

# University of Luxembourg

## Final Conference DigiFam

16 th April, 2024  
Black Box, Maison des  
Sciences Humaines,  
University of  
Luxembourg



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# DigiFam

Globalisation and the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated and expanded the use of digital media for various purposes such as language and literacy learning. This article written by Maria Antonina Obojska and Potheini Vaiouli which Final Conference takes place today, provides real evidence of the role and the approach of digital media in transnational families in Luxembourg, supported by an exhaustive literature review. Luxembourg is an ideal setting for this research due to its high number of Internet users and non-national population.



# Program 16th April, 2024

**09:00-09:15 - Registration & Coffee**

**09:15-09:30 - Welcome!**

Claudine Kirsch & Maria Obojska

## **09:30-10:15 Digital Media as Language and Literacy Learning Spaces in Multilingual Families in Luxembourg – project results.**

Maria Obojska. University of Luxembourg.  
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“Recent sociolinguistic research shows that transnational families offer their members unique safe spaces for language and literacy learning. With the growing availability and accessibility of digital technologies, many of these families draw on digital media in their language learning endeavours. The recent COVID-19 pandemic intensified these practices, as virtually all learning moved to the online infrastructures. Yet, as of today, there is little systematic knowledge on how digital media are used by transnational families to facilitate language and literacy learning. Focusing on the context of multilingual Luxembourg, the DigiFam project addresses this knowledge gap by first exploring how multilingual families learn languages with digital media. In this talk, we first discuss the results of the DigiFam survey conducted among parents of multilingual families on the topic of learning languages with digital media. Thereafter, we shift focus to the preliminary results of the series of case studies conducted with 5 families.

Our survey data suggest that digital media are used for language learning in all the studied families. While the type of activities performed, languages learnt and frequency of use vary across generations, virtually all family members draw on digital technologies for their language learning endeavours. The qualitative data from 5 participating families, illustrate in more detail what the daily language learning practices of the family members look like. The interviews, screenshots and recordings of learning practices of our participants show that the language learning practices with digital media are complex and involve both formal and informal types of learning at home”.

## **10:15-10:30 Coffee break.**

# Multiliteracies at home and educational institutions

**10:30-11:00** **Toddlers, tech and heritage language learning at home: emergent findings from the Toddlers, Tech and Talk project.**

Rosie Flewitt, University of Manchester.  
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“In this paper, I present emerging findings from the ongoing, ESRC-funded study ‘Toddlers, Tech and Talk’, which focuses on the under-researched phenomenon of how digital technologies shape 0-36-month-old children’s early talk and literacy experiences at home in diverse minority and majority communities across the UK. I’ll outline the study design and briefly discuss how our reflections on ethics have been central to our endeavour to respond flexibly and imaginatively to the preferences of ethnically and socio-economically diverse families.

Focussing on our work with multilingual families, I’ll discuss how very young children enact rich translanguaging repertoires (Wei and Lee, 2023) as they interact with distant family and friends via social media as part of their family’s rich media and linguistic ecology.

Our theoretical approach brings translanguaging into conversation with posthuman theorisation to consider the ecological relations between human and non-human, material actants that characterise contemporary home learning environments (Flewitt and Clark, 2020), and to illustrate how social media can enrich opportunities for very young children’s emergent heritage language learning (Zhao & Flewitt 2020)”.

# Multiliteracies at home and educational institutions

**11:00-11:30** Children's experiences with multiliteracies in crèches and at home.

Claudine Kirsch, University of Luxembourg.  
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“Programmes of multilingual education in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) are promising because they can contribute to the development of children’s language and literacy skills and their multilingual identities. In Luxembourg, where the data for this presentation come from, a multilingual programme has been implemented in ECEC that requires educators to familiarize children with Luxembourgish and French and value their home languages, for instance in literacy activities.

In this paper, I present shared reading practices in two centres with children aged two to four and zoom in on two bilingual children’s shared reading at home. The analysis of the video-recorded practices indicates, firstly, that the educators in both centres translanguaged when reading, but that the reading practices differed in the quantity and quality of talk, with the educators in one centre being more responsive to children’s needs. Secondly, the comparison between the centre-based and home-based reading practices reveals that the language use of the parents and the interaction patterns between adults and children differed.

Nevertheless, the four-year-old was not asked higher-level questions in any setting. I argue that it is important that professionals and parents are aware of the benefits of dialogic reading and particularly of the need to engage children in deeper conversations about the text”.

**11:30-11:45** Break

# Multiliteracies at home and educational institutions

**11:45-12:05 Home literacy environment and family language policy of multilingual families in Luxembourg.**

Gabrijela Aleksic, University of Luxembourg.  
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“In this presentation, I will talk about home literacy environment (HLE) and family language policy (FLP) of multilingual families in Luxembourg. HLE and FLP are essential for preschool children’s (multi)literacy development, a base for their school success. While there has been a plethora of studies in both HLE and FLP mainly in the bilingual settings, this is the first study that has been conducted in a highly multilingual context offering findings from 600 parent questionnaires and 32 parent interviews, and thus new insights to both domains. In the first part of the presentation,

I will focus on HLE and present the quantitative findings stemming from the parent questionnaires followed by the results from the thematic analysis of the parent interviews. In the second part, the focus will be on FLP of multilingual families where I will present the findings from thematic and discourse analysis based on parent interviews”.

# Multiliteracies at home and educational institutions

**12:05-12:25 Family language policy embedded in the homescape in Franco-Chinese transnational families: initiating children's Chinese literacy.**

Nanfei Wang, SEDYL Laboratory (CNRS-INALCO-IRD).  
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“This presentation discusses a study of family language policy (King et al., 2008; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009), specifically in transnational families. The focus is on how parents connect their homescape (Boivin, 2020; Melo-pfeifer, 2022) to their children's home language literacy development (Marsh, 2003; Stavans, 2012; Said, 2021).

The study aims to uncover parents' language management and beliefs embedded in the design of their homescape. The research involved a two-year-long ethnographic case study of three Franco-Chinese families residing in France. It included sound recordings of family interactions, photographs of families' homescape, and in-depth interviews with family members.

The Findings suggest that homescape can be highly visible, semi-visible, or multimodal and can serve as a literacy development resource. The results also indicate that the homescape reflects family language policy concerning parents' language education choices, expectations and goals for their children's literacy development”.

**12:25-13:30 Lunch break**



# Ethical and methodological considerations in researching multilingualism and multiliteracies online

**13:30-14:00 Collaborative approaches in the study of multilingual digital interaction.**

Kristin Vold Lexander, Innland Norway University of Applied Sciences. kristin.lexander@inn.no

“Recent developments in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics bring with them a need for methodological innovation towards more collaborative approaches in the study of multilingual communication in the online/offline nexus. We require methods that inform research when it comes to speakers’ conceptions and practices of language and that treat the digital as an integrated part of people’s language practices, recognizing ‘that the digital has ceased to be a salient or disruptive element in society’ (Tagg & Lyons, 2022, p. 15).

In this context, mediagrams have been developed for research in families (Lexander & Androutsopoulos, 2023) and later applied to study digital multilingual workplace communication and home-school interactions (Thyiness & Lexander, 2023).

In my talk, I discuss the use of mediagrams in these three domains, focusing on how this visualization tool can be used to enhance the collaboration between researchers and research participants and to increase the participatory dimension of the sociolinguistic research processes for the study of online multilingualism in a post-digital lens”.

# Ethical and methodological considerations in researching multilingualism and multiliteracies online

**14:00-14:30 Ethical and moral dilemmas in digital family data collection.**

Åsa Palviainen, University of Jyväskylä.  
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“In this talk, I will discuss some of the concrete situations and challenges that I and my colleagues have faced in research projects collecting digital and co-produced data in multilingual families.

At the very core is that “FLP [family language policy] research relies on relationships of trust between families and researchers; the collection of family conversations and interactions is an intimate process that reveals the personal life of families that is rarely on public display.” (Higgins & Wright 2022, p. 10, my italics). The relationship of trust involves that you, as a researcher, manage legal issues (following the law, such as the General Data Protection Regulation), are ethical (doing good and avoiding harm, maintaining confidentiality and ensuring consent), but also that you make moral decisions (evaluate what is right or wrong when assessing the research process).

By showcasing some authentic situations, I will demonstrate tensions which may appear at the intersection of trust, legality, ethics, and morality in qualitative digital family data collection, and also suggest solutions for some of the dilemmas”.

**14:30-14:45 Break**

# Ethical and methodological considerations in researching multilingualism and multiliteracies online

**14:45-15:05 Investigating linguistic repertoires with digital language journal: ethical and methodological reflections.**

Rafael Lomeu Gomes, Arctic University of Norway.  
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“Recent sociolinguistic approaches to the study of multilingualism in the home-school intersection have emphasised the suitability of biographical, visual methods of data generation. Yet, there is still a need for better understanding the challenges and affordances of digital tools to investigate the development of participants’ linguistic repertoires over time.

Based on ongoing fieldwork engagement initiated in April 2023 at an upper secondary school in Tromsø, Norway, in this presentation I share reflections on ethical and methodological dimensions of using current digital methods of data generation in ethnographically oriented projects. Particularly, I illustrate how the creation of a multimodal digital journal authored by a focal participant may serve as an entry point to examine the different ways in which their linguistic repertoire is used and reflected upon over time.

Furthermore, I discuss challenges and insights concerning the maintenance of participants’ continuous engagement and the (aspirational) creation of horizontal relationships with participants”.

# Ethical and methodological considerations in researching multilingualism and multiliteracies online

**15:05-15:25 Researching family multiliteracies using multimedia diaries with parents and children.**

Yin Ju. Univeristy of Göttingen. yin.yu@stud.uni-goettingen.de

“Digital technologies offer numerous opportunities and resources for language education, both in academic settings and within families. Multilingual families utilize a variety of digital media for their daily communication and language learning endeavors. To comprehensively study family language policy and children’s multiliterate practices, this study employs a combination of media diary with ethnographic observation and interviews.

This study aims to explore the multiliterate activities in which children engage at home and how these activities relate to the family language policy. Eleven families, comprising 17 children in kindergarten and the first year of primary school, participated in the study. Parents documented their children’s literacy-related activities involving various media over a one-week period, with a focus on the media used and the languages involved.

The results demonstrate that, in addition to traditional print materials, apps, online courses, and digital devices contribute significantly to children’s multilingual and multiliterate development, aligning with the goals of family language policy. The utilization of multimedia aids in the maintenance of heritage language and culture among multilingual transnational families”.

**15:25-15:40 Coffee break**

# DigiFam Final Conference - 16th April, 2024

**15:40-16:10 Panel discussion: Future Directions in the  
Study of Multilingualism and Multiliteracies**

**16:10-16:30 Closing**

# University of Luxembourg

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Campus Belval. Luxembourg.