

Language Planning and Policy on Linguistic Boundaries: the case of Luxembourgish

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1. Introduction

Language contact between regional and immigrant languages constitutes a widespread phenomenon in Luxembourg. The official recognition of Luxembourgish, French and German is accompanied by the presence of various immigrant languages as well as an increasing use of English as a language of communication among Luxembourg's growing international workforce. Societal multilingualism in Luxembourg can be attributed to both the country's geographical location and various political and demographic changes since its foundation in the tenth century. Whereas different waves of immigration from primarily Italy and Portugal throughout the twentieth century have contributed to the spread of multilingualism, language contact in Luxembourg is closely related to its geographical situation.

The country is located on the linguistic border between a Romance and Germanic language area in Western Europe and geographically shares borders with France, Germany and the French-speaking part of Belgium. Due to Luxembourg's borderland location, its indigenous variety, Luxembourgish, has originated from contact between Germanic and Romance varieties or, in other words, contact between the ends of two dialect continua. Contact dialects of this kind exist all over the world in places where different dialect continua come into contact with each other. The case of Luxembourgish is in many ways an unusual example as the Luxembourg government officially recognised the West-Moselle Franconian dialect, spoken by the vast majority of the indigenous population, as Luxembourgish, the country's national language, by passing its first language law in 1984. Alongside Luxembourgish, French and German benefit from official recognition.

A discussion of the various historical and sociolinguistic developments which led to the explicit language policy in 1984 can throw light onto the complex mechanisms underlying the rising in status of a contact dialect to a

national language. Despite its official recognition, Luxembourgish continues to play a marginal role in the education system and the reasons underlying this lack of support will be investigated in relation to past and present trends in Luxembourg's language planning and policy activities. Firstly, the wording of the language law will be analysed to illustrate the continuing tensions between Luxembourgish, French and German. The emergence of Luxembourgish as a language of identity will then be described diachronically and will be followed by a discussion of the current status and use of Luxembourgish with reference to language in education policy documents as well as qualitative data originating from an interview carried out by the author with Luxembourg's Minister of Education in 2006.

2. The formation of a national language

Luxembourg's language law was ratified on 24 February 1984, officially establishing Luxembourgish as the country's national language (Article 1). French was awarded the status of legislative language (Article 2) and all administrative matters were to be carried out in French, German or Luxembourgish (Article 3). Finally, the policy states that in written correspondence administrative bodies should 'as far as possible' reply in the language that was chosen by the correspondent (Article 4). The establishment of Luxembourgish as Luxembourg's national language marks a rare sociolinguistic development as contact varieties on linguistic borders are frequently excluded from official language policies. A brief analysis of the wording of the language law can provide insights into the intentions of the policy makers. Berg (1993) draws attention to the government's choice of terminology when drafting the language law as Luxembourgish receives the status of 'national' language without further information as to what this label entails. Moreover, the rise of Luxembourgish to an administrative language in Article 3 is qualified in the following article through the phrase 'as far as possible'. This exit clause enables administrative bodies to ignore a correspondent's choice of language and, therefore, risks weakening the effect of the language law in the administrative domain. In fact, Luxembourg's administration continues to write almost exclusively in French despite the changes imposed by the law in 1984 (Fehlen 2002: 83). The vague nature of the language law suggests that despite its considerable rise in status, Luxembourgish remains in a competitive relationship with French and German. A diachronic

discussion of the formation of Luxembourgish as a national language can provide an explanation for Luxembourg's current linguistic situation as well as the nature of its language policies.

2.1 Historical overview

The origins of Luxembourg date back to 963 AD when Count Sigfried, a noble of Upper Lotharingia, acquired the castle 'Lucilinburhuc' from the Abbot of St Maximin and founded the independent feudal state of Luxembourg. Count Sigfried's Luxembourg was located in the area of the old Carolingian empire which was divided by a language border into two separate parts, named 'Germania' and 'Romania' (Hoffmann 1980). Consequently, both Germanic and Romance varieties were spoken in early Luxembourg, and the tensions between a Germanic East and Romance West go back as far as the first centuries AD when Celtic Treveri, Romans and increasing numbers of Germanic-speaking Rhine-Franks were living side by side in the area which later became Luxembourg (Hoffmann 1980). Throughout the twelfth century Luxembourg's territory increased, the counts started to 'acquire French habits, tastes, and language' (Gade 1951:80, cited in Davis 1994: 26) and French gradually became the language of the nobility and the official language of the state. The linguistic prestige of French continued to grow and by the end of the fifteenth century French had replaced Latin in the writings of the clergy as well as strengthened its position as the language of the upper classes and the emerging middle classes of merchants who extensively used French alongside German as a trading language. On the other hand, the peasants and serfs who represented nine tenths of the population exclusively spoke the local Germanic dialect as they had no use for either French or German (Davis 1994: 27). During the following four centuries Luxembourg changed hands several times and belonged to Austria, Spain, France and the Netherlands. These various periods of foreign rule had an influence on the size and shape of Luxembourg as parts of the original territory came under Belgian, German and French possession. In 1839, The Treaty of London finally established Luxembourg's present day borders and Luxembourg became an independent state.

Political independence was accompanied by a newly-gained self-confidence in the Luxembourg people who started to associate their local dialect with a Luxembourg identity and used their native tongue as a differentiating characteristic from the larger neighbouring countries (Gilles and

Moulin 2003: 304). Hoffmann (1980) establishes 1848 and 1896 as key dates contributing to the emergence of Luxembourgish as a language of identity. In 1848, Luxembourgish first appeared in the domain of politics in the parliamentary speeches by Carl Matthias André and Norbert Metz (Hoffmann 1980; Newton 1996). In 1896, the first ever introductory speech in parliament was carried out in Luxembourgish by Caspar Matthias Spoo who suggested the use of Luxembourgish as the language of communication in Luxembourg's parliament. Spoo's proposition was not positively received by the majority of the parliament but in 1912 he managed to introduce Luxembourgish as a compulsory school subject in primary schools.

The Second World War marks a challenging and controversial period for the linguistic composition of Luxembourg as the country was invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany. Strong anti-German feelings were prevalent among Luxembourg's population who were treated as ethnically and linguistically German by the Nazi occupiers. Various resistance groups formed in reaction to the invasion and they finally united forces in 1944. The resistance groups used the Luxembourgish language as a marker of Luxembourgish identity (Wagner and Davies 2009: 118). During a census on nationality and language carried out by the German occupiers in 1941, the vast majority of the population refused to be ethnically and linguistically labelled as German. In responses to three questions regarding, (a) current nationality, (b) mother tongue, (c) ethnicity, over 96% of voters answered with 'Luxembourgish' despite explicit instructions by the Germans that 'Luxembourgish' constituted an invalid answer (Newton 1996: 188). The outcome of this census was influenced by the Luxembourg resistance movement who had urged the population to regard Luxembourgish as their sole mother tongue (Wagner and Davies 2009: 117). Consequently, Luxembourgish became a crucial tool for the strengthening of the Luxembourgish identity during World War II which has often been regarded as a pivotal event in the development of Luxembourgish as a national language (Hoffmann 1996, Berg 1993). In a study of letter writing practices during World War II, Wagner and Davies (2009) show that Luxembourgish fulfilled affective functions, acted as the language of closeness and home and served as a mode of expression for personal emotions. However, for the letter writers in their corpus the affective value of Luxembourgish was not necessarily linked with a desire to politically establish Luxembourgish as the country's national language (Wagner and Davies 2009). This finding is

strengthened by the apparent lack of explicit language policy activities in the immediate aftermath of the war. However, Luxembourgish gained new ground by replacing German as a medium of communication in parliamentary debates from 1945 onwards. The initial inclusion of Luxembourgish in the primary school curriculum in 1912 was extended to the first two years of secondary schools in the aftermath of World War II. The teaching of Luxembourgish using the 'Margue-Feltes' orthography in secondary schools marked a hopeful development. The orthography had no resemblance with the German or French spelling systems and was therefore impractical from an educational perspective as German remained the language of alphabetisation and the teaching of Luxembourgish continued to be marginalised (Gilles and Moulin 2003: 316). Support for the 'Margue-Feltes' spelling system faltered in the 1950s and Luxembourgish language classes were increasingly dedicated to the study of German (Newton 1996: 191). Moreover, street signs were changed back from German to French as opposed to Luxembourgish at the end of the war. This lack of support for Luxembourgish weakens the claims made about the crucial role of World War II in the development of Luxembourgish as a national language.

Horner and Weber (2008) argue that the official recognition of Luxembourgish as the country's national language in 1984 cannot be directly connected to the historical events surrounding World War II and they attribute greater importance to the social and demographic developments of the 1970s. Heavy immigration, in particular, transformed the make-up of Luxembourg's society and inevitably had an impact on patterns of language use. The 1984 language policy must be regarded as the government's reaction to a number of perceived external and internal threats to cultural cohesion (Davis 1994: 10). Repeated claims by German politicians and journalists just prior to the language law that Luxembourgish was a dialect of German and that Luxembourgers were ethnically German acted as an external threat (Davis 1994: 11). This threat was perceived as being closely related to the developments of the second world war and the resulting connection between Luxembourgish and a Luxembourgish identity. The threats posed by the German culture and language and the historical events of the second world war acted in conjunction with the internal threats from the high influx of migrants (Davis 1994: 11). In reaction to the steel crisis of the 1970s, Luxembourg shifted towards a more service-oriented and white-collar economy. Increasing numbers of foreigners were recruited by

Luxembourg's growing financial sector and by the numerous institutions of the European Union based in Luxembourg. Due to a rise in the standard of living and a subsequent demand in housing and road construction (Davis 1994: 10), numerous building companies started to employ Portuguese immigrants as manual labourers on building sites (Hoffmann 1996: 99). Immigration from Portugal began in the 1960s and 1970s following a peak in immigration from Italy, whose origins date back to the industrial development in the nineteenth century. Portuguese immigrants have continued to arrive in Luxembourg and they currently represent the largest immigrant group with over 76,000 members, followed by French (26,000) and Italian (19,000) immigrants (Statec 2008: 5). In 2008, Luxembourg's total population amounted to 483,000 inhabitants (Statec 2008: 5).

The social and demographic developments of the 1970s coincided with the creation of 'Actioun Lëtzebuergesch', a non-profit organisation and pressure group who in their constitution claim that 'the purpose of the Association is to speak for everything which is Luxembourgish, especially the language' (Newton 1996: 192). Lobbying efforts of 'Actioun Lëtzebuergesch', such as support for the appearance of Luxembourgish on street signs, bank notes and stamps, contributed to the creation of Luxembourg's first language law. The language law was finally ratified on 24 February 1984. The historical overview of the sociolinguistic developments in Luxembourg has shown that the formation of Luxembourgish as a language of identity has been an extremely slow and complex process which has extended over hundreds of years and the language policy of 1984 cannot be attributed to a single historical event such as the invasion and occupation of Luxembourg in World War II. The language contact situation in Luxembourg constitutes a rich context for the investigation of possible outcomes and consequences of language planning and policy decisions from the perspectives of both policy makers and language users. The lack of unequivocal support for Luxembourgish, as previously discussed in the analysis of the wording of the 1984 policy, is also reflected in the failure of the policy makers to strengthen the impact of the law by providing accompanying measures to change patterns of language use or concrete plans to produce teaching materials, dictionaries or grammars of Luxembourgish (Gilles and Moulin 2003: 309). While various dictionaries have been published both in print and online, the education system still heavily relies on teaching and learning materials from the neighbouring countries. The remainder of this

chapter will be dedicated to an investigation of some of the successes and failures of Luxembourg's language law. By officially recognising Luxembourg's contact variety as a national language, the Luxembourg authorities emerge as a rare and positive exception in comparison to many other countries and states where largely spoken contact varieties are excluded from official language policies. However, Luxembourg's language law was not accompanied by an increase in status and use of Luxembourgish in the education system. A close analysis of the stance of the authorities can provide an explanation for the continuing marginalisation of Luxembourgish in the educational domain.

3. Luxembourgish: a national language with no role in education
Education emerges as one of the most crucial domains for Language Planning and Policy activities (Spolsky 2004; Ferguson 2006) as schools offer governments extensive control over a young and captive audience. School students' language attitudes and language behaviour are considerably affected by language in education policies (Ferguson 2006: 33). The inclusion or exclusion of particular languages at school as well as decisions on whether specific languages are employed as media of instruction or taught as foreign languages can considerably influence the status of a language. Luxembourg's education system is governed by explicit language policies regulating the use of multiple languages in a multilingual education system.

Languages play a major role in Luxembourg's education system both in the form of taught school subjects and media of instruction. 35 to 40% of school lessons are dedicated to language teaching at primary and secondary school level. German and French constitute compulsory languages throughout schooling. English is introduced as a foreign language at secondary school level where students can also opt to study Latin, Italian and Spanish. German and French are employed as languages of instruction at different levels in the curriculum. German is the language of alphabetisation and is mostly employed as a medium of instruction throughout primary education and the first years of secondary schooling (Council of Europe 2006: 16). French largely replaces German as the medium of instruction in the latter years of secondary education. The change of the language of instruction has been attributed to an attempt by the authorities to provide students with a balanced competence in German and

French, thus enabling them to complete their higher education at either German-speaking or French-speaking universities (Hoffman 1996: 132).

Luxembourgish, on the other hand, is only taught for one hour a week at primary school level and is completely discarded after the first year of secondary education (Horner and Weber 2008: 92). Officially, it is employed as a language of instruction for arts, music and sports in primary schools (Hoffmann 1996: 131-2) and Horner and Weber (2008: 98) draw attention to the fact that it is ‘banned in most other contexts of primary and secondary education’. No major policy changes in relation to Luxembourgish have occurred since the Educational Act of 1912 when Luxembourgish was first introduced as a school subject in primary schools. Teaching of Luxembourgish was extended to the first two years of secondary schools in the immediate aftermath of World War II. The official recognition of Luxembourgish as the country’s national language in 1984 was not followed by an increase in status for Luxembourgish in the educational sphere. The ongoing official exclusion of Luxembourgish from the education system is particularly striking due to the major role of language teaching and the use of multiple languages of instruction in Luxembourg’s education system. In an official Ministry of Education report, Luxembourgish is described as an inadequate tool for academic purposes due to its primary role as a spoken medium of communication and its former definition as a dialect (Berg and Weis 2005: 76). Simultaneously, the Ministry of Education acknowledge the fact that Luxembourg constitutes one of the rare countries where the national language has been extremely marginalised in the education system.

As Luxembourgish has so far only been extensively codified with regards to orthography (Gilles and Moulin 2003: 317), an increase in the official use and status of Luxembourgish in education requires considerable and more comprehensive standardisation of the language particularly in relation to the development of dictionaries and grammars. Whereas small grammatical descriptions of Luxembourgish are available, effective use and teaching of Luxembourgish in education requires the development of teaching and learning materials based on extended Luxembourgish grammars and dictionaries (Gilles and Moulin 2003: 323). Codification and norm selection is an ongoing process in Luxembourg which has so far only been addressed in relation to phonology and orthography (Stell 2006: 54). Consequently, questions regarding the status

of Luxembourgish in education are accompanied by the challenges resulting from the incomplete standardisation of the language.

In an evaluation of Luxembourg's education system in 2006, the Council of Europe claimed that the current system is unable to satisfy the needs of the population as a whole and that educational attainment is heavily affected by the students' mastery of the various languages of instruction (i.e., German and French) (Council of Europe 2006: 17). At primary school level 20.4% of students show an educational delay of one year or more; this educational delay increases to 62.6% for students enrolled in technical secondary schools. Secondary education is largely split between classical and technical secondary schools. Whereas classical schools aim to prepare students for higher education at university level, technical schools generally serve as an initiation into various professions. Horner and Weber (2008: 88) reveal that only 16.7% of young people successfully obtained the secondary school leaving diploma in 2005. French and German are among the school subjects that cause the highest number of fail rates (Council of Europe 2006: 19). Whereas students from Romance-speaking immigrant communities such as the Portuguese and Italians excel in French and struggle with the acquisition of German, ethnically Luxembourgish students are faced with the opposite scenario (Council of Europe 2006: 19).

Luxembourgish is the native language for the vast majority of ethnically Luxembourgish children and extensively serves as a medium of communication between Luxembourgish-speaking children and their peers originating from various immigrant communities. Redinger (2009) draws attention to largely positive attitudes towards the inclusion of Luxembourgish as a school subject as well as a language of instruction in a study of language attitudes among Luxembourgish, Portuguese and Italian residents in Luxembourg. Moreover, in an ongoing ethnographic study of language use inside the classroom, the author is documenting extensive code-switching practices between the official media of instruction (i.e., French or German) and Luxembourgish (Redinger, forthcoming). Despite its official exclusion from language in education policies, Luxembourgish is frequently used in classroom interactions between students and teachers. This phenomenon is not surprising as Luxembourgish is extensively employed as a medium of communication in informal as well as many formal contexts such as parliamentary debates, political speeches and broadcasting media. Consequently, despite its official exclusion from the

education system as a medium of instruction and its token representation as a taught school subject, Luxembourgish plays a major unofficial role in the students and teachers' daily lives. The following analysis of official policy documents and interview data with Luxembourg's Minister of Education will allow for insights to be gained into the reasons underlying the ongoing lack of support for Luxembourgish in the education system.

3.1 The stance of the policy makers

In 2007, Luxembourg's Ministry of Education published a document entitled *Réajustement de l'enseignement des langues Plan d'action 2007-2009* outlining 66 measures for the improvement of language in education policies and providing details regarding the status and role of various languages in Luxembourg's education system. In relation to the status of Luxembourgish in the education system the authorities claim the following:

Il est clair que le luxembourgeois joue un rôle important dans la vie sociale du pays. Actuellement la langue luxembourgeoise ne pose de façon directe aucun problème scolaire. Il faut donc veiller à ce qu'elle n'en devienne pas. (Ministry of Education 2007: 51)¹

This statement depicts the contradictory stance of the authorities as they simultaneously acknowledge the importance of Luxembourgish and express a reluctance to increase its use and status in the education system due to a fear that this may cause problems. Concrete measures to increase the teaching of Luxembourgish consist of introducing language related activities in youth clubs. Further plans include widening the study of contemporary Luxembourgish authors writing in either Luxembourgish, French or German and introducing school students to Luxembourgish culture through theatre and cinema related activities (Ministry of Education 2007: 51-52). However, these language planning activities are all characterised by a lack of support for the systematic teaching of Luxembourgish as part of the curriculum.

The allusion to the potentially negative consequences of strengthening the role of Luxembourgish in the education system can be related to the

¹ 'It is clear that Luxembourgish plays an important role in Luxembourg's society. Currently, Luxembourgish does not pose any direct problems in the education system. We, therefore, have to ensure that it does not become a problem' (my translation).

competitive relationship which continues to exist between Luxembourgish on the one hand and French and German on the other hand. In an interview carried out by the author, Luxembourg's Minister of Education describes the continuing tensions between Luxembourgish, French and German and indicates that a difference in status between the three officially recognised languages continues to shape educational policies.

Beim Lëtzebuergeschen schingt et mir evident dass een et muss verstoen a schwätzen net onbedingt korrekt schreiwe kënnen an do soen ech all Kand wat duerch de Lëtzeboier Schoulsystem geet muss op manst Däitsch oder Franséisch gutt kënnen [...] well bon dat sinn awer lo déi Sproochen mat denen ee säi Liewe muss maachen.²

Luxembourgish clearly remains restricted to the spoken domain whereas French and German are described as languages which fulfil instrumental functions. No change in the minds of the policy makers can therefore be noticed as French and German continue to play a more important role than Luxembourgish even after its official recognition in 1984. The rationale underlying the current medium of instruction policies to provide students with an adequate competence in French and German to enable them to enrol in university education abroad is reflected in the Minister's explanation. The Minister of Education stresses the challenging consequences of Luxembourg's multilingual situation for its education system when expressing her doubts regarding the inclusion of Luxembourgish in the curriculum.

Mir sinn schon ee Land wat immens vill Stonnen also vill Zäit vun der Schoulzäit op d'Sprooche konzentréieren mat dem Resultat dass Sciencen vernoléisseg ginn, net genuch Sport an der Schoul ass. Wa mer lo nach soen mir müssen nach vergréisseren d'Offer u Sproochen also dann dat ass d'Schwieregkeet.³

² 'In the case of Luxembourgish it seems to be clear to me that it is important to be able to understand and speak it without necessarily having to be able to write it correctly. And then I would say that every child going through Luxembourg's education system must at least have a good command of German or French [...] because these are after all the languages necessary to get through life' (my translation).

³ 'We are a country that dedicates many hours, a large proportion of the school hours, to languages with the result that sciences are neglected and we do not have enough sport at school. If we now claim that we have to increase the offer of language teaching, that will be very difficult' (my translation).

The continuing exclusion of Luxembourgish from the education system does not seem to be motivated by negative feelings towards Luxembourgish itself but rather by a reluctance to detract focus from the two major European languages, French and German, which have dominated Luxembourg's education system for several centuries. This dilemma can provide an explanation for the lack of support for Luxembourgish despite the authorities' acknowledgement of the importance of Luxembourgish and the extreme marginalisation of the national language in the education system. Moreover, official Ministry discourses are filled with an emphasis on multilingual education practices and the lack of support for Luxembourgish may be motivated by fears that such a monolingual focus will be interpreted as a lack of commitment to multilingual education. The unequivocal support for multilingual education is reflected in the Minister of Education's description of the highly multilingual nature of Luxembourg's current education system.

Eise Schoulsystem an do hale mer dru fest ass plurilingue; d'Äntwert ass net eng Sprooch oder di aner.⁴

While the Luxembourg authorities take pride in the country's highly multilingual education system, they acknowledge the negative outcomes of this system for the majority of the student population.

Le plurilinguisme sera donc pour les uns un enrichissement, il augmentera leur capital culturel, leur donnera des facilités de communiquer et de participer à la vie culturelle de différents pays. Cependant pour les autres, il aura une nature sévèrement stigmatisée, il sera véritablement un déclencheur d'une carrière négative. (Ministry of Education 2005: 107)⁵

⁴ 'Our education system is multilingual; the answer to our problem does not consist of choosing one language over another' (my translation).

⁵ 'For some, multilingualism constitutes an enrichment, it will increase their cultural resources and give them abilities to communicate and participate in the culture of different countries. However, for others it will be seriously stigmatised and constitute a trigger for a 'negative career' (my translation).

La réussite dans le système luxembourgeois est réservée à une élite sociale qu'il a tendance à reproduire. (Ministry of Education 2005: 92)⁶

4. Discussion

Multilingual education emerges as an asset for a minority of students who manage to successfully complete their education in Luxembourg. However, the majority of students demonstrate considerable difficulties with the challenging linguistic requirements of Luxembourg's education system. The continued reluctance of the authorities to teach and/or employ Luxembourgish as a medium of instruction constitutes a surprising development as Luxembourgish has not only been the country's national language since 1984 but also functions as the native language for the vast majority of Luxembourgish-born residents and is largely spoken by the various immigrant communities with younger generations generally showing higher degrees of proficiency. However, the ethnically diverse composition of Luxembourg's population poses a considerable challenge for language policy makers. In 2007, 41% of Luxembourg's population were represented by migrants originating from various countries as was previously outlined. Weber (2009) draws attention to the marginalisation of Portuguese immigrants in Luxembourg's education system due to the system's emphasis on German as a language of alphabetisation and medium of instruction in primary and parts of secondary education and its later focus on standard French. According to Weber, the Luxembourg education system fails to build on the vernacular French competence which many Portuguese students have acquired outside the educational context and he advocates a two-track educational system where students can choose between a German-literacy and a French-literacy path (Weber 2009: 66). As immigrant students from Romance-speaking backgrounds tend to excel in French and Luxembourgish students largely demonstrate considerable ease with the acquisition and use of German, a two-track system is frequently seen to work against successful integration of immigrants in popular discourses. Weber (2009) argues that fears concerning threats to cultural cohesion and ghettoisation which are often associated with a two-track system of this type could be alleviated by bringing together students enrolled in both literacy options in mixed language classes.

⁶ 'Success in the Luxembourgish system is reserved for a social elite which the system tends to reproduce' (my translation).

According to Weber (2009: 67) the introduction of a two-track system would be followed by a decline in fail rates as students would be taught in a language which they know well as opposed to a language which poses considerable difficulties for them. Interestingly, the proposed two-track system does not make any provision for increased teaching or use of Luxembourgish and therefore does not mark a substantial move away from the current focus on internationally recognised languages (i.e., French and German). In the current as well as the proposed two-track system, the vast majority of the student population is taught in languages other than their native language. However, Luxembourgish is extensively used in schools by both teachers and students as is being documented in an ongoing study of language choice in Luxembourgish secondary school classrooms carried out by the author. This phenomenon, in combination with the positive attitudes towards a potentially increased use of Luxembourgish in the education system (Redinger 2009), suggests that the official inclusion of Luxembourgish in the education system may help to improve educational attainment among Luxembourg's student population.

The analysis of the various policy extracts and interview statements demonstrates that the reluctance of the authorities to increase the status and use of Luxembourgish in education is motivated by worries that this development will detract from the importance of French and German and may have a negative impact on the students' mastery of these languages. The current system's emphasis on foreign language teaching and the use of multiple languages of instruction is, therefore, based on the concept of maximal exposure to foreign languages as a prerequisite for their successful acquisition. However, extensive exposure to foreign languages becomes a less urgent concern for policy makers when children receive effective mother-tongue education in combination with good subject teaching in the relevant foreign majority languages (Skutnabb-Kangas 2000: 576). An increase in the use and status of Luxembourgish in education is further complicated by the incomplete standardisation and codification of the language and a need for teaching and learning materials in Luxembourgish.

The reasons underlying the continuing lack of support for Luxembourgish after its official recognition as Luxembourg's national language in 1984 are extremely complex and rooted in a long-lasting competitive relationship between a contact variety (i.e., Luxembourgish) and its two bordering major European languages (i.e., French and German). The language law in 1984 must

be interpreted as an act of status planning resulting from a long and complex development of Luxembourgish as a language of identity. Historical events extending over hundreds of years can be seen to culminate in the ratification of the language law in 1984. At the time, the official recognition of Luxembourg's contact dialect as its national language marked a promising development for the status of the language. However, the continuing exclusion of Luxembourgish from certain formal domains such as the education system considerably weakened the significance of this language policy act and draw attention to the fact that in relation to its two internationally recognised competitors, French and German, Luxembourgish still bears more resemblance to a 'marginal dialect' than to a national language. Nevertheless, the increasing spoken use of Luxembourgish in other formal domains such as parliamentary debates and political speeches shows that Luxembourgish is slowly infiltrating official domains which were exclusively reserved for French and/or German in the past. Moreover, the ongoing codification of Luxembourgish under the control of the *Conseil Permanent de la Langue Luxembourgeoise* (Permanent Council for the Luxembourgish language) created in 1998 demonstrates that Luxembourgish continues to develop both politically and linguistically.

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