

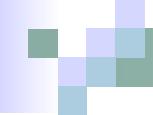
Implementing the one person, one language (OPOL) policy in early childhood education: An ethnographic study of an English-French crèche in Strasbourg



Dr. Eloise Caporal-Ebersold
Membre associé à l'EA 1339 LiLPa | Université de Strasbourg



The International Research Foundation
for English Language Education



OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

1. Introduction

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

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The harmony and discord of language principles and language practices

4.1 “Declared language policy”

Bilingual Language Policy: one person, one language (OPOL)

4.2 Discourse on OPOL & Hybrid Language practices

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How do they negotiate languages on daily, practical basis?

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1. INTRODUCTION

“It (**language policy**, LP) may be discovered in the *linguistic behaviour (language practices)* of the individual or group. It may also be discovered in the *ideology or beliefs* about language of the individual or group. Finally, it may be made explicit in the *formal language management of planning decisions of an authorised body.*” (Spolsky 2004: 217)

Three Conceptualizations:

- “**Practiced language policy**” (Bonacina, 2012, Spolsky, 2007)
- “**Perceived language policy**”
- “**Declared language policy**” (Shohamy 2006: 68)



INTRODUCTION

- ◆ **The challenge in Language Policy (LP):** Making connections between the macro and micro, between macro-level policy texts and discourses and micro-level language use (Johnson: 2011)
- ◆ There is a need to study the specific ways in which policies are translated into practice (Saxena, 2012).
- ◆ **Language policy in practice (LPP)** is a multi-layered dimension. There is a need to look into the agents, goals, processes and discourses (Johnson: 2009).



INTRODUCTION

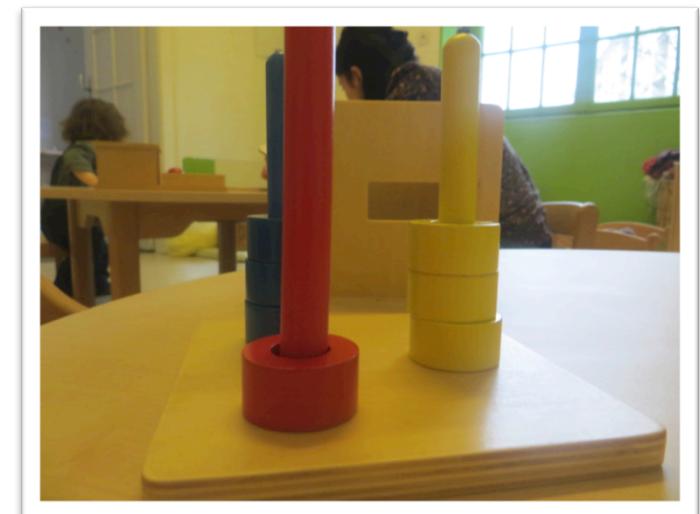
- ◆ “**Bilingualism** is a simple term that hides a complex phenomenon” (Baker, 2014: xviii)
- ◆ **One person, one language (OPOL)** preferred language policy of parents with different first languages (Leopold, 1970; Ronjat, 1913). Most widely used approach towards *bilingual language acquisition* in children

ECEC: A NEW SPACE FOR LP STUDY

- Most studies are on language acquisition
- The focus at this level are childcare and welfare. Constraints are different from school.

Language is not seen as central for the cohesion of nation state (as in schools).

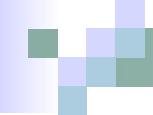
- New space to study LP and discursive practices
- A place of multilingual socialization before schooling
- Interesting space to investigate as parents invest their time





MACRO CONTEXT: ECEC IN FRANCE

- ◆ ECEC services have a long history/tradition
- ◆ At the heart of French family politics
- ◆ Ministries in-charge: Ministry of Solidarity and Health, National Family Benefit Fund (CNAF), Caisses des Allocations Familiales (departmental), the child and maternal health services (protection maternelle et infantile or PMI)
- Different care options possible
- Parents pay according to salary (quotient familial)
- Number of Bi/Multilingual Crèches in France



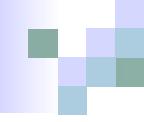
CRECHES IN STRASBOURG

- Population of Strasbourg: 272 222 in 2014, **66** (public, managed by the city) **25** (private, i.e. micro-crèche, managed by associations) with 3100 slots available (2014)
- Number of bilingual crèches : **2** German and French; **1** English and French, parental; micro-crèches in E-F (more recently)
- Registration managed by the city: centralised through RAM (Les Relais d'Assistantes Maternelle)
- In Strasbourg, “Charte de Qualité.” No statement about language.

Language policy has evolved under the influence of research.

Where is Strasbourg?





ECEC LP OF STRASBOURG

- French is the language of the crèche
- In bilingual crèches: the focus is on working languages
- The politics is not favorable to the idea of accommodating minority languages (bilingual crèches)

“L'une des orientations politiques sur la petite enfance, c'est de faire des crèches pour tous et de ne pas faire des crèches communautaires. Donc a priori, la ville n'est pas favorable à des crèches pour Turcs, des crèches pour Juifs, des crèches pour carnivores...Donc, des crèches pour Turcs à priori on n'a jamais eu de projet mais après un projet de crèche si on a encore un projet de développement qui développerait bilinguisme turc mais qui serait ouvert à tous, c'est quelque chose à priori qui n'est pas exclu. L'ouverture pour tous est un impératif (pour la ville).”

(Based on the Interview with the Chief of Service, Strasbourg City and CUS

- Direction de l'enfance et de l'éducation/Service de la Famille et Petite Enfance, January 31, 2014)

2. THE CASE STUDY

THE FIRST PARENTAL ENGLISH-FRENCH BILINGUAL CRECHE IN STRASBOURG

- ◆ A result of a parent initiative: From crèche founder to association president
- ◆ British-Canadian who grew up in the United States and married to French; has a strong network, previous employment include: European Project, Region D'Alsace and UDS; is active in civic, volunteering activities

“Because I am English, and I’ve been living in France for sure. Why English-French because that is my household. English-French at home, and my heart language or my mother language is English...” (GC, 26 Aug 2013)

THE CASE STUDY

The Composition of the Crèche

- 13 children from 3 months to 3 years, 5 children between 3 and 4 years (part-time) who come on Wednesdays only.
- 8 professionals/carers
 - 4 permanent positions:* 1 Eng speaker + 3 Fr speakers
 - 1 part-time position:* Eng speaker
 - 2 substitute professionals:* 1 Eng + 1 Fr speaker
 - Crèche president* is present everyday except Fridays: Eng

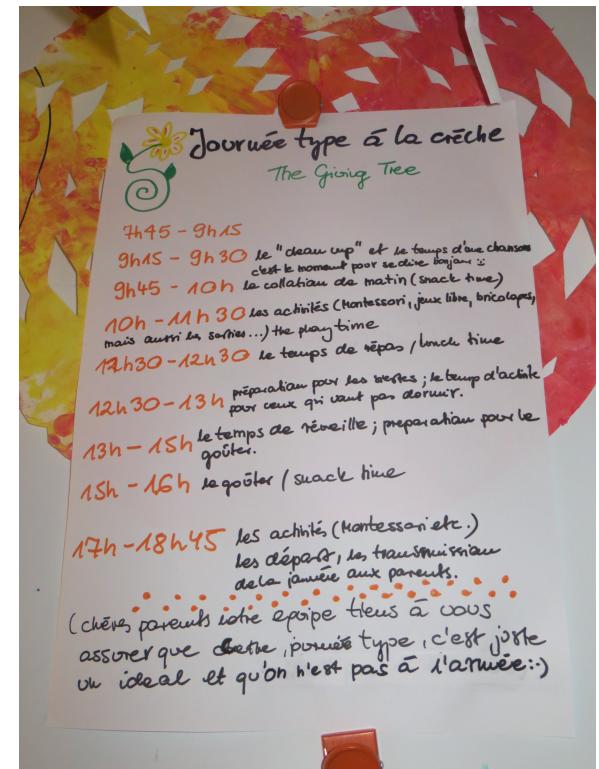
A clear effort to balance the languages among the personnel

- 26 parents

THE CASE STUDY

◆ The Parents

- All parents have English (linguistic repertoire)
- They manage the crèche; serve few hours a week
- A committee of parents, in-charge for recruitment of professionals; another committee, responsible for to choose new families as members





THE CASE STUDY

On Languages

At least 13 languages: Arabic, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish

- ◆ English and French (official languages)
- ◆ “There is openness to languages and different culture”
 - Multilingual songbook, parents speak their languages to their children

PROFILES OF SOME PARENTS

Parent	Nationality	Languages	Spouse's Nationality	Spouse's Languages	Home Language	No. of Children
1	Canadian	English, French	French	French English (work)	English <i>(wife)</i> French (husband)	2 (one at the crèche)
2	Greek	Greek , English French, German (basic)	American	English, French (some notion)	English (most of the time) Greek (sometimes) French (with some books)	1
3	French	French, English German (basic)	Indian	English, Punjabi Hindi, French	French (most of the time) English	1
4	English	English, Spanish French (some notion)	Finnish	Finnish, English Swedish , French (some notion)	English (husband) Finnish <i>(wife)</i>	1
5	French	French, English	(Mother of his child) French	French, English Spanish	French, English <i>(when doing homework with the oldest child)</i>	2 (one at the crèche)
6	French	French English	(Father of her child) American	English	French, English (when talking via skype with the father of her child)	1

PROFILES OF CARERS

Carers	Work Status	Age Range	Nationality	Educational Background	Languages Spoken	Assigned Language	Year of Arrival in France
1	Full-time	25-30	Algerian	French Childcare certificate (France) Management (university level – 2 years in Algeria)	Arabic French English	French	2009
2	Full-time	25-30	Polish	Psychotherapy and Health Promotion Bachelor in Education (ERASMUS)	Polish French English	French	early 2000
3	Full-time (on maternity leave, starting April 2014)	30-35	British	EJE (Education degree, specializing in young children)	French English	English	1980's (when she was 4 years old)
4	Part-time	25-30	Canadian	Biology and Chemistry degree	English French	English	2013



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative, longitudinal study
- ethnographic approach (Conteh, 2005; Heller, 2008)
- September 2013 – June 2014 –
 - observation twice a week
- Total Observation Hours: 133 hours + 33 minutes
- Number of Interviews:
 - 2 with ECEC personnel from the city
 - 3 with Association president
 - 12 with Parents
 - 7 with Professionals
- Audio-recorded sessions: 45 of 20 mn each
- Field notes, Photos

DECLARED LANGUAGE POLICY

One person, one language (OPOL) sometimes referred to as one adult, one language or one professional, one language

Where is it stated? Where is the policy visible?

- ❖ Website
- ❖ Paper document
- ❖ Recruitment advertisement

→ Respect the principle of one person, one language: ENGLISH

Diploma and experience

- ➔ French EJE diploma or foreign equivalent in early learning childhood
- ➔ Experience in a co-educational (parent-professional) structure is a plus

Sample Document: Mission de Poste EJE Replacement anglophone, English Version, February 9, 2014

DECLARED LANGUAGE POLICY

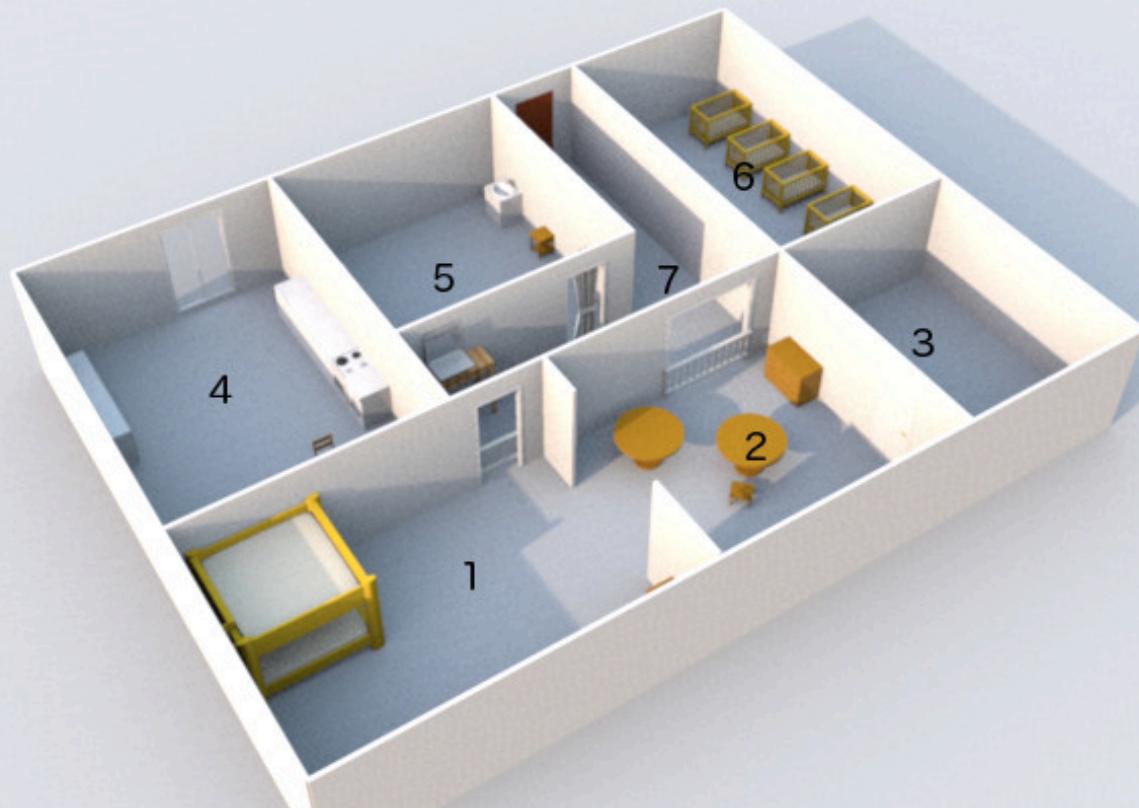
“In this structure, I never say a word of French. It is almost a game that we play because for instance, we have a delivery at the door, and then I say, hello, how are you? And then, they'll say une livraison, and blah...blah... blah. And then, I'll say thank you, thank you very much. They look at me and sometimes I say, yeah... **we are an English-speaking crèche.**

Most of the people, even the deliverer has a little bit of English. They might find it odd. **Otherwise, I go outside of the door. I invite them in the kitchen, and then I shut the door. So this kitchen space, when there are no children in it is the space where the professional or the team members can speak French.”**

Crèche Founder/ Association President, August 26, 2013

FLOOR PLAN OF THE CRECHE

- 1- Play Area / Baby's Area
- 2- Dining Room / Play Area
- 3- Montessori Play room
- 4- Kitchen
- 5- Toilet
- 6- Sleeping Room
- 7- Corridor



DISCOURSE ON OPOL & HYBRID LANGUAGE PRACTICES

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

(Professional 4, 2 June 2014)

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

“Professional 4 was reading to *H* [English-speaking child] in English. It was only later when I got hold of the book that I realised that it was actually written in French ONLY...”

(Research Note, 17 April 2014)



NEGOTIATING LANGUAGE POLICIES

(Menken & Garcia, 2011)

Example 1: Bilingual activity with 2 carers Fr +Eng present

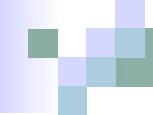
Where: Room 2

When: During snack time, everybody seated, getting ready for snacks.

Routine: They sing two songs: one English, one French

What happened: One of the children asked to go to the toilet (urgent)

- French speaking carer attends to him, leaves the room.
- English speaking carer is by herself, leads both English and French songs.



NEGOTIATING LANGUAGE POLICIES

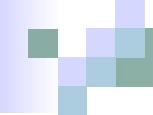
Example 2: Bilingual interaction Fr + Eng from a French speaking professional

Where: Corridor

When: Carers dress up the children to go to the park.

Scenario: There was a box of books to keep the children occupied, especially those already dressed up. An English-speaking boy, 3 years old, restless, trying to open the door.

French carer: *Ferme la porte, close the door!*



SUMMARY

- **Declared Language Policy (DLP)**
 - According to people = Language switch is marked by switch of persons
 - Carers/professionals must adhere to OPOL
 - At least one English and one French speaker with children
 - No language policy for parents +children
 - **OPOL in all spaces of the crèche except kitchen = free space**
- **Practiced Language Policy**
 - Negotiation of the DLP, Translanguaging, Bilingual Mode
Carers have become more flexible in their language use become more aware of the constraints of OPOL

CONCLUSION

- ECEC, a rich space for LP study
- LP is multi-layered. (Agents, Goals, Processes, Discourses)
- Ideologies of language are all pervasive, « Fear of communautarism », OPOL is still widely used and accepted because it is a well-known strategy

Disharmony of the declared language policy and practiced language policy

- A necessity to negotiate is necessary (children's safety, when professional assigned to the language is not available, etc.)
- Bilingual professionals continuously function in bilingual mode

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