKILL/LANGUAGE	Portuguese	English	German	Dutch	Spanish	Italian	French
<i>speaking</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>listening</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>reading</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>writing</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Respondent 7:

The respondent's native language is Hungarian. He learned German in high-school, English with a private teacher, French in Luxembourg, Italian in the Parliament courses and Danish while living there for two years. His mother spoke Hungarian and his father spoke Hungarian, French and German.

SKILL/LANGUAGE	English	Hungarian	German	French	Danish	Italian
<i>speaking</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>listening</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>reading</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>writing</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Respondent 8:

The respondent's native language is Luxembourgish. She learned Luxembourgish from her parents, she got alphabetized in German and also learned it from TV, she started learning French

in school when she was seven, English when she was twelve and Spanish when she was seventeen. Her parents are native Luxembourgish. Her mother speaks English, French, German and Dutch and her father speaks French, German and Luxembourgish. Her ancestors come from the Czech Republic. Her sister is fluent in ten languages.

SKILL/LANGUAGE	Luxembourgish	English	German	French	Spanish
<i>speaking</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<i>listening</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5			
<i>reading</i>	1 2 3 4 5				
<i>writing</i>	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5			

4.2. Sociolinguistic results

4.2.1. Language in Luxembourg

In order to get an idea of the actual everyday language use of our respondents which could potentially provide a simplified picture of general language use in Luxembourg, the table below compares which language(s) each respondent uses at home, in the supermarket and at work (R8 is a high school student, asked about school instead of work). Marked by asterisks are some interesting comments provided by the respondents on their language use.

	Home	Supermarkets	Work (school)
R2:	EN	EN	EN
R5:	EN, DA	FR, IT*	EN, ES**
R6:	EN, PT	FR***	EN, FR
R7:	HU	FR, DE****	EN, FR, DE*****
R8:	LU	FR	LU
<p><i>*you can be lucky here that you can, because they were the first immigration wave, so there's a lot of them</i></p> <p><i>**and at work English, and Spanish here, it's Spanish. Because my corner is Spanish-speaking, that's why</i></p> <p><i>***and why, because shop assistants are all border French workers unable, not nice, to speak any English. My German is rusty and it doesn't work with these French shop assistants either, I don't speak any Luxembourgish although I understand a bit because of Dutch and German, and that's it.</i></p> <p><i>**** in Auchan I use French, in Cactus I use German... because Cactus is very Luxembourgish so there you have a high chance of Luxembourgish cashiers basically and Luxembourgish workers, so there I always try German first. It depends on the shop, in Naturata I definitely use German and, as much as I can, Luxembourgish</i></p> <p><i>*****at work English, sometimes French, but mostly, 90 percent English, and then 2 percent German. I speak with [name of a German employee] German and with [name of a Dutch employee] and with [name of a Polish employee].</i></p>			

Although it is immediately noticeable that language use differs to quite an extent according to respondents, we can still deduct some patterns. At home, most respondents use their native language, sometimes in combination with English. At supermarkets, or outside in Luxembourg, they mostly use French. Finally, at work they use English, sometimes in combination with other languages. This table shows that when discussing multilingualism, the distribution of language use across different spaces needs to be kept in mind. The use of English at work is increasingly prompted by the existence of large, international companies which choose English as their

working language, English arguably being the language of business in the modern world. The use of French in the supermarkets is not only explained by the presence of border workers at shop assistant positions but also by French simply being the most spoken official language in Luxembourg. And as home is usually the most private space of every individual, it is not surprising that this is where the respondents often use their native language.

One respondent which stands out is R2 who, according to his report and unlike the others, basically practices monolingualism in Luxembourg. The respondent's native language is Arabic which he does not use at home:

R2: (...) I'm living with a family, they speak like, I don't know, seven languages so yeah, sometimes it's hard. (...) They want me to speak French all the time which I'm not capable to so sometimes I try to speak French but I don't know the words. Sometimes I say them in German 'cause they are German, and if I don't find it in German I speak it in English and it goes like this.

The respondent is faced with extreme multilingualism at home, which to a certain extent makes him confused. He states that one of the reasons for this is that, with the family using all these languages, especially the children, it is sometimes hard for him to communicate, as there is a lot of mixing and his level of competence in the languages which are preferred in the household is not sufficient for smooth communication. On the use of language outside the household, the respondent commented:

R2: Well in Luxembourg things are really hard, you need to get at least four² from the rate that you just showed me, at least four so that they would say yeah you can work with us.

This respondent expresses having difficulty in the multicultural environment of Luxembourg, mainly because of the fact that he feels that his knowledge of official languages of Luxembourg is not sufficient. However, this is also the only respondent who expressed a great desire to learn Luxembourgish as well as significant enthusiasm about the country itself, as the following sections will show.

² I asked the respondents to self evaluate their knowledge of languages, 1 being the least competent and 5 the most competent.

R2: Well I think Luxembourg is better than other countries.

As the other side of the picture, it might be useful to look at a native Luxembourgish speaker's perspective and at the same time introduce the Luxembourgish language, a language not many people are familiar with.

R8: Luxembourgish it started developing a few years ago, I think like the vocabulary is limited

R8: Luxembourgish became an official language here it was 1984, it became official language and it existed way before that and the official languages until then were French and German, our whole justice system is running in French because we have still the French system and I think they knew they couldn't express themselves in Luxembourgish in that way with all the terms that have to be used but I also understand that they feel uncomfortable. For example my grandmother she doesn't speak French, that means that if she goes to a doctor appointment she has to take my grandpa with her and I think that it's older generations that were raised during war when French was forbidden and German was forced on them

R8: Translating it is really hard because most Luxembourgish people they have no clue how to write Luxembourgish. The thing is you only need to do one year in your whole school career to learn Luxembourgish, you only do one year and one hour per week, that's not enough to learn how to write it [...] it's just a spoken language, most people say it's a spoken language and nothing

The comments above show that the situation of the Luxembourgish language is specific and it is important to understand its status in order to understand the linguistic situation in Luxembourg. Luxembourgish is one of the three official languages, not entirely standardized as a written language and not spoken by a majority of people in the country where it is native. This gives way to French, which dominates the public sphere and which is usually the language expats feel they need to master in order to build a life in Luxembourg. However, the public sphere itself is as multilingual as the other segments of life in Luxembourg. In this case, the respondents commented on language in the media and in politics.

R2: Okay, they just speak Luxembourgish on the radio, TVs I think they are German, there are also some French channels but... So yeah, Luxembourgish is, I think you can't find Luxembourgish language in the TV, but its everywhere in the radio... So in the TV it would be German or French.

R8: Well you have the parties, and they normally translate in French and Luxembourgish and well I noticed that most Luxembourgish people they do speak Luxembourgish, they also write Luxembourgish comments and so on and with each other they use Luxembourgish primarily and if someone speaks French or English normally they just like say, 'could you please speak French or English' and then Luxembourgish people they respond in French as long as the other people are not rude.

These portrayals of language in the media depend largely on what languages individuals use in their lives and what they focus on while looking for information. Luxembourgish can, in fact, very often be heard on TV and it is usually subtitled in French or German – or one of these three is subtitled in another one of these three. The scene of the Luxembourgish print media is dominated by the German-language daily newspaper, with added French publications (Horner and Weber 2008: 101). In the social media, for example, the interaction in some of the most popular groups, even the ones who do not target expats, often takes place completely in English. Another frequent situation is that some of the long-term residents of Luxembourg do not follow the media and the politics in Luxembourg at all.

R7: I read Hungarian news, even after 15 years, it's completely ridiculous I agree.

One of the respondents offered an explanation.

R5: Okay I'm not following a lot the politics, but it's also because Luxembourg is one of the only European countries that took away our vote, so I, Denmark took away my vote and Luxembourg took away my vote for five years at least³ and I can only vote for the European elections, so basically I'm, that makes you pull out, kind of, in my case it's like this, because I have nothing to say then. So I'm not following so much this.

³ Adults who settled in Luxembourg can apply for Luxembourgish citizenship provided that they have legally resided in Luxembourg for at least five years.

4.2.2. Functioning of multilingualism and multilingual education

a) Multilingual education

Luxembourg is often admired and praised for its multilingual education. People are often fascinated by the fact that children of many different linguistic backgrounds speak several languages fluently. This is attributed to the educational system in which they learn all the official languages of Luxembourg in elementary school, together with English, while possibly having a fifth language spoken at home, or even a sixth if the parents are of different nationalities, which is actually very common.

R2: You really have to see the kids over here, they like speak everything.

While some might argue that it is very logical for expat children to be multilingual, the following example of a completely ‘traditional’ Luxembourgish family will demonstrate that multilingualism is deeply embedded in the identity of Luxembourg.

R8: [I learned] Luxembourgish from my parents, I grew up with German TV, I got also alphabetized in German. French, I started learning it in school when I was seven. English, I started learning it when I was 12 and Spanish two years ago.

R8: Yes my parents are native Luxembourgish both of them, my mother speaks English, French, German and Dutch, my father speaks French, German and Luxembourgish.

R8: My sister she’s fluent in 10 languages.

It is not only common but expected as well.

R5: Languages today is work, it’s what makes you competitive.

I: How many languages should a child learn?

R2: Well as I’m living here, maybe not less than four.

However, while on the surface it seems highly functional and while it is reported as highly functional from people who do not really have personal experience with Luxembourgish education, a slightly deeper insight into it starts to show challenges.

R8: Like for German is like for me my second mother tongue, I write in German, I think also in German. French is like, I feel confident writing it but speaking at the beginning I stutter a lot and then when I like get comfortable with someone then it goes better, it really depends on the situation. English, I feel comfortable in English, it's for me like really easy and Spanish I started it two years ago so it's like, I'm proud that I can like understand and read it, but speaking not so much

A student who is highly motivated in her language learning shows insecurities and different levels of competence in one of the languages that is crucial for not only her academic and professional achievements but also for her everyday life in her country of birth. Her following illustration serves as a very good summary of problems which this type of multilingual education causes and they are far from negligible.

R8: Especially, people always tell me when I tell them I study all these languages at the same time and they're like oh that's sounds wonderful, but the negative side they don't see is that for example you have, Luxembourgish people are more talented for learning German and normally they get problems in French. You can't choose if you want to learn one of these languages, you're forced to learn the three and so normally at least in one of them, you're bad, you get bad grades and still you have to keep up [...] It is stated that in the final year you have to have the level of a native speaker which I think is impossible. For three languages to achieve native speaker level is like, I just find it that they force too much on children [...] I know people that killed themselves because they couldn't keep up in school with it, that it was just too much and I think that it is good that in school you learn like different languages but I think you should leave the choice to young people, I think they should say okay you have to learn English but you can chose if you want to learn French or German so they have a chance of being comfortable in the language they learn and not forcing a language up to them and then they get really frustrated.

We can assume that just as our Luxembourgish respondent has difficulties with French, native French students probably often have difficulties with mastering Germanic languages. This raises the questions of how many languages an average child should really learn and whether this three-language system is indeed manageable in the form in which it is conceived.

There is another educational system which can be found in Luxembourg and it is the European School. The European Schools system serves mainly children of EU officials and is also based on the policy of multilingualism. Unlike in the Luxembourgish system, in the European School the child has courses in their mother tongue and in other languages of choice. The details, advantages and disadvantages of the European School will not be discussed in this paper but, for the purpose of comparison and a broader portrayal of education in Luxembourg, it is important to introduce it.

R7: (talking about multilingualism) I think it's crucial and I think it should be everywhere because exactly for the reasons why, as we discussed, because for example my children are growing up in a completely multilingual and multicultural environment in the European School where they are going and they speak two languages on a high level, Hungarian and French but their openness is beyond comprehension I mean it's they literally, it never crosses their mind that anybody could be less than anybody else and that's something in spite of the shortcomings of the school system this is to me like a ticket for life that I would like them to have.

c) Multilingualism

While discussing multilingualism in Luxembourg and in general, the respondents' first and overall reaction was usually strongly positive and they often proudly share their experiences. Code switching, often regarded as an unwelcome practice, is in this case presented as a useful strategy, allowing smoother communication between members of this multilingual society.

R2: Well, trust me, it completely works, it's awesome.

R7: Yeah in Luxembourg I think it's completely normal, I do mix languages for example, in everyday situations I use French a lot but sometimes I use German and then suddenly a word doesn't come and I just can't remember the word in the moment so I use the French one because they will understand so I use the French word and they understand everything perfectly.

R7: My son comes home sometimes speaking things in Greek because he played football with Greek kids.

Their portrayals of language use in Luxembourg are quite diverse, which shows that an accurate or 'objective' description is in fact very difficult, as it depends on the observer's background, focus and perspective.

R2: French for young people, Luxembourgish for old people.

R6: English is basically clashing against everything, there's French against Luxembourgish, even against German but had the support of the international institutions here. But then we have the borders, the border workers that basically don't speak any English, so it's very complex the situation here, very specific.

R7: it is completely part of my everyday, so it is a very well functioning multilingualism, basically there, we didn't mention Portuguese which is definitely a very very important language in Luxembourg even I mean, actually it's both sides, you have people who speak Luxembourgish, English, German, French and Portuguese like you go to Auchan and the cashier has the flags⁴ what language they speak, usually if they come as a guest worker from France they have only French and then if they are Luxembourgish they have the three, and if they are Portuguese, Luxembourgish with a Portuguese origin but already second generation, they have all the languages plus the Portuguese and the same with Italian because we have a lot of, there is a lot of Italians, there are a lot of Italians here

The respondents did, however, state a couple of challenges of multilingualism.

R6: When there is a less positive situation, language can worsen it, you know what I mean.

R5: I mean the more languages you speak, you're gonna speak worse all the languages.

R6: (...) the more I learn, that's when you asked me how many languages do you speak and actually I can be very proud and say all these five or six, I don't know, but it's true, the more I learn, the less proficient I feel in every, like (...) I feel rusty, I don't feel a hundred percent fluent in any of them.

⁴ On cashiers' name tags in supermarkets are marked, by small flags, the languages that they speak so that the customers can know which language they can use with the cashier.

The last two answers reflect the ideology of the monolingual or fractal view of bilingualism and show that this view has indeed been predominant, making people believe that their competency in each language should be observed as separate monolingual competencies and evaluated as such. Even though the language gap can sometimes act as reinforcement of a misunderstanding or a less favorable relationship between people and even though a significant number of respondents have expressed that they feel that with acquiring new languages their competence in each language decreases, according to their answers the overall benefits seem to outweigh the possible challenges.

4.2.3. Inside the EU institutions and institutions in Luxembourg

Luxembourg is one of the six founding countries of the European Union and is currently one of the capitals of the European Union, together with Strasbourg and Brussels. The city of Luxembourg is home to many European institutions, agencies and authorities. Two institutions of the European School of Luxembourg are intended primarily for children of the staff of the European institutions (Le Gouvernement 2019). Therefore, the role and the extent of the Institutions' influence on language use in Luxembourg are quite significant. The most prominent influence is the increased use of English.

R8: English is becoming a thing in Luxembourg especially with like the European institutions.

R8: At Kirschberg⁵ ... you only hear like English.

This is very clear evidence that, even though the European Union has a very developed multilingualism policy, by far the most used official language within the Institutions is English.

R7: You can actually get a job here with speaking Danish and German and no English, so my wife came here without any English knowledge, for example... but she realized she cannot live without it, so she had to learn English

⁵ Kirchberg is a quarter in north-eastern Luxembourg City. It is dominated by the EU institutions and agencies that were the key to its development: Court of Justice, Court of Auditors, European Commission, European Parliament, European Investment Bank, Eurostat, European School of Luxembourg. As of 31 December 2018, Kirchberg has a population of 5,801, with less than a quarter possessing Luxembourgish nationality (Statistiques sur la Ville de Luxembourg 2018).

Within the Union, the question of multilingualism and its associated cost are highly debated.

R5: It seems stupid but the EU is much more than just a political organization or common market you know, we do actually make legislation and whether or not people want this, it's gonna affect their daily lives, we make like over 50 percent of the legislation in each member state, so we need to make this accessible for the citizens and [...] we cannot require the citizens to know one of these languages, we just cannot because we're not there yet... Europe is not ready for cutting down the multilingualism

R6: I'm pretty sure if information would only be disclosed in one or even two or even three languages, people would start complaining and feel it, feel the disadvantage on their lives, it's like roaming, you know [...] if you buy appliance, domestic appliance in your own country and you don't have the instructions written in your language then you will miss it I think, so people take things for granted.

The respondents who work in the Institutions outline and defend not only the benefits but the need for a multilingual system within the EU. This does not mean, however, that this is a flawless system. There are many challenges that the EU is faced with in trying to implement its multilingualism policy.

R6: Well it does promote, and the Parliament waves the flag of it, but then when you look at the connection it's basically a three language communication basis, published to the citizens I mean. I do think European Union in general promotes it, I do think their approach is quite good, it has changed for the better, I've never seen so many policies on that and as a domino effect the education system in different countries.

R6: [...] the problem is that we, EU, institutions, we don't know how to explain, show this to people, the machine is built in such way that people think that we are only, it's only about money and power and there is a gap between us and between them, so maybe we have to change the way we show what we do and what for and benefits that at the end of the chain are brought to the citizens

R5: (should we promote multilingualism?) like politically correctly speaking on part of my organization, yes. My personal opinion, no, why? We don't have a job then, you know,

and multilingualism will come if it's needed, there's no reason to force people to learn languages if they don't need them.

On a more general level the problems encountered are the money spending debates, “forcing” the multilingualism where it might not be needed or wanted, functioning effectively on a three-language basis and operating exclusively in standard varieties, thus excluding all dialects and minority languages. One of these is Luxembourgish.

R8: I would say that people here don't really care that the European Union translated into 24 languages because they don't translate in Luxembourgish and they have never accepted it as an official language even if it's like, Luxembourg and this language exists, it's a language with it's own grammar, it's own vocabulary and I think like people are offended if people say oh it sounds like German or Dutch even it offends me because I'm like no, it is an own language, it is an own thing and it's nice that you translate into German, French and all that stuff but that's still not our native languages, that's just something we learned when we were children, when we grew up a bit, yes we can speak like native speakers mostly but still it is NOT our language and I think if like the European Union would make effort to see it at least as a language people would be like okay we are fine we understand the other languages, we understand that you don't translate it into such a small language

4.2.4. Role of dominant languages

This section will focus on the relationships between languages in Luxembourg. In this multilingual environment, it is expected that some languages will dominate over the others, be it the number of speakers, the prestige, the history, etc. In a monolingual country this role is usually straightforward and doesn't demand much investigation but in the case of Luxembourg it is interesting to notice there is more than one dominant language, depending on the social space and it is interesting to compare the relationship between these dominant languages. The languages observed are two of the official languages – French and Luxembourgish – as German does not have a dominant role on any level. Together with these, the role of English will be observed, as it is currently the world's dominant language and as such it has an impact on the language distribution in Luxembourg as well.

R5: Almost all countries are freaking out about [the influence of English] at the moment, me I really could not care less and I think it's even good

R7: Globalization forces us to speak at least the language which has by itself become the Esperanto of the world, which is English. And that is a bridge between cultures, my opinion.

The respondents' feelings about the use of English were almost always very positive. They feel that it is a language which poses the least problems and is easy, necessary, facilitates communication and eliminates discriminatory connotations other languages might contain for them.

R5: I think it's good, it's an easy, it's a straightforward language to communicate in and in the end we just wanna communicate, so yeah, I think it's good... It's much better for me than French, I'm much happier than in French yeah

R5: (on experiencing discrimination) Yeah all the time, but that's why I insist on keeping on speaking the way I do, I think it doesn't apply so much when I speak English I mean, you can't really distinguish, you from me if you have, if you're from you know a royal family, or I'm, you cannot really hear this when we speak English, probably, but in Danish you probably can hear it

For expats who do not master the official languages so well, the knowledge of English serves as a means of everyday communication in Luxembourg.

R2: [...] the level of people speaking German and French and such thing is over here, they are great so, I said okay, stay with English, thank you so much

R5: For us it's English I think, for us that's coming from abroad, for the French it's French and for the Germans it's German

However, the respondents confirmed that the knowledge of the official languages is still very important if you want to move upward professionally and get by without problems.

R7: In Luxembourg, strangely enough, I don't see it as widespread as in many other countries... German, French and Luxembourgish, they do have English but you are sometimes better off with the other three.

R8: You have people that don't feel comfortable speaking English.

R7: I don't even try English because either French, French certainly works and if it doesn't work then German works so I don't even try English anymore.

This brings us to probably the most dominant language in Luxembourg – French. Although its status is officially equal to Luxembourgish and German, its predominance in the public sphere is evident. Most respondents report that the knowledge of French is essential for life in Luxembourg. The linguistic results show that all the respondents learned French, to a certain extent, in Luxembourg, mostly as a necessity to participate in the everyday life.

R8: If you don't speak French you're lost, like you are restricted from getting even food.

R7: I'm speaking [French] because I just have to.

R5: They just speak it like as if it was Germany or France, poor Luxembourgish again, and in the city it's French, but I think it's a lot French because everybody working in the shops they are usually from France or Belgium, so, but yeah Luxembourg is French speaking, and you fell that a lot when you come here without French, I came without French and it's not possible, you have to have a little bit... you cannot even buy potatoes.

R8: French thing on the street is in like big bold blue letters and Luxembourgish is so tiny underneath

The result of this is that the part of the population whose native language is not French, even if they master it, feel a certain level of resentment towards it and feel forced to use it by native French speakers. The results of this research showed that this is valid even for native Luxembourgish speakers, whose use of French is expected to be on the native level.

R8: I think it's unfair that these languages [French, English] are more important than our native language. [...] German people don't come here because everything is French.

R8: I would be more happy if kind of out of respect also these people would try to speak Luxembourgish so it would be like a thing of multilingualism in the shops but nowadays it's just like you know French [...] I think that's like really annoying Luxembourgish people.

R6: [...] although I'm a Roman language speaker, ideally it would be easier for me to learn French but I don't have the motivation because I really don't... It's not that I hate it but I don't like it in comparison with others

This section of the comments is fruitful ground for observing how attitudes towards language actually reflect attitudes towards people and nations.

R6: French are very... they block, they don't make any effort, it's all about French, they say immediately we don't speak English. If we do or we try a common thing, some words, but they switch immediately to French and yeah.

R6: I always make an effort to speak your language if I know, or find a common one. [...] so I personally haven't encountered any bad experiences apart from the French, I would say

These attitudes are not only directed towards the French. Although to a lesser extent, similar attitudes can be found towards the Luxembourgish.

R6: They use it, Luxembourgish, as a way of blocking people from reaching top positions.

R7: What can be seen is sometimes when you go to very typically Luxembourgish places, shops that are obviously Luxembourgish kept and the owner or the assistant there is clearly original Luxembourgish, then you might get in trouble if you don't speak Luxembourgish. Even though they speak German or French or even English they are not as nice to you if you don't, if you reply in not Luxembourgish, this happens too.

In the case of Luxembourgish, the respondents were sometimes more tolerant, which stems from the view that the Luxembourgish speaking people are the 'true' native inhabitants of Luxembourg and should be respected as such.

R5: I heard from them that they would like us to have Luxembourgish as lingua franca here, this is not very logic, because we're too many and it's too difficult, it's really

difficult, so yeah, I understand them, this is a reaction to us coming and freaking out in their country.

R7: So if you make an effort and you try to speak Luxembourgish, it's very welcome [...] let's say I understand them, I understand them but I think it's not realistic, I understand them because this is an emotional thing because they feel that this is a country where people really speak Luxembourgish [...] They want to raise the number of inhabitants even more and they want people who live here and work.

4.2.5. Communities and a hundred nationalities

While it is impossible to draw exact conclusions on the distribution of nationalities and therefore languages in Luxembourg, it is important to highlight some of the largest communities and try to understand how language reflects the social hierarchy of Luxembourg. The clash of cultures and nationalities is something which is on the surface handled very well in Luxembourg. However, looking deeper into the social structure reveals that under this seemingly perfect heterogeneity lie deeply rooted social issues and challenges. Some of the respondents confirmed this, while others strongly stood by the opinion that Luxembourg is a prime example of a highly functional multilingual and multicultural society.

R5: I think poor Luxembourg, because this is an example of how bad it can get, you know [...] the local population is minority and therefore there's a lot of racism, this is natural, I mean it's natural because we are completely dominating the expat environment, I mean we're not expats but we're acting this way because there is nothing to integrate into, we don't know where they are, you've probably heard a lot of people saying, who, where are the Luxembourgish, they're actually everywhere, they just look like us so we cannot see them [...] you'll find all these small local communities, I have mine, my Danish one [...] it's the same as always, Spanish Spanish Spanish, Italian Italian Italian, Portuguese Portuguese Portuguese, you know, I think this is like, I don't know, I guess it's natural, but it's weird, a bit weird, and I'd like to, I'd like us to coexist a bit more, like, I'd like us to be more multicultural than we actually are because we end up running around like in small ghettos

R8: [The Luxembourgish] just feel attacked and like helpless when they see like more than half of their country not speaking their language and they can feel isolated like also from society

From the entire research, and as the following results will show, it can be concluded that the most significant cultural clash happens between the “native Luxembourgish” citizens and the Southern European expat groups. In the response quoted above the respondent mentions precisely three Southern European expat groups as examples of closed communities. These are also the most numerous expat nationalities in Luxembourg, as the French, Belgian and German border workers constitute a different category in the social structure and are mostly not perceived in the same way as immigrants or expatriates. That is not to say that these groups are also not subject to language conflict issues. This research does not contain a report from a border worker in Luxembourg and thus conclusions on this subject will not be drawn. The following part of this section will compare a native Luxembourgish perspective on this subject with a perspective of a member of the largest national minority in Luxembourg, the Portuguese.

R8: I would admit that I would be happy if they tried to take Luxembourgish lessons because they come to your country and yes we can speak French, German but we don't have to. [...] they don't really ask how we feel about it [...] it's fine I can change the language but if I see that someone expects me to speak their language I get upset. [...] I think Luxembourgish people are not offended if they see you struggling because we know how hard it is to learn Luxembourgish, we are aware of the fact that we are a minority, that we are a small state and we have a language that's only spoken here in this country and it's not going to use anyone, but it's just out of respect for traditions [...] they feel like too proud to be forced again to speak something that is not their language

Because of their small number and their expected ability to adapt linguistically, the speakers of Luxembourgish often feel threatened. This, again, has its roots in the historical development of Luxembourg, i.e. its continued subordination to the large, dominant cultures.

R8: [...] and then we feel like they only come to Luxembourg to make money but they kind of say it for the south, they came here from the south and they have no respect for our culture, traditions and that really upsets people like that's one of the most points that

people, they come to the country, they only work here, they take money and then they don't interfere with the native ones and I think that's one point that's really getting the discussions and also sometimes to quarrels as well

The “southern” nationalities are faced with more resentment than all the other nationalities living in Luxembourg. The reason for this can be, at least partially, found in their number. The unemployment rates in these countries are high, and Luxembourg provides a very stable economic environment. Unlike in monolingual countries where acquiring the national language is the key to survival in the society, in Luxembourg the lack of linguistic assimilation, and probably other kinds of assimilation, is quite significant. This refers mostly to the first generation because, as the following comments will show, the situation changes drastically for the second generation immigrants.

R7: There is a community of Portuguese people who speak but Portuguese, nothing, absolutely nothing but Portuguese, and they can still survive which is amazing. The first generation is only Portuguese but the second generation becomes completely Luxembourgish, with Portuguese added.

R6: I do think that Portuguese wasn't very well accepted as you know Luxembourgish has a very big Portuguese speaking community, it's 25 percent of the population, and then there is already the new generation who was born in Luxembourg, has a Luxembourgish passport but Portuguese speaking background. Luxembourgish people, somehow developed this ultra protective approach like we want Luxembourgish to be the official language, we are against immigrants, we are very happy that they came and helped us rebuilding the country after the war but Luxembourg is Luxembourg and everything should be in Luxembourgish because somehow they lack identity, that's the main problem [...] it's actually a requirement to work for a public sector system in Luxembourg, to speak Luxembourgish. so and I think that's what happened, Portuguese community became so big and big means powerful that the way they found to somehow block them reaching let's say higher positions it was from the language, and Portuguese was not very well seen. Things are changing because the new generation is different as well, the first Portuguese that came to Luxembourg back in the 60s their education levels were not as

high as nowadays, they weren't even able to speak in French or in very bad French and nowadays it's different

R6: And furthermore it's, this is really true, Portuguese was never considered to be a language of middle and top positions of parties, no, it's you know the cleaning lady, the civil constructor

R6: It's changing but when I came here 9 years ago the only information I could find in Portuguese in the city was to impose rules or give orders or do not do this or do not do that. [...] Then next to Bierger center, please do not step on the grass, you know it's always in the negative way, like rules, it's forbidden to do this and that. And for these instances, examples, you could find information in Portuguese. [...] when I moved here they realized because the electricity contract changed name, an owner, they immediately sent me a letter saying if you have a TV or a radio you have to let us know because they you will start paying this tax, and for that it was written in Portuguese, I was astonished, as if no, we do have this stereotype that we are southerners, we don't comply with the rules all the time and you know they need to put us in order. And this was, this is a real sign of discrimination. And there was this pushing from the community to change things because it was also our fault. Nowadays we would mingle more but before they were sort of segregated by themselves, so now things are changing and yeah, I do see more information in Portuguese, neutral information let's say.

Other than pointing to discrimination directed against the Portuguese, the respondent also expressed not agreeing with the behavior of the Portuguese minority and sometimes feeling uncomfortable admitting she is Portuguese. It is questionable whether these feelings are the consequence of negative labeling or whether the Portuguese community has really exhibited hostile behavior.

R6: I should admit that I usually don't say, don't show I'm Portuguese [...] I don't hide, but I don't feel comfortable [...] with foreigners, yes, with foreigners, I'm Portuguese, very proud, but with Portuguese here, not all the time

R6: I don't feel comfortable, because I, I don't identify myself with their behavior, this sounds very elitistic but that's the true. [...] no one thinks I'm from Portugal, I don't look

Portuguese. But sometimes they have some rude behavior, in the plane, at the airport, it's not a stereotype, let's face it here, not everyone is well educated and education doesn't mean only at school but at home as well and sometimes they can be rude, and I don't, I feel a bit ashamed of this because then it's, Luxembourgish only look at this. And somehow I feel like I behave like Luxembourgish people as well. And I prefer not, I mean if someone asks me some important thing in Portuguese I reply in Portuguese, but sometimes I just feel like no, I'm in a multicultural environment, I prefer not to disclose my nationality if not needed, if needed of course because then I also think that Portuguese when they are together and there is someone from another language, they don't pay attention, I don't like it.

R6: And sometimes I do feel ashamed of a certain behavior from a Portuguese community. In the bus, in the bus it really shocks me. [...] Yeah sometimes they are really noisy, rude and at that moment I feel I don't want, also because if you speak in Portuguese to them and you would like make a comment or, they immediately can be very harsh on you, you know, so I prefer not to say anything.

4.2.6. Experiences with conflict, discrimination and anxieties

It was interesting to notice that, although reports of language conflict and anxieties were expected in this research, when asked about these directly, a part of the respondents answered that they hadn't experienced or witnessed any. But they did mention some involuntarily while discussing different topics, meaning some of the respondents are not aware of some anxieties they had and may not be aware of discrimination they might have witnessed or experienced.

R2: Sometimes I want to speak really French or German but it's not for me.

R8: Especially in French, like I know that I'm stuttering a lot in French and that I don't find words, I prefer to not speak at all, and if I have to I like use like words that I know are correct and I normally don't use new words even if I could express myself differently [...] because you have French native speakers, that they would like make fun because I know French for so long and I still not best speak it

When asked about discrimination, one of the respondents was very hesitant to speak about it.

R2: Well once... Okay, I really want to go through with this? Okay, once I got a small chit chat on the bus because I was speaking Arabic and the guy just thought we're Arabs, we came here to take the money and such things and he guessed that just because I was speaking Arabic.

Most of the respondents reported experiencing language conflict and discrimination in combination with one of the dominant language groups.

R7: in small shops like for example in Bonnevoie there is a bio shop where some of the assistants in the shop were not so nice if you are not talking Luxembourgish [...] I think in Luxembourg many people don't like the foreigners that much... the real Luxembourgish people, it's only 54 percent or something like that of Luxembourg who are Luxembourgish

R7: I did experience once it was a very bad feeling when we bought our apartment in Luxembourg we went to the notary and they were all Luxembourgish and they knew we didn't speak Luxembourgish and they were speaking Luxembourgish with each other, the seller and the notary and I don't know lawyer knowing that we don't understand they were talking to each other, laughing to each other and that was terrible, that was really not a feeling, you really felt like outsider and you really felt stupid, so that was a very bad experience, that was the only case when I felt bad

R7: I guess if somebody looks down on someone because they don't speak a certain language or they don't speak the language well, it is actually the 'my nation is better than yours' kind of thing, to me

R5: language has nothing to do with this, I mean, if it wasn't for a language was suppressed, usually it's because they were treated bad because of their language, it was prohibited during dictatorship or you know some kind of wild dominance where violence was used you know, if it's not because of this people don't give a shit about which language they speak

R5: (talking about conflict) Oh my god you cannot even imagine [...] people are from everywhere, you just don't know how to behave [...] a lot with the French [...] I actually

took an IQ test here because I was doubting whether it was me or it was really just another way of thinking, and it's really another way of thinking – they get overcomplicated, not a very direct culture, they are very complicated, you have to be careful, a lot with offending them

R5: People know [cultural differences] in Luxembourg more or less because it's very multicultural, but the ones that know it the least are the dominant cultures here and here I mean like the French and the Germans, they are maybe the least conscious even the Luxembourgish are conscious about this, but not them so much, so those are the ones that you're gonna offend here more or less

Although the respondents did experience challenges in their multilingual environment, for all of them multilingualism generally has positive connotations. According to their opinions, it encourages openness, brings more work opportunities, functions as a bridge and helps achieve equality.

R6: There are so many languages but ironically I think we are more united and spending more time together and we appreciate that, so multilingualism is quite beneficial.

R8: [...] the world is becoming one big continent for me where everyone has to live with each other to survive and I can think in one point in future, they have to depend on multilingualism

R5: It will offer you communication umm, and hopefully with communication some kind of understanding you know. [...] Multilingualism doesn't necessarily mean multiculturalism and we should also learn the culture when we learn the language, language is not only a language.

R7: It promotes openness to me, which is for me one of the basic values that I believe in so for me it's a very positive thing.

R7: Sometimes the reason why we don't think we are equal is because of communication gaps.

On the other hand, it is important to rethink the definition of multilingualism and realize that this word has different meanings to different people and that it actually has two faces.

R7: It helps, I think it helps, it's like a, I think it's a bridge, multilingualism as such, oh wait, I'm actually thinking about two different things. So do you say multilingualism that means like for example to accept all the languages in the European Union so everyone can speak whatever they want and then we try to translate them like that or multilingualism in a way that we find a way to communicate with each-other, we find a common language like English or Japanese whatever to speak with each other. Because what I think is multilingualism is good because everybody has the right to speak their own language because that's how they express themselves the best and so on but somehow we need to make sure that we understand each other via some kind of relay language, whatever that is so that we can best communicate with each other so it's to me a double question or a double thing.

R7: I am for, in a way for both, I am for the freedom and for the possibility to live, I mean to express yourself the best way you can in your whatever language you wish but I'm also for whatever bridge we can build between those languages so that we actually speak the same language in a way.

This is why discussing multilingualism is not as straightforward as it may seem and why language policies are faced with many challenges. As most societies today are in some way multicultural and multilingual, their functionality will most probably depend on the balance between people being free to maintain their own identity and language and finding a bridge between cultures and languages that will allow for mutual understanding and a functional community.

8. Conclusion

In terms of the interviews, I was pleasantly surprised with the respondents' willingness to participate and their openness in answering the questions. It needs to be stressed that, while I did follow the general topics while interviewing the respondents, I did not always follow the modules as they were planned. The questions were individually adapted to the respondents and at times I would skip questions having judged they are inadequate or superfluous or I would add questions which spontaneously came up as potentially relevant. The interviews strongly resembled casual conversations and the atmosphere was always relaxed and positive.

However, in the course of analyzing the results, I noticed one major absence in the research and this is the fact that I did not get a chance to interview a person which would represent a very important social group in Luxembourg – a French border worker. I believe that including a native French speaker and a border worker would provide a crucial missing link in this research. Nevertheless, I find that the thesis can be regarded as relevant and representative as it is.

The analysis of the results has shown that the linguistic diversity of Luxembourg is so extreme that any quantitative conclusions are questionable. The impressions of the functioning of multilingualism are equally diverse and depend on the profession, linguistic background, age, nationality and beliefs of the respondent. There are multiple social spaces in Luxembourg and depending on a respondent's belonging to one or more of these spaces, we can more or less predict the languages that they might be using. These social spaces correspond partially to the categories of sociolinguistic results in this thesis. The results clearly debunk the myth of the highly functional trilingualism and expose challenges in the areas of multilingual education and the relationship between dominant and minoritized languages. Multilingual education, at least the Luxembourgish system, certainly has its challenges, contrary to popular belief. The language configuration goes much further beyond the official trilingualism, the elephant in the room being a very significant presence of languages such as Portuguese, not officially recognized in any way. This is tied to the presence of discrimination towards certain social groups.

On the other hand, the study shows that the residents of Luxembourg are highly aware of the challenges of multilingualism and recognize it as a naturally occurring phenomenon, which

requires and promotes openness, awareness and positive action towards a more harmonious society.

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7. Appendix: Modules

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. How old are you?
2. What do you do?
3. What is your level of education?
4. Where were you born?
5. Where did you spend most of your life?
6. Where do you live?
7. How long have you lived in Luxembourg?
8. Have you lived anywhere else?
9. Where would you like to live in the future? Why?

LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

10. What is your native language?
11. How many languages do you speak?
12. What are they?
13. Rate your knowledge!
14. How well do we need to master the language in order to say that we speak it?

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

15. Where did you learn each language?

16. What languages do your parents speak?
17. What languages would you like to learn? Why?
18. Do you feel confident using the languages that you speak?
19. How easy or difficult is it to learn a new language?

LANGUAGE MIXING AND INTERFERENCE

20. Have you experienced any mixing of the languages that you speak?
21. In what way?
22. Do you mix languages? Do you do this on purpose or is it out of your control?
23. When is it okay to mix languages and when is it not?
24. Is it okay to say that one language is better than another language?

MULTILINGUALISM IN GENERAL

25. Do you think being multilingual is generally a good or a bad thing? Why?
26. Do you think ML should be promoted?
27. Do you think globalization forces us to expand our learning of foreign languages?
28. What opportunities does ML offer?
29. What are the challenges of ML? Are there any negative sides to ML?

EDUCATION

30. What do you think about ML education?

31. How many languages should a child learn?
32. When would you expose a child to other languages?
33. What are the good and the bad sides of multilingual classrooms in your opinion?
34. How important is it for a child to learn multiple languages?

EU MULTILINGUALISM POLICY

35. What do you think about the European Union as a place that promotes ML?
36. Do you think this approach works?
37. Do you think it is a good thing that the EU spends resources on translating everything to all languages or should they just do everything in one language, perhaps English?

ENGLISH AS LINGUA FRANCA

38. What do you think about the position of English a) in the world, b) in Lux?
39. What do you think about its dominance?
40. How do you feel using English as a 'lingua franca'?
41. What do you think about borrowing English words in other languages/your native language?

LUXEMBOURG

42. What do you think about Lux as a multilingual country/city?
43. What languages are preferred here?
44. Are there languages which you feel are not welcome here?

45. Does it matter which language you speak in Lux?
46. What languages do you need to speak in order to be successful here?
47. Have you had any difficulties, problems, conflicts in Lux regarding language?
48. Which language do you use at supermarkets?
49. ... At work?
50. ... At home?
51. How do politicians here speak?
52. What do you think about language in the media?
53. Do you think Lux promotes ML? In what way?

DIALECTS

54. Is it okay for people to speak in their local dialect in a formal setting?
55. Is it okay for politicians to speak in their local dialect?

SPEECH ACCOMMODATION

56. How would you describe the way you speak?
57. What influenced the way you speak the most?
58. Do you adapt your speech to the situation that you find yourself in?
59. Why do you do that? How do you do that?
60. When do you speak the most naturally?

LANGUAGE DISCRIMINATION

61. Has anybody ever tried to change the way you speak?
62. Have you ever experienced discrimination based on the way you speak/ the languages you speak?
63. Do you have anxieties or feel bad about the way you speak? Why?
64. What would you like to change about the way you speak, if anything?
65. Does the way in which people speak influence your opinion about them?
66. Do you think people judge other people by the way they speak?
67. Do you think language discrimination is acceptable? Why/why not?

LANGUAGE CONFLICT

68. Have you witnessed any language conflict (in Lux)?
69. Do you think language conflict reflects other kinds of conflicts?
70. Do you think multilingualism can be used to overcome cultural differences?
71. Do you think ML promotes civilized dialogue?
72. Have you ever had a civilized dialogue with those who are different from you in language and in terms of their religions, beliefs and political opinions?
73. What does language have to do with religion? Think of Islam.
74. Do you think multilingualism will help avoid political, economic, social and religious misunderstandings?