Parental and Educator Attitudes Towards Multilingualism for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Quebec

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Abstract

This study examines the intersections of child language learning and disability. It took place in Quebec, Canada, and investigated attitudes regarding the importance of learning additional languages for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) among children's parents (n = 5) and teachers (n = 14). The study further looked at factors influencing these attitudes as well as the impact of these attitudes on parents' language use at home and teachers' practices in the classroom. Parents and teachers engaged in short online interviews ranging from 20 to 90 minutes. Through a process of transcription and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), participant data was inductively coded, recategorized, and formed into four themes related to participants' beliefs and behaviors regarding language education for children with SEND. Upon further analysis of these themes, one overarching theme was found. As a whole, it was found that parents and teachers held positive attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND and displayed the hallmarks of these attitudes through flexible language use and multilingual approaches with these children. However, neither parents nor teachers prioritized language learning opportunities, which always came second to accessing special education services in school. Often, the more specialized the services were that the children accessed, the less time was allocated to additional language teaching. Furthermore, language education was largely relegated to being the responsibility of parents, rather than an institutional and educational right for Quebec children with SEND. This study's findings clearly indicate that, without core institutional support to integrate language education and special education services, teachers and parents will prioritize special education services over language education.

Key words: multilingualism, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), special education, language attitudes

Résumé

La présente étude analyse la relation entre l'apprentissage de langues et les troubles d'apprentissage chez les enfants. La recherche a eu lieu au Québec, Canada, et a étudié les attitudes envers l'apprentissage de langues pour les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques et des troubles d'apprentissage, auprès de leurs parents (n = 5) et de leurs professeurs (n = 14). L'étude cherchait à comprendre les causes de ces attitudes ainsi que leurs effets sur l'usage des langues à la maison et dans les salles de classe. Des parents et professeurs ont participé à de courts entretiens en ligne, d'une durée de 20 à 90 minutes. À travers un processus de transcription et d'analyse thématique (Braun & Clarke, 2006), les données de participants ont été codées (à travers une méthode de codification inductive), recatégorisées et réorganisées en quatre thèmes portant sur l'éducation de langues portant sur l'éducation de langues pour les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques et des troubles d'apprentissage. Une analyse subséquente de ces thèmes a établi un thème commun. Cette analyse démontre que les parents et les professeurs ont exprimé des attitudes positives envers le multilinguisme pour les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques et des troubles d'apprentissage, ce qui se manifeste par un usage flexible de la langue et une approche multilingue avec ces enfants. Cependant, ni les parents ni les professeurs priorisaient les opportunités d'apprentissage de langues, celles-ci étant toujours considérées comme moins prioritaires que l'accès à des services d'éducation spécialisée à l'école. Souvent, plus les services auxquels les enfants accédaient étaient spécialisés, moins ils avaient de temps pour l'apprentissage de langues secondes. De plus, les parents considéraient l'apprentissage de langues comme étant leur seule responsabilité, et non un droit institutionnel et éducatif pour les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques et des troubles d'apprentissage au Québec. Ces recherches, basée sur les données recueillies, permettent d'établir la conclusion suivante : Sans un soutien institutionnel pour

intégrer l’éducation de langues avec les services d’éducation spécialisée, les professeurs et les parents vont prioriser les services d’éducation spécialisée plutôt que l’éducation aux langues.

Mots clés : multilinguisme, besoins spécifiques, éducation spécialisée, attitudes envers les langues

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Chapter 1. Introduction

There are increasing numbers of children across the globe who are being raised with more than one language, with over a half of the global infant population growing up in a multilingual environment (Novogrodsky & Meir, 2020). Children might be raised as multilinguals when the family and societal languages are different and when there is more than one language operating in society (Kircher et al., 2022).

In the province of Quebec in Canada, we see both phenomena. Quebec is, on the one hand, a French minority stronghold within the rest of Canada that has been committed to protecting the French language, and on the other hand, is a place of linguistic plurality and diversity, with a strong presence of English (Lamarre, 2013). The latter is most true for the city of Montreal within Quebec (Kircher et al., 2022). Regardless, English has no official status in the province and therefore accessing services such as education in English is not straightforward, despite there being a number of English-speaking communities scattered throughout the province (Kircher et al., 2022). However, English or French monolingualism is less common, especially in the city of Montreal where bilingualism in both French and English allows for better integration into all the city has to offer, including cultural offerings, employment, and schooling. Bilingualism is in particular a gateway to employment opportunities in the city of Montreal and throughout Canada, which is officially bilingual, omitting Quebec (Lamarre, 2013). Perhaps due to these employment opportunities, the growing immigrant population residing in the province is likely to learn the two societal languages with the aim of improving their employment prospects (Lamarre, 2013); the most recent census in the province reported French, English and another language to be the second most common languages combination spoken in Quebec homes, after French and English (Statistics Canada, 2023). Aside from the two official languages, the 2016 census reported

Arabic to have the highest number of speakers in Quebec homes, followed by Spanish and Italian (Statistics Canada, 2017).

As childhood multilingualism is increasingly commonplace in Quebec, inevitably there will be many children learning multiple languages who also have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), with around 20% of students enrolled in Quebec schools reported to have special needs in 2018 (Ducharme & Magloire, 2018). These may include learning difficulties, challenges with behaviour and emotions and language and communication disorders such as developmental language disorder (DLD) and autism spectrum disorder, (ASD) (Cheatham et al., 2012; Paradis et al., 2021). To date, uncertainties and concerns linger among parents, teachers, and professionals as to whether multiple language learning is appropriate for children with SEND (De Valenzuela et al., 2016; Quirk et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there is evidence that children with SEND can become multilingual and that balancing multiple language acquisition will not slow or compound development for these children (Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2016; Paradis et al., 2021; Pesco et al., 2016). In light of the situation in Quebec where many find it next to essential to speak both French and English as well as *heritage languages* (see definition in Chapter 4. Literature Review), children with SEND, just like their typically developing peers, may require two or three languages in order to participate in the many contexts they encounter with their family and friends and in society as a whole (Novogrodsky & Meir, 2020; Pesco et al., 2016).

Studies have shown that children with SEND have fewer options for additional language learning compared to their typically developing peers (De Valenzuela et al., 2016; Genesee, 2007; Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2016; Schüpbach, 2009). The first objective of this research study was to better understand this phenomenon. This study endeavoured to learn what attitudes parents have towards multilingualism for their children who have SEND and to

understand how this may influence their language planning and choices for these children both in the home and at school.

Furthermore, this study offers a general understanding of the language learning opportunities for children with SEND in schools in Quebec, as these opportunities also greatly impact the likelihood of their multilingual development (Pesco et al., 2016). This study therefore took a multi-dimensional approach by also unveiling teachers' attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND. The aim of examining teachers' attitudes was twofold: to gain awareness of what options and institutional support for multiple language learning were available for children with SEND; and to discern how teachers' attitudes might influence their classroom approach to multiple language exposure for children with SEND. Speaking with both parents and teachers, I aimed to learn what environmental impacts contributed to their attitudes.

An awareness of parental attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND, may indicate what further support parents need when making decisions for these children. This is important given the wide-ranging implications multilingualism could have for a child with SEND in Quebec, both in their personal and professional lives. An enhanced understanding of parent and teacher beliefs and attitudes can generate knowledge to better support the students themselves in the multilingual context. I chose to investigate parental and teacher attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND in order to grasp the extent to which these attitudes impact access to multilingual development for children with SEND, compared with other existing barriers at a wider societal or institutional level.

Chapter 2. Historical Context

2.1. Language Planning and Policy in Quebec

In the 1960s through to the 1970s, subsequent Quebecois governments oversaw a watershed social transformation in the province of Quebec, spearheaded by a French nationalist movement which took control from the French clergy and anglophone bourgeoisie (Oakes, 2008). This widespread social change has become known as the Quiet Revolution; “quiet” because of a marked lack of violence between groups as power changed hands (Endleman, 1995). This chapter will explore the implications this had for language planning and policy in the region, with the impacts lasting up to the present day.

The Quiet Revolution was ultimately a protracted battle to impose French as the dominant language in all spheres of life, in the hope of securing a protected nationalist identity through assimilating the entire population of the province (Oakes, 2008). In the wake of rapid industrialization in the ’60s, rural Catholic and francophone farming communities who had already begun an exodus to the city of Montreal, were facing the dominating English-speaking elite in this swelling urban hub. The seeds of discontent were planted due to social inequity between anglophone and francophone populations, with English monolingual males earning around 20 per cent more than francophone men for example (Endleman, 1995; Oakes, 2008).

This was soon to change. The puppeteers behind the slow but momentous social changes were a growing French-speaking professional class as well as the French working class (Endleman, 1995). They mobilized to leverage political power, increasing pressure on the government to pass transformative language laws (Endleman, 1995).

The drive to protect the French language and culture also stemmed from the dramatic decline in birth rates among the francophone community in Quebec and dwindling numbers of the francophone minority in Canada as a whole (Bourhis & Foucher, 2012). Prior to the

Quiet Revolution, birth rates in the province were especially high compared to the rest of Canada. This was a result of pro-natalist government policies, greatly influenced by the Catholic church and its traditional values within rural societies (Krull & Trovato, 2003). The government, swayed by the Catholic Church, sought for Quebec to remain its own unique enclave with a distinct identity from the rest of Canada. They operated under the mantra of *la revanche des berceaux* (the revenge of the cradles) growing the Quebec population against the backdrop of modernization which was occurring in other Canadian provinces (Krull & Trovato, 2003).

Therefore, facing a sudden drop in fertility rates, Quebec came to rely on immigrant populations for growth and even for the survival of the French language. Nevertheless, a future with a largely French-speaking populace could not be guaranteed without changing the language practices of immigrant groups, who frequently opted to enrol their children in schools taught through English, the language associated with power and money in North America (Oakes, 2008). The government therefore began to create laws to promote the use of the French language in the main domains of life: legislation, public services, the workplace, business, and education (Oakes, 2008). I will mainly focus on the impacts this had upon language instruction and education.

A late 20th century amendment to the Canadian Constitution realigned the organization of Quebec school boards on the basis of language, rather than religion, separated into those offering French-medium instruction and those offering English-medium instruction (Lachapelle et al., 2017); this paved the way for greater controls over languages education in the province. Bill 101, or the Charter of the French Language passed in 1977 by the recently elected *Parti Québecois*, was a monumental piece of language legislation and the culmination of previous unsatisfactory attempts to change the linguistic landscape by prior governments. Chapter eight of the Charter mandates that children are required to be educated in French

from kindergarten until they leave secondary school (Charter of the French Language, 1977). Enrolment in English schools was originally delimited to children with parents who had previously been to an elementary English school in Quebec (Hamers & Hummel, 1994). Children arriving from outside of Quebec were from that point on obliged to enter the French school system, and newcomers' freedom to choose their children's language of instruction essentially ended (Oakes, 2008). However, the initial limits for Canadian citizens were later challenged and subsequent changes meant that parents who had received elementary schooling in English across Canada, not only in Quebec, could be eligible to enrol their child in an English school (Oakes, 2008). Another strand of Bill 101 announced French was to become the language of the workplace, and larger companies needed certification to prove they operated in French (Endleman, 1995). Nevertheless, the intrinsic value of English did not wane in the province despite its official relegation to minority status, due to the continued economic importance of national and multinational companies and the status of English in scientific and academic research communications (Endleman, 1995).

Rates of French and English bilingualism have been on the rise in Quebec since Bill 101 was implemented (Leimgruber, 2019). The 2006 Canadian census highlights an increase of francophones who speak English as a second language in Quebec from 26% in 1971 to 36% (Bourhis & Foucher, 2012) and a further rise in the 2016 census (Statistics Canada, 2016). In the past, the city of Montreal had clearly distinguished anglophone and francophone communities and neighbourhoods. However, francophones and anglophones now tend to live in closer proximity and to interact more at school and in their environs (Advisory Board on English Education, 2010). Intermarriages have further blurred the lines between francophone and anglophone communities (Advisory Board on English Education, 2010). Similarly, the number of reported English-French bilinguals from anglophone households rose from 37% in 1971 to 69% in 2006 (Bourhis & Foucher, 2012) and then reached 71% by 2016 (Statistics

Canada, 2016). In increasing numbers, children from English speaking families are learning French in the form of *additive bilingualism* (Bourhis & Foucher, 2012) which is a form of additional language acquisition that supports continued development of a learner's other languages (Lambert, 1973).

Those whose first language is neither French nor English are also reporting increasing use of both languages, from 33% in 1971 to 50.2% in 2006 (Bourhis & Foucher, 2012) and 51% by 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016), meaning that there are more trilingual speakers in the city. Especially on the island of Montreal, a blend of French and English in daily life is increasingly common, dependent on the community (Ballinger, 2017). In these circumstances, children may identify with both official linguistic communities and participate in the social and cultural domains of both, resulting in more parents seeking balanced instruction for their children in both languages (Advisory Board on English Education, 2010).

2.2. Quebec Education System and Language Instruction

From the late 19th century, the education system in Quebec was a dual system governed by the Protestant and Catholic religious denominations and their respective confessional school boards (Lachapelle et al., 2017). During the Quiet Revolution, the power of the Catholic church dwindled in Quebec, and the province experienced almost complete secularization of public systems by the 1960s (Leimgruber, 2019). The education system began its process of secularization from 1964 (Ghosh, 2004; Lachapelle et al., 2017). In 1997, an act established separate public French and English school systems to replace the dual Protestant and Catholic systems, and the reconfiguration came into effect the following year (Leimgruber, 2019).

Currently, public schools in Quebec's school system are governed by school service centres and school boards, which work within the confines of a specific regional area and which are made up of parents, students, staff, and members of the public (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2023). This system consists of 60 French language service centres, 1 special school

service centre[1], 9 English language school boards, and 2 special status school boards (*Gouvernement du Québec*, 2023). Furthermore, Quebec has the highest number of private school enrolments in North America due to many of these schools being subsidized by the government (Ourkids The Trusted Source, n.d.). Finally, there are some non-subsidized private schools, with higher tuition fees. As the government does not support them, these schools have more freedom and can offer English-medium schooling to children who are unable to obtain a certificate of eligibility for English-medium education in subsidized or public schools (Lachapelle et al., 2017).

The Charter of the French Language, or Bill 101, remains the most influential piece of legislation affecting school attendance trends. English school attendance is permitted only if a child has at least one parent who attended an elementary English school in Canada; has certification for a severe learning difficulty or for experiencing a humanitarian crisis; resides in the province on a temporary basis; or was schooled in a language other than French within an Indigenous community (*Éducaloi*, 2024).

Both the French and English systems offer some form of instruction in the other language. In the French school system, English as a Second Language (ESL) began as an offer from Grade 4 continuing through the five years of secondary education (Lightbown & Spada, 1994). The recommended number of hours assigned to ESL instruction from the Ministry of Education was 120 minutes for Grades 4, 5 and 6 and then a further 150 minutes in secondary school, although in practice school boards have not always offered the maximum advised amount (Lightbown & Spada, 1994). Lightbown and Spada (1994) describe how parents have expressed concerns in the past, regarding a lack of ESL provision in French schools, which has failed to equip students with adequate English proficiency for

[1] *The Centre de services scolaire du Littoral* operates across a unique geographical location, with bilingual services for both French and English communities in this area (from Kegaska to Blanc-Sablon)(Centre de services scolaire du Littoral, n.d.).

certain education and employment pathways. From 2006, a change to the Education Act introduced compulsory ESL in Grade 1 and 2 to improve this provision in schools. In addition, an innovative program of intensive English was developed from the late 1980's by local school boards and has since expanded. However, these programs are largely oversubscribed. On this program, Grade 5 or 6 students receive 5 months of intensive English language learning through communicative and project-based instruction, putting all other subjects on hold to be resumed in the second part of the school year (Lightbown & Spada, 1994). Only English public schools may offer either an English/French bilingual program or French immersion (Ballinger et al., 2022), where French is taught through school subjects rather than specific language courses. There are also English schools offering a variety of French as a Second Language (FSL) programs.

Essentially, the implementation of Bill 101 has had a transformational impact on the demographics of the public school system (McAndrew & Lamarre, 1996) with the effects still visible today. French schools became multi-ethnic from 1977 as all immigrant children, who may have previously joined an English school, were required to attend a French school (Advisory Board on English Education, 2010). As a result of these changes as well as the shift to linguistic school boards, the number of English school boards has reduced by half since 1971, with two school boards serving the island of Montreal and a further seven serving the wider provincial area (Advisory Board on English Education, 2010). Numbers have declined in admissions to English language schools. Anglophone parents are often choosing to enrol their children in a French school even when they meet English school eligibility. This way, they are taught through French and assumed to obtain a higher proficiency in the language in preparation to live in the province (Ballinger et al., 2022). The reverse is evident in French speaking communities off the central island (Advisory Board on English Education, 2010). The seven English school boards operating outside of Montreal teach a

student population which is one third French. Some francophone parents may wish their children to attend this setting to maximize dual language competence, which is possible when parents meet the eligibility criteria of having attended an English elementary school in Canada. (Advisory Board on English Education, 2010).

2.3. Immigration

From the second half of the 20th century, Quebec's population has increasingly been propped up by flows of immigration (Bakhshaei, 2015). At the beginning of this time period, the population showed generally encouraging attitudes towards immigration based on previously described concerns regarding low birth rates in the province (Ghosh, 2004). Continued global movements of people to the province has diversified the cultural and linguistic landscape, first and foremost in the city of Montreal (Ballinger et al., 2022). Over 21% of Montrealers speak three languages, which is the highest rate of trilingualism among Canadian cities (Statistics Canada, 2016). Therefore, in addition to being perceived as distinctly *bi*lingual, the city of Montreal has become known for its *multi*lingualism.

Bill 101 instigated significant change for the lives of immigrants in the province (Leimgruber, 2019). For many, the public language of school and work changed from English to French. There was an influx of immigrants to French schools, especially in the city of Montreal where the largest proportion of the immigrant population in the province had settled. School communities changed from mainly francophone Catholic to multicultural, multi-ethnic, and linguistically diverse student populations. In response, the province was tasked with a pressing need to integrate diverse communities (Oakes, 2008), and following Bill 101 *classes d'accueil* (welcome classes) were introduced within French schools. These are smaller classes, separate from the main classroom, for non-Francophone pupils who have been in Quebec for less than five years (McAndrew, 2003). These students would not follow the school curriculum but instead focus on learning about life in Quebec and the French

language with the aim to integrate into the mainstream classroom within around one year (McAndrew, 2003).

Government-led efforts to offer heritage language support have been minimal although some options emerged under the *programme d'enseignment des langues d'origine (PELO)* or the Heritage Language Instruction Program funded by the Ministry of Education (Ballinger et al., 2022; McAndrew, 2003). This program proposed non-official language instruction, predominantly for primary students, out of school hours (Aravossitas et al., 2022). However, the 1998 PELO program was unevenly implemented between schools in the province (McAndrew, 2003). Ballinger et al. (2022) found heritage language speaking parents to be dissatisfied with the provisions. They wished to see better resources and language maintenance support in schools.

In greater Canada, the model for the integration of immigrants from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, is one of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism officially promotes equality for all groups and a respect for and understanding of cultural difference with efforts directed towards ensuring difference is not barrier to accessing the social, political and economic spheres of life (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). Meanwhile, Quebec has developed a policy of interculturalism (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018).

Interculturalism officially promotes respect for and interaction with diverse groups, but not necessarily equality between them because of the "supremacy of French in the language and culture of Quebec" (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018, p.16). This framework does not tolerate discrimination and accepts all groups yet differentiates from the "Canadian multicultural mosaic" (Oakes & Warren, 2007, p.29). Everyone is expected to work towards a common public goal to uphold and maintain the French language (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). Ballinger et al. (2022) found that some parents from heritage language backgrounds

felt a model of interculturalism prioritized French language at the expense of promoting cultural diversity in schools (Ballinger et al., 2022).

2.4 Special Education

In 2000, a new policy regarding special education was put into effect by the Ministry of Education, "Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students." This remains the key policy guidance for special education (Towle, 2015). The policy proscribes integration into regular classrooms wherever possible and pivots towards a case-by-case individualized approach, devolving autonomy to schools to identify student needs and implement the appropriate response (*Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*, 2007). The policy was intended to encourage decisions to be taken by those closest to the child in question, specific to their varied needs rather than based on labels or whether a "student belongs to a particular special needs category,"(*Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*, 2007, p.3). The policy follows an amendment of the Education Act in 1998 which gave schools more power of autonomy. Notwithstanding the aim to integrate students into the regular classroom if possible, The Education Act also states that students are entitled to educational programs including complementary and special education services (*Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2007)*. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a strategy used across Canadian provinces, including Quebec, which involves drawing up targeted educational adjustments for students with additional needs for support and accommodation (Towle, 2015). An assessment for special needs is a prerequisite to obtaining an IEP in Quebec (Towle, 2015).

Students with special educational needs, disabilities, and learning difficulties have three main support routes in Quebec: (a) integration into the mainstream classroom along with in-class complementary and additional assistance; (b) special classes within regular schools offering smaller group settings for tailored support; or (c) a referral to an independent

special school catering to specific learning needs (*Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2007)*.

Unfortunately, in Quebec, recent media attention has spotlighted the lack of government funding directed towards special education services in elementary schools, suggesting that a child's right to complementary services, as stipulated in the Education Act, is not always being honoured (The Canadian Press, 2022). These schools often lack sufficient support staff to meet student needs or to provide services in special education and speech and language therapy (The Canadian Press, 2022).

This chapter has contextualised present day language education policies in Quebec and how they have developed from the 1960s, with a focus on the implications of Bill 101 for language learning in the province. Furthermore, this chapter explained the key features of the Quebec school system and of special education services within that system. The following chapter will provide a thorough overview of the literature in relation to this study.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

This chapter will outline the theoretical framework underpinning my study. The following theoretical standpoints detailed below and understood through a thorough search of the literature, informed, and explain the rationale for the study I then undertook.

3.1. Family Language Policy

The presence of the two societal languages in Québec, each with their own unique value, has meant bilingual child-rearing is a common practice in the province. Moreover, there are increasing numbers of children raised multilingual, learning a language in addition to the two official languages, with 26% of households in Quebec reporting the use of French, English and another language at home in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2023) . Although French is the sole official language and English is of official minority status, English possesses unquestionable utilitarian value. Learning both languages is an asset to full participation in Quebec society and for future opportunities in North America. Furthermore, popular English cultural imports make it an attractive linguistic resource to younger generations, with exposure being almost unavoidable (Ballinger et al., 2022).

Heritage languages (HLs) are those which are spoken in the home, alternative to those spoken in society (Bilash, 2009), and in Canada, the term usually refers to languages other than English, French, or Indigenous languages (Aravossitas et al., 2022). HL is a term in increasing use in research, alongside community or international languages (Aravossitas et al., 2022). Many first- or second-generation immigrant parents pass on their HLs to their children for multiple reasons (Schwartz, 2010a). There is research to suggest that there are cognitive benefits to growing up multilingually which could amount to academic and then economic advantages (Ahooja et al., 2022), and numerous studies have shown that skills in the first language (L1) can transfer across languages to improve second language (L2) learning (Verhoeven, 1994). Furthermore, knowledge of HLs can increase cultural capital in

certain spheres of life and promote “family cohesion” (Aravossitas et al., 2022, p.732) as well as help to develop self-esteem through a closer connection to one’s personal identity (Aravossitas et al., 2022).

However, maintaining HLs across generations is often a highly complex process, influenced by multiple factors. According to Fishman’s (1991) famous model regarding intergenerational language shifts, by the third generation within an immigrant family or community, HL competence will have all but disappeared in the face of the dominant societal language. This process could even occur in earlier generations, as children begin their schooling in societal languages (Ahooja et al., 2022), especially considering the Quebec context, where there are two other languages dominating societal discourse.

Family language policy (FLP) is a process of conscious planning for language use between family members (King et al., 2008). The field of study emerged from Spolsky’s (2004) tripartite framework which includes language practices, language beliefs, and language management. FLP can encompass all three of these aspects. Where language policy historically focused on institutional agendas, Spolsky (2012) highlights the domain of the family, a separate and intimate ecology. Within the family bubble, parents and other family members can assert great influence on languages spoken by children (Schwartz, 2010a). There have been various models touted as the optimal strategy for passing on a HL, such as the one-parent-one-language policy (Slavkov, 2017), first-language-first (Kopeliovich, 2013), and L1 only at home. However, recent research has revealed that many parents’ language practices are fluid in multilingual homes (Antony-Newman, 2022) and that whilst parents may endorse ideologies about the right way to pass on a language, this doesn’t always reflect the reality of their daily communication practices (Schwartz, 2010a). Spolsky has called schools “one of the most powerful institutions attempting to influence the family domain” (2012, p.5). In fact, studies have shown that schools have an immense impact on FLP after

infancy, especially because of the powerful role of peer influence when children begin to form new speech communities at school, seek a sense of belonging and are socialized into these groups (Schwartz, 2010b; Slavkov, 2017). Language socialization can be understood in the way it "shapes children's language development by situating it within social and cultural norms, beliefs and practices" (Slavkov, 2017, p.3). In Tuominen's (1999) study looking at language transmission in multilingual families in the United States, she found that school-age children are "socializing their parents instead of being socialized by them" to try and enforce societal norms they learnt outside of the home within the family context (p.73). Essentially, without the overt transmission of HLs to the next generation in some planned form, HL language loss is inevitable in a process of *subtractive bilingualism*. Subtractive bilingualism sees the HL replaced by a more powerful societal language (Lambert, 1973). This may undermine a parent's initial intentions and may be damaging to parent and child relations (De Houwer, 2007).

Initially, researchers in the field of FLP investigated European families raising their children with two languages, however the field has recently expanded (King et al., 2008). Hua and Wei (2016) presented three case studies on transnational families residing in the UK and found that less attention should be paid to overall patterns of language change and more to the unique and multidimensional experience of each family, or "why they feel the way they do and why they do things the way they do" (p.665). Similarly, King (2008) argues for a multidisciplinary approach to analyzing parental ideologies and their role in FLP.

Although the field has rapidly developed in recent years, there is scant literature investigating FLP among families raising children with learning difficulties and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in either bilingual or multilingual family contexts. Language planning in the home adds to parental anxiety and stress (Piller & Gerber, 2021, p.622) which may be compounded if a child also has a language impairment or

learning/developmental disability (Quirk et al., 2023). How this changes FLP decision-making for parents has not been adequately scrutinized in the literature. This requires investigation into both parental language attitudes and ideologies and the way they are affected by institutional opportunities for children with SEND.

3.2. Language Attitudes

An attitude is understood as "a disposition to respond favorably or unfavorably to an object, person, institution, or event" (Ajzen, 2005, p.3). Attitudes are considered to be tendencies or dispositions and therefore pose a challenge to research. Many researchers agree upon their three-part structure, comprising *affect:* how the object of an attitude makes one feel; *cognition:* beliefs around an object; and *conation:* the "behavioural intentions" and "actual behaviour" towards an object (Kircher & Zipp, 2022, p.4). Attitudes do not directly cause behaviours, but rather influence them within a melange of various other factors (Kircher et al., 2022). Consequently, language attitudes are understood as "any affective, cognitive or behavioural index of evaluative reactions towards different varieties and their speakers" (Ryan et al., 1982) to which Kircher and Zipp include their "users" to signify that language is not just a spoken set of rules, but which is also intimately linked to our identities in society (2022, p.4). These attitudes towards languages may impact choices related to which languages or varieties are learnt or passed on to future generations (Kircher, 2022; Kircher et al., 2022). Kircher and Zipp (2022) also argue that it is important to distinguish the concept of language ideologies from attitudes. According to them, ideologies are a community or group stance, whereas attitudes are made up of varying individual factors in addition to these community-based assumptions and feelings which are unique from one person to another.

Prior research has globally agreed on two main evaluative dimensions to language attitudes: *status* relating to societal importance and high utilitarian value (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) and *solidarity,* languages which invoke ingroup belonging (Kircher et al.,

2022). Ample research has been conducted into attitudes towards language varieties. However, attitudes towards multilingualism is a new area of research. Kircher et al. (2022) were the first to apply the universally acknowledged dimensions of status and solidarity to attitudes towards childhood multilingualism in Quebec and discovered that they too consisted of these dimensions. In addition, they found a further dimension—cognitive development— a belief that multiple language learning can entail improved cognitive functioning (Kircher et al., 2022). The researchers found parents' attitudes to be positive towards childhood multilingualism for infants or toddlers between 0-4 years old in the province and called for further research to build on this theory of an additional evaluative category (Kircher et al., 2022).

To build on these findings, research needs to be conducted into attitudes towards multilingualism for school-aged children, rather than just infants, for deeper insight into the course of changing attitudes, especially when the influence of the school is brought into the equation (Kircher et al., 2022).

3.3. A Multilingual Approach

In the last century, one of the most pressing and contentious issues facing languages pedagogy is the quantity of first language (L1) versus second language (L2) use in the second language classroom (Brown, 2021). One prevailing school of thought has been to prioritize as much L2 input as possible, with optimal learning happening in a model akin to, if not being, full immersion (Brown, 2021). This has informed countless in-school policies which ban L1 use in the L2 classroom (Debreli, 2016; McMillan & Rivers, 2011; Rivers, 2011) which has caused feelings of guilt and wrongdoing among teachers using the L1 (Copland & Neokleous, 2011; Gaebler, 2014) or attempts to conceal L1 use in the classroom from higher personnel (Debreli, 2016).

This is in contention with burgeoning research supporting L1 use in the classroom as an aid to behavioural management, building relationships, sharing jokes, instilling student confidence, and explaining grammar points or translating vocabulary for example (Brown, 2021). Furthermore, allowing students to access all languages in their repertoire can be both comforting when students cannot express themselves in the L2, and a token of pride for those students valued as multilingual in the classroom (Belz, 2002; McMillan & Rivers, 2011). In a study of French and Arabic beginner community language classes, Brown (2021) found that learner outcomes were improved through a multilingual compared to a monolingual teaching approach, at least at the beginner level. Studies have shown that these advantages in transfer of the L1 to L2 learning occur for non-typically developing children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as well as for typically developing children (Blom & Paradis, 2013; Cheatham et al., 2012). Research has shown teachers' attitudes to be favourable towards at least some L1 use to teach the L2 (Debreli, 2016; McMillan & Rivers, 2011) even if this view is in conflict with an overarching school policy, or if students themselves do not welcome these strategies (Brown, 2021; McMillan & Rivers, 2011).

L1 support in the classroom and multilingual approaches have, in this growing field of research, been defended and theorized from a range of standpoints and defined through varied terminology. Studies on code-switching (Green & Wei, 2014), plurilanguaging, plurilingual instruction (Galante, 2022; Piccardo, 2018), and translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011; García, 2011) have explored classroom practices and tested interventions. Teaching guides have been produced such as on the website "CUNY-New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals" (https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/) and the "Plurilingual Guide: Implementing Critical Plurilingual Pedagogy in Languages Education" (https://www.mcgill.ca/plurilinguallab/files/plurilinguallab/plurilingual_guide.pdf) which offer plentiful resources for teachers. On the other hand, institutional support is still lacking

in this area, and without adequate pre-service training and a fully cooperative administration, teachers are lacking in the guidance and confidence they need to incorporate L1 use into classroom teaching (Gaebler, 2014). Although much emphasis has been placed on teachers making the best judgements about when to employ the L1 (Gaebler, 2014; McMillan & Rivers, 2011), teachers feel ill-equipped in explaining the reasons for L1 use to students, who may reject their teachers' attempts, preferring to focus on the target language (Gaebler, 2014). In their approaches, teachers may be guessing, not fully committing themselves to one method or another, which may lead to confusion for students (Wang, 2019).

In the context of growing research into plurilingual practices in classrooms and the benefits of the use of the L1 to teach the L2 for *all* students, there is a need for more research into the opportunities for children with SEND to access these new pedagogies.

3.4. Disability Studies in Education and Inclusion

This study will employ the term disability in relation to Disabilities Studies (DS) and more specifically Disabilities Studies in Education (DSE). In the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights movement in the United States drew attention to the rights of people with disabilities (Baglieri et al., 2011). Overseas, in the UK, around the same time the Disabled People's Movement introduced the social model of disability, reframed from the medical model (Baglieri et al., 2011). The social model of disability argues that society has made the surrounding environment inaccessible for those with disabilities, rather than the problem residing in the individual themselves (Argyropoulos & Halder, 2019). In the following years, there was a surge of research working through the lens of DS from which DSE emerged. DS understands disability as deeply embedded in the social, historical, and cultural context and moment (Baglieri et al., 2011), and thus socially constructed (Connor et al., 2008). This model challenges a scientific and medical model, which pathologizes disability as a condition needing to be fixed. DSE understands disability to be a "social negation" (Connor et al., 2008

p.447) because identifying a person with a disability as different is based on a judgement which positions them against a socially constructed norm.

DSE encompasses a wide range of disciplines and approaches, with the social model as its core unifying factor (Connor et al., 2008). An interdisciplinary approach is encouraged, interfacing research in multicultural education for example (Connor et al., 2008) because disability is a "construct that interacts with other factors (e.g. ethnicity, race, class and gender) to produce inequalities in school experiences" (Pesco et al., 2016, p.16).

For the most part, DSE endorses inclusive education practices in schools (Baglieri et al., 2011). Although inclusive education is the widely accepted model for educating children with SEND today, implementation in practice is heterogeneous across contexts (Lindsay, 2003) and inclusive education does not have a single definition (Pesco et al., 2016). There is broad consensus for integrating children with SEND into general schools as outlined in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (Lindsay, 2003; UNESCO, 1994). However, Connor et al. (2008) noted that it is impossible to apply a blanket model to all contexts, where schools can range a great in their special education offerings and resources. Lindsay argues the term "regular" applied to schools is not definable across all contexts (2003, p.4); it is not clear whether a special school could qualify under this label.

Broadly, inclusion alleviates barriers to spaces which have been designed to cater for the majority (Argyropoulos & Halder, 2019). Adapting the curriculum for learning needs and ensuring support and resources are in place are essential to meet different needs, so that all students can actively participate in the varied aspects of school life and build a range of relationships (Pesco et al., 2016). Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is one practice within inclusive education, a type of lesson planning invented by building on architectural design concepts. Where a public space is configured to be used universally, a lesson plan will aim to embrace all strengths and needs (Baglieri et al., 2011). Other strategies to promote inclusion

in schools include the use of technology, which has greatly advanced in recent years, and differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2014), or adaptive teaching (Pesco et al., 2016), which endeavours to include all learners in the same task by modifying the material to accommodate individual student needs. Ideally, inclusion is not "about bringing people into that which already exists. Instead, it is about forging new educational spaces" (Dei & Kempf, 2013, p.37). Although these are but a few examples of the many ways that teachers can strive towards an inclusive classroom, changing attitudes and ideas in education is a long process, and there is no doubt that students with SEND continue to be subject to prejudice and discrimination. As a result, they are routinely denied equal opportunities for learning in the classroom (Argyropoulos & Halder, 2019).

3.5. Language and Disability

Terms and labels affixed to disability change over time and according to context or to a judiciary (Cullen et al., 2020; Towle, 2015). In Canada, Towle (2015) lists "special needs", "disability," "exceptionality," and "intensive needs" as current terms in circulation in the education context (p.10). For the most part, I will use the term special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in discussing my own research in the context of global research on similar topics. This term is employed in extension to special needs (*Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*, 2007, p.6*)*, a term rooted in the provision of special education to students who require additional support in Quebec. Special education itself can be understood as teaching adapted to the required needs of students with disabilities (Pesco et al., 2016). I have experience using the term SEND in my professional life thus far, when a child is understood as having "SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision" (Department for Education, 2014, pp.94-95). SEND is chosen over SEN to recognize and encompass a spectrum of severity in disability in my research.

When referring to specific disabilities, I will use the name provided by parents and teachers in the study or researchers in other studies. All the students at the special school in this study had a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, which will at times be discussed separately to other SEND. Autism spectrum disorder is recognized by deficits in communication and social skills and repetitive habits and behaviours (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Although an autism diagnosis is no longer defined by language skills (Gilhuber et al., 2023) children with autism can experience a range of challenges with both receptive and expressive language as well as encountering different language related struggles, such as with social pragmatics, conversational skills such as turn-taking, and metaphorical language or turns of phrase (Baird & Norbury, 2016; Conner et al., 2020; Hudry et al., 2010; Warreyn et al., 2005).

3.6. Rationale

The cognitive benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism for children have long been supported in the literature (Barac & Bialystok, 2012; Pesco et al., 2016) although parents, teachers and professionals have historically questioned whether bilingual education or childrearing could cause developmental delay (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2021). Only recently has research begun to explore the potential for children with SEND and learning difficulties being brought up or taught bilingually. Research has shown bilingualism does not slow development or compound learning disorders for children with SEND and developmental disorders, despite widespread concerns (Pesco et al., 2016). A number of studies conducted in both the US and Canada have found that students with SEND in dual language or bilingual education programs perform at least as well as their peers with SEND accessing English only instruction (Lindholm-Leary, 2005; Myers, 2009).

There could be considerable benefits to bilingualism or multilingualism for this group of children. On top of advantages such as broadening future opportunities in societal

languages and building intergenerational family connections, self-esteem, and cultural capital through HL acquisition (Aravossitas et al., 2022; Kircher et al., 2022) multiple languages could increase opportunities to interact with others and access to services for children with SEND, especially in a multilingual setting such as Quebec (Pesco et al., 2016). In a study which explored different issues inhibiting students with autism from the dual language classroom in the US, Baker et al. (2018) highlighted that continued L1 learning at school afforded numerous benefits to Spanish-speaking multilinguals with autism. Children with autism can struggle with sustained social interactions, close relationships and pragmatics which makes it pressing to maintain the L1, so that their connections to the family unit are maintained (Baker et al., 2018; Conner et al., 2020). Adapting one's language to context, even monolingually, can pose a challenge for children with autism. There is potential for dual language education to offer a better array of tools to manage different social contexts, "an interactional asset" (Yu, 2016, p.25). Conner et al. (2020) highlights that as rates of both autism and the number of multilingual children in schools rise in North America, teachers will more frequently encounter children who fall into both categories. It has been found that children with autism can become bilingual (Gonzalez-Barrero & Nadig, 2018), and bilingual children with autism have developed a wider array of expressive gestures for communication and creative childhood games (Valicenti-McDermott et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, children with SEND and developmental disorders can face challenges accessing bilingual or additional languages education. De Valenzuela et al. (2016) found there were considerable barriers to children with developmental disorders accessing language learning at six schools across the US, UK, the Netherlands, and Canada. They found that when scheduling conflicts arise, special education services were prioritized over languages education. These services were in competition on timetables rather than integrated, "an either/or type of thinking" (De Valenzuela et al., 2016, p.38). Furthermore, where language

learning programs were available, parents were required to advocate for their child to be part of them, disadvantaging parents who do not possess the cultural competence or skills to do so (De Valenzuela et al., 2016). In other cases, parents would purposefully withdraw their child with SEND from additional language learning opportunities, concerned about the "added pressure of learning another language" (De Valenzuela et al., 2016, p.38).

Genesee (2007) found children with learning difficulties were being disproportionately withdrawn from French immersion programs in Canada, and Selvachandran et al. (2022) discovered this may be in part due to a lack of the same access to special education services within immersion programs compared with English programs. In a study by Nic Aindriú (2022) in primary immersion schools in the Republic of Ireland, it was found that professionals were recommending parents transfer children with SEND out of immersion because it was deemed too academically challenging. This, and other studies, have demonstrated that students with SEND can be restricted access to immersion programs due to persistent deficit ideologies which imply learning through two languages is a "burden" for them (Nic Aindriú, 2022, p.59).

Therefore, previous literature offers some reasons why parents and teachers may exclude children with SEND from additional language learning or immersion programs in school, with decisions being influenced by their attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND as well as other factors. Much of this research has been conducted in either immersion contexts in Europe and Canada or Dual Language programs in the US.

There is scarce research at the intersection of SEND and multiple language learning in Quebec, with its unique linguistic landscape in relation to the rest of Canada and its increasing linguistic diversity, especially in Montreal. Research in Quebec has found that the presence of developmental disorders in young infants is linked to increased parental concerns for the long-term effects of multilingual child-rearing. These concerns have not been tracked

as children grow up and attend school. To my knowledge, there has been no research into the reasons behind parental and educator attitudes towards childhood multilingualism for children with SEND in Quebec, the environmental influences and the consequences in decisions being made for this group of children. Due to the countless potential benefits to multilingualism in this province, it is vital to learn more about the issues concerning parents and teachers, to discover how to better support them and to highlight the institutional bias which may be disadvantaging children with SEND in their opportunities to learn languages. In an attempt to fill the research gap, I have developed the following research questions:

1. What attitudes do Quebec parents of children with SEND have towards developing bi/multilingualism for these children?

    a) What are the societal, institutional, personal and cultural factors which might influence these attitudes?

    b) To what extent do these attitudes influence their Family Language Policy?

2. What attitudes do teachers in Quebec have towards developing bi/multilingualism for children with SEND?

    a) What environmental factors at the school as well as personal factors influence these attitudes?

    b) To what extent do these attitudes influence teachers' language practices in the classroom?

This chapter has organised the main theories which informed my research, to better understand the rationale for this study. This research was born out of a thorough understanding of preceding literature in a multi-disciplinary approach. The following chapter will position myself in relation to my research topic and participant group. I will detail my methods of data collection; sampling; my participant characteristics; my interview protocol; and my data analysis.

Chapter 4. Methodology

In this chapter I will begin by positioning myself in relation to the research topic and research site. The chapter will explain my process of data collection through methods of convenience and snowball sampling; present my participants' characteristics; outline my interview process; and describe the analysis of data. My interviews and data analysis were performed with the following research questions in mind:

1. What attitudes do Quebec parents of children with SEND have towards developing bi/multilingualism for these children?

    a) What are the societal, institutional, personal and cultural factors which might influence these attitudes?

    b) To what extent do these attitudes influence their Family Language Policy?

2. What attitudes do teachers in Quebec have towards developing bi/multilingualism for children with SEND?

    a) What environmental factors at the school as well as personal factors influence these attitudes?

    b) To what extent do these attitudes influence teachers' language practices in the classroom?

4.1. Researcher's Positioning

Integral to a qualitative research study is an understanding of the researcher's identity; their experiences, assumptions, and beliefs will have an influence upon every aspect of the study, from the topic and research questions to the researcher's position towards participants and their interpretation of the data. Positioning myself within my research study will not only acknowledge "the impossibility of remaining outside of one's subject matter while conducting research," (Willig, 2001, p.10) but it will also elicit additional layers of meaning behind the study's findings, once embedded within the researcher's personal story.

This research study is part of a Master's in Second Language Education at McGill university. Before arriving in Montreal for my graduate studies, I was employed for three years in London, UK, at an Alternative Provisions school for students from primary to secondary years, working with students until they reached 16 years of age, with some older students repeating academic years. For example, I worked with students ranging from 6 to 21 years old. Alternative Provisions (APs) make up part of the education system in the UK, beyond mainstream schools. The UK Department of Education describes the AP offer as an option for children and young people "who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education" (Department for Education, 2013, p.3). Other reasons could include special educational needs and disabilities, truancy, a refusal to attend, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), disruptions in the home life of the student, anxiety, and depression (Trotman et al., 2019). Many students at this AP either had or required a diagnosis of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Furthermore, this AP was situated in the London Borough of Hackney, where there are at least 89 and perhaps as many as 100 different languages spoken (Aravossitas et al., 2022) including Spanish, Turkish, Sylheti, Bengali, and French. This was reflected in the student population who brought with them a wealth of different linguistic and cultural competences.

I enjoyed my time working at this school; I embraced the school's success in engaging students through alternative means such as drama, the arts, spoken word and music. Nevertheless, I decided to leave this specialist setting, because I began to question the school's monolingual attitude and approach. They did not offer any foreign language learning on the curriculum, which inhibited a natural exploration of the linguistic plurality which existed within the school grounds, an important part of ethnically diverse identities (Aravossitas et al., 2022; Creese & Blackledge, 2015). I was concerned that students did not have an option to learn a language at school, as their peers would in a mainstream school. I

thus decided to return to graduate school in order to raise awareness of the disparities in the education system for children with SEND, especially the lack of foreign languages on offer.

I wish to position myself as a white, middle-class woman; although I have three years of experience working with children who have SEND, I do not have a disability. Reflecting on my own privileges, I cannot make claims about the experience of those with SEND who are referenced in this research, especially because my research does not involve directly speaking to these children. I aspire to working alongside teachers and parents and see myself as someone who is constantly learning about the experiences of those who have SEND, as well as those of parents/guardians and professionals.

I am also a foreign languages graduate from the UK University of Cambridge who studied French and Spanish for four years as part of my undergraduate degree. I have been passionate about language learning from a young age, influenced by my mother's strong linguistic capabilities and a Russian-Jewish ancestry. My love of language learning contributed to my belief that it should be an opportunity open to all. I believe that languages education should not be an exclusive educational offer but part of an inclusive education package and adapted to meet learning needs. However, I am aware that this instilled belief is also a result of my experience working at the AP, where I built strong relationships with students with SEND who expressed an interest in their linguistic heritage and language learning. Having grown up in London, UK, as the daughter of two white British citizens, learning European languages was a pursuit which suited my academic interests. It was only later, whilst working with a neurodiverse student population with varied backgrounds and experiences, that I considered languages as a vessel for expressing minoritized identities and reassessed the Eurocentric and elitist approach embedded in the UK languages education curriculum.

At the start of this project, I believed there to be a need to challenge deficit ideologies, which adhere to the notion that children with SEND should not be learning a second language due to the misconception that this might overload their development (Nic Aindriú, 2022). However, through speaking with parents and teachers in Quebec, I learnt that my project was not about a hierarchy of attitudes. Notwithstanding the general positive attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND, I discovered that deciding to pass on a family heritage language is impacted by multiple personal and situational factors and the decision whether to pursue second language learning also depends upon the availability of resources and support. Listening to teachers' and parents' experiences, I better understood the challenges in obtaining diagnoses and addressing daily behavioral issues which exist alongside the questions surrounding language choices. It was invaluable to learn that the wider provincial policies and educational institutions in Quebec do not facilitate these decisions for parents and teachers. In addition, although I was not educated in Quebec prior to beginning a Master's in education, through the knowledge I gained in my classes and the awareness that I developed while living in the city of Montreal, I learnt that language rights are a broader subject of concern in the province and a widely debated topic, which I also needed to take into consideration when discussing parents' and teachers' views on languages education.

I have been committed to best practice in my methodological approach when conducting this study. Nonetheless, my decisions and interpretations are shaped by the life experiences which led me to this research topic.

4.2. Recruitment

In the summer 2023, I gained approval from McGill University's research ethics board for my research study. I then began a process to recruit participants to a sample of both parents and teachers.

Parent recruitment occurred over three months, and I used a mixture of *convenience sampling* and *snowball sampling* to capture a broader perspective. Convenience sampling involves publicizing the study and allowing participants to sign up (Stratton, 2021). Snowball sampling is a process of referral to a study. The process starts with " initial contacts (seeds), who fit the research criteria," who recruit within their own networks and then, these new participants recruit within an even wider network, and so on (Parker & Scott, 2019, p.3). At the time, I was volunteering at a Montreal-based charity, Global Communities (pseudonym) which ran programs for families and their children with intellectual disabilities. I joined as a *GC Friend,* which meant I was connected to a young person and their family on the program with an aim of fostering a relationship, so the young person could work on relationship-building skills. Sessions comprised communication and conversation activities to work on parents' social or communication goals for their child. Once a strong working relationship was established with the charity, a request to disseminate my recruitment flyers was made; Global Communities directed my materials through their media channels. I received interest from two parents, only one of whom fitted the demographics needed to participate in the study. The requirements to participate in the study were for parents of one or more kindergarten or school-aged child with SEND, and I was open to any languages being spoken (although interviews could only be conducted in English, French or Spanish). I employed a strategy of convenience sampling to engage with a wider audience beyond this organization. To widen my search, I utilized social media, specifically Facebook, to contact various charities working with children with learning disabilities and SEND. Through these means, I recruited two further parent participants. A final two parents were recruited differently towards the end of the recruitment process, which I will discuss below.

Concurrently, teacher recruitment began through the method of convenience sampling. A former Master's student on McGill's Second Language Education Program

recommended working with schools in Laval, a city in Quebec that lies to the north of Montreal. Through the *Centre de Services scolaire de Laval* website, I accessed 47 school email addresses. I composed a formal, introductory message, attaching my recruitment materials to be shared with school principals in order to recruit teachers at their school. These emails listed only three responses to an initial 47 emails, despite subsequent follow ups. Among these responses, only one school principal offered to share my recruitment materials within their school; subsequently, I received interest from one teacher. Unfortunately, this teacher later withdrew due to extenuating circumstances.

Following these initial challenges, recruitment progressed to a snowball sampling method. A peer in my faculty at McGill University recommended my study to a student in the Education and Counselling Psychology Department, who was actively teaching and working within special education. This participant was recruited and, as per the snowball method, shared my recruitment material with their network, through which I added another participant. Furthermore, through liaising with this student's professor, I was allowed to present my study to their class. Although this didn't yield direct recruitment, one class member shared my flyer within their wider network, which led to another participant signing up.

The final stage of recruitment involved a cross-group snowball effect, during the start of my interview process. The first parent interviewed recommended I contact her daughter's school, Leaps Forward (pseudonym), due to their openness to working with researchers. This was a watershed moment in my recruitment process: Leaps Forward responded positively to my project proposal and their administrator signed up 11 teachers to the study. Furthermore, as a result of an early teacher interview, the participant shared my materials within her own company's media channels, because she ran a business working with parents through which I recruited one further parent.

Combining both convenience sampling and snowball sampling methods enabled my study to reach a broader audience and engage with populations initially hidden to me. Although the process spanned a greater period than I had anticipated, at the end of the recruitment period I had a sample of five parents and 14 teachers.

4.2.1.Participants' Characteristics

Teacher participants signed and returned consent forms and then were sent a short demographic questionnaire to complete on the Microsoft Office Platform. The questionnaire collated information regarding the languages they spoke and their teaching background. The following tables display this demographic information from the teacher group.

Table 1

Teacher Information

Teacher	Teaching role	Language spoken by teacher		
		English	French	Other
1	ESL at French public school	✓	✓	
2	Resource teacher at private school	✓	✓	
3	ESL at French public school	✓	✓	Spanish
4	*Leaps Forward* English section	✓		Hindi, Bengali
5	*Leaps Forward* English section	✓	✓	
6	*Leaps Forward* English section	✓	✓	Italian
7	*Leaps Forward* English section	✓	✓	
8	*Leaps Forward* English section	✓		
9	*Leaps Forward* English section	✓	✓	Spanish
10	*Leaps Forward* English section	✓	✓	Italian
11	*Leaps Forward* French section	✓	✓	Spanish
12	*Leaps Forward* French section	✓	✓	
13	*Leaps Forward* French section	✓	✓	
14	*Leaps Forward* French section	✓	✓	

There was a disproportionate number of teachers at one special school ($N = 11$) as shown in Table 1. It is important to note that within that special school, participating teachers were divided between the French section and English section of the school (four and seven teachers respectively). The two public school teachers were at separate school sites.

Through recruitment, I learnt important information regarding how teaching differed at the Special School compared to regular schools. At Leaps Forward, students' curriculum options were: *QEP Modified*, a reduced variation of the QEP (Québec Education Plan)

offered in public schools or *CASP* (A Competency based Approach to Social Participation). The CASP-I Education Program and CASP-II Education Program cater for students between ages 6 to 21 "with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities" (*Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, 2019, p.1)* for whom the standard mainstream subject allocation time is not suitable. The program offers "qualifications based on their needs and abilities" and "differentiated instruction adapted to meet the needs of children and adolescents" (*Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur*, 2019, p.1). Second language education is not offered when students are on the CASP curriculum, at least according to teachers at Leaps Forward.

The languages in Table 1 were self-described by the teachers. Through the interviews, I learnt that these were a combination of mother tongue and additional languages learnt.

Parent participants signed and returned consent forms and then were sent a short demographic questionnaire to identify characteristics such as the age of their children with SEND, each child's diagnosis, the languages spoken with these children at home, languages they learnt at school and parental languages. Table 2 conveys this information.

Table 2

Parent and Children Information

Parent	Age of child with SEND	Language parent knows			Language they use with child		Language child taught in at school		School type	Child's diagnosis
		English	French	Other	English	French	Main	Other		
A	10	✓			✓		English	French	English public school	Developmental Language Disorder (DLD)
B	8	✓	✓		✓	✓	French	English	French public school	Verbal Dyspraxia, Dysphasia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
C	8	✓	✓		✓		English	French	English Special school	Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
	12	✓	✓		✓		English	French	English Special school	Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
D	16	✓	✓	Finnish	✓	✓	English		Special school	Autism, Gross Motor Dyspraxia, Verbal Dyspraxia, Hypotonia, SYNGAP 1, intellectual disabilities, fine motor issues
E	10	✓	✓	Egyptian	✓	✓	French	English	French public school	Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
	13	✓	✓	Egyptian	✓	✓	French	English	French private school	Dyslexia, Dysgraphia

Although Parent A described using mostly English at home, she shared that they had extended family that was francophone. The third languages reported by Parent D and E, (Finnish and Egyptian) were heritage languages (HLs); neither parent used this heritage language with their children with SEND at the time of speaking with them. The reasons behind this will be explored further in Chapter 5. Research Findings.

The children's diagnoses listed in the table were self-reported by the parents. Parent D's 16-year-old child was an outlier in the data set, despite still meeting the demographic parameters for selection to the study. The child's age and severity of diagnosis diverged from the rest of the group. SYNGAP-1 is a rare genetic mutation with complex symptoms including those which Parent D disclosed: autism spectrum, hypotonia, intellectual disabilities and others. This was deemed to fit within the remit of the study. The intention was to ensure as many parents as possible experiencing raising a child with SEND would be able to discuss their experiences, regardless of severity of diagnosis.

The languages spoken at home were self-reported by parents. Table 2 highlights the primary language(s) as means of communication in the home (for example, Parent C said they would use a small amount of French at home to help with homework, so I did not include this). This table represents the reality at the time of speaking with parents; the parents' previous choices in relation to their children's language education and schooling will be discussed in Chapter 5. Research Findings. All children except for one were taught mainly through one language while taking classes in either FSL or ESL. Parent A notes that her child was at a bilingual school where subjects are taught through a balance of French and English. However, her child was accessing around 80/90% in English because they were in a special class rather than a regular class. There were no students who were learning in a completely balanced 50/50% immersion program.

4.3 Interviews

4.3.1. Materials

The interviews were conducted online by the researcher using Microsoft Office Teams. The platform was chosen for its user-friendly interface and the ability to capture video and audio recordings whilst also producing a transcription. A few days prior to the interview, the participants were sent an invitation for the chosen date and the option to choose a pseudonym.

4.3.2.Interview Protocol

The interviews were led by the researcher, who managed the platform and handled any technical challenges. The interviews lasted between 20 and 90 minutes with the majority close to 30 minutes. The majority were conducted in English (11) with three being conducted in French.

At the start of the interview, the researcher read through an interview guide which briefly explained the format of the interview and that it would be recorded. Once the recording began, the researcher followed a series of pre-planned questions which were modified only on account of the interviewee's experiences and the conversation's direction, thus following the format of semi-structured interviews, a recommended method for qualitative data collection in the field of language attitude research (Karatsareas, 2022). This allowed for an overarching structure to the interview whilst giving space for participants to expand on their answers, permitting unplanned spontaneity to "bring to light entirely new information, new topics, or new dimensions to established knowledge" (Karatsareas, 2022, p.101).

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1. Transcription

Interviews were transcribed by the researcher through a method of denaturalized transcription. Transcription practices can be viewed along a "continuum" (Oliver et al., 2005, p.1273). A naturalized approach reproduces the spoken words as faithfully as possible, whereas denaturalism removes utterances which don't contribute to the meaning, such as stutters, repeated words and hesitation (Oliver et al., 2005). Understanding content and information was the priority in my study, hence the use of a denaturalized method of transcription. Care was taken to produce faithful transcription of all words which contained meaning, and meaningless utterances such as stutters or *ums* were removed from the transcriptions to create a clearer depiction for the researcher. On the other hand, meaningful non-verbal cues (shaking the head) or meaningful utterances (laughter) were included in the transcription as they contributed to the meaning of what participants were saying.

4.4.2. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) was selected as a preferred method to map out the story within this data set. TA offers an approach to uncover the key patterns within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is adaptable to theoretical frameworks and is suited to data exploring personal experiences through interviews. Further, it is a method to "provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.78). The method is not only descriptive, but interpretive, and is especially useful in drawing together "multidisciplinary phenomena" (Boyatzis, 1998, p.8). I followed the six-step thematic coding approach outlined in Braun and Clarke (2006), as described below.

Acquiring a thorough understanding of the data was the primary step, involving reading and re-reading transcripts to familiarize myself with participants' experiences. Following this step, the first coding phase began. Specific ideas or attitudes towards

multilingualism for children with SEND were assigned a summarizing code. For example, Parent D stated that the heritage language was very important to her family connections and described a "grieving process" when she abandoned this language for her child, jeopardizing communication with grandparents. This was assigned the code *language strengthens family connections*. On the other hand, another parent expressed that "it doesn't matter…in my family we speak both French and English so…if she doesn't speak one language, we'll change to the next," which was assigned a different code *language choice not related to family connections*. Both segments describe a relationship between language and the wider family bond, whether that be a strong or weak one. They were grouped together and recoded into the category *Importance of Family Connections* to represent a spectrum of views or codes regarding the links between language and family. An initial ten categories were formulated for parent data sets and a further six categories were inductively drawn from the teacher data.

Following this stage, the next step involved searching for themes across the coded data, which involved looking for recurring patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Establishing four main themes involved going back and forth between the codes and data. Certain themes with less weight were lost in this process and stronger themes interacted with renewed cogency, to produce compelling findings, encapsulated within the following headings: *Parents and teachers have conflicting attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND*, *Parents and teachers are dissatisfied with public services for SEND*, *Language learning is not the priority*, and *Languages are a classroom tool/resource*. With the themes mapped out, I looked at the relationships between themes and the points of contention between themes, which is important not to overlook in this process of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This, as well as a process of going beyond the surface level to search for *latent themes,* which uncover "underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations"

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.84) produced a single overarching theme which explained how and why the four sub-themes all linked together. When refining this theme it was entitled: *When resources are limited, we resort to priorities*.

This chapter established my positionality in relation to the research topic and set out my methods for recruitment and sampling. Characteristics of my participants were outlined in this chapter alongside the interview process and methods for data analysis which laid the groundwork to present my findings in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Research Findings

In this chapter I will analyze the research findings, grouped under four themes. Each of these themes explain a part of the story told by the data. Links between the separate themes will be made throughout this chapter and the overarching theme, *When resources are limited, we resort to priorities*, will be coherently detailed in Chapter 6. Discussion.

The 14 teacher and five parent interviews produced a rich data set illuminating their attitudes, personal experiences and thoughts on the current situation of education and language learning for children with SEND in Quebec. The interview questions for the parents were designed to learn more about their (a) Family Language Policy (FLP); (b) school language choices; and (c) the environmental factors influencing these decisions. Furthermore, the interview questions for teachers were designed to elicit their (a) beliefs and practices regarding language learning for children with SEND; (b) beliefs about wider institutional support for language learning for children with SEND; and (c) the environmental factors influencing these beliefs

The analysis of data (as described in Chapter 4. Methodology) produced the following four themes:

- Parents and teachers have conflicting attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND.
- Parents and teachers are dissatisfied with public services for SEND.
- Language learning is not the priority.
- Languages are a classroom tool/resource.

Each of the four themes included internal variation, as parental and teacher views were not consistent even within their own participant group.

5.1. Parents and Teachers Have Conflicting Attitudes Towards Multilingualism for Children with SEND

5.1.1. Cognitive development

To begin, the interviews were framed around the question of whether children with SEND *can* or *should* be learning and growing up with multiple languages, which reflected the cognitive development factor, one of the three dimensions discovered to comprise attitudes towards multilingualism (Kircher et al., 2022). Whilst Kircher et al. (2022) discovered parents in Quebec could be both optimistic and concerned about the positive cognitive implications of multilingualism for their children, I have expanded this sub-theme to encompass not only the attitudes towards the cognitive effects of multilingualism for children with SEND but also the attitudes towards the cognitive possibilities for children with SEND to become multilingual.

Most parents and teachers responded favorably to this question, convinced that children with SEND have all the cognitive skills to develop and learn additional languages. For example, the teacher from the Special School, French section, stated, "*Je pense qu'ils sont complètement capables d'apprendre et de comprendre plusieurs [langues]*. (I think they are completely capable of learning and understanding several [languages].) with the emphasis being on the fact that there is no reason children with SEND wouldn't be able to learn another language, a view widely held within both participant groups.

Three participants also suggested there could be cognitive benefits. Parent C claimed, "my son's delayed speech wasn't necessarily a result of the two different languages and actually felt that in the long run [learning an additional language] is better ... which I mean, I agree." Here, Parent C seemed to at first acknowledge existing wider concerns regarding language delays occurring when more languages are added, but then counteracted this idea with a belief that multilingualism could have long-term benefits for children with SEND.

Parent E focused on the potential cognitive benefits of multilingualism, noting, “it even helps with executive [functioning] like ... if you’re learning your transparent language first, it transfers over. ... I just think the more languages, you know, the better.”

Amongst some of the teacher participants, these positive views appeared to stem from experiences of having worked with children with SEND who speak multiple languages. The teacher from the Special School’s French section referred to such experiences: “I know there’s been studies and people say that ... if they can’t speak one language, or they’re not talking, putting two is too many ... but ... I think honestly, having taught as many kids as I have, like they really will surprise you.” A teacher from the English section at the same school also had direct experience with multilingual children: “I know that a lot of my students, they either speak or understand two languages and sometimes even three.” With this direct experience, this teacher was certain children with autism could be bilingual or multilingual. Another teacher on the French side of Leaps Forward was of the same view: “*Ça ne serait pas improbable d’être sur le spectre puis d’être bilingue ou multilingue. On en voit. Il y en a plusieurs [à l’école].* (It’s not impossible to be on the spectrum and be bilingual or multilingual. We see it. There are several like that [at the school].)”

It appeared that these experiences had changed teachers’ views over time, as described by the teacher from the English section of the Special School:

> It’s funny because if you had asked me, like a few years ago, I would say no, that it’s too hard for them to learn more than one language. But I see that like, especially if they grow up in like an allophone household or something where they speak something other than English or French and they are completely capable of understanding.

Changing demographics in classrooms seem to have shifted attitudes in recent years towards possibilities for children with SEND to be multilingual as another teacher on the French side of the Special School disclosed, “*La majorité de mes élèves sont rarement de*

nationalité Québécoise. (Most of my students are rarely quebecois).” It appears that these teachers were aware of past misconceptions that children with SEND cannot speak multiple languages, but their current understanding showed how their attitudes were changing over time as teachers gained more experience with children who have SEND and are by necessity, multilingual.

However, attitudes were not consistently positive towards multilingualism for children with SEND, under the sub-theme of cognitive development. Even during a single interview, participants seemed to change viewpoints, claiming multilingualism was important, but that it was also inappropriate for children with SEND.

For example there was some trepidation with assigning the words *multilingual* and *bilingual* to the language skills of children with SEND. Participants seemed to equate these labels with a linguistic proficiency or standard that these children wouldn’t be able to reach. Parent A weighed these two terms, “I’m not sure about multilingual. I don’t know if I would say bilingual cause I don’t think she would be perfect in it.” This parent felt that being bilingual meant being perfect in two languages, which children with SEND may not achieve. A teacher in the English section of the Special School thought that her students could be bilingual but then said, “I don’t know [about] multilingual, Well, it could be too … confusing for them,” which suggests that this teacher considered there to be a limit for the number of languages children with SEND could cope with learning. One teacher in the English section of the school seemed to think it was “about processing ... they’re not gonna know like Shakespeare in any language,” again suggesting there was a limit to the amount of language development possible for a child with SEND, in the view of parents and teachers.

Two other teachers referred to the severity of the diagnosis making a difference to language acquisition. For example, the English teacher from the Special School argued, “that

depends on the level, you know, the autism that they have and their learning abilities ... if they are high functional ... it's not gonna be challenging."

On the other hand, one parent and one teacher suggested that the severity of the diagnosis did not inhibit children understanding multiple different languages, such as in the case of non-verbal children capable of understanding multiple languages:

> my older child who is nonverbal yet understands two languages about the same level and can totally switch here listening to another one speaking French and another one speaking in English. ... it's a pretty good example of what's possible even with severe limitations ... severe intellectual disability (Parent D).

Parent D shared her experience using languages fluidly with her child who had the most severe disabilities in this study. She suggested that switching between different languages fluidly had nothing to do with the severity of a SEND diagnosis, and her child was perfectly able to understand when this occurred. Similarly, a teacher in the English section of the Special School described situations with non-verbal students who were exposed to both the societal languages and a third language at home and claimed that "even if they're not responding back, they understand all three and often it can actually help them."

Even though some parents and teachers were unsure how to relate the terms *bilingual* and *multilingual* to the language practices of children with SEND, three participants were either moving away from using the terms at all or they were redefining the terms. For Parent A, it was more important their child was "able to communicate at least basically" rather than have "bilingual status." This suggests that this parent felt language should fulfill the needs of children with SEND and it was of no concern if they were bilingual or not. One teacher working at a French public school in this study did not subscribe to a traditional definition of bilingualism that implies speaking two languages perfectly: "bilingual for me is someone who can converse in a language orally and be understood". However, she lamented that

"those are not the benchmarks that our government places on students". Participants seemed to be aware that there was a gap between the language learning children with SEND required for everyday life and the framing of language learning by society and institutions. For example, Parent B believed their child to be "perfectly bilingual because she … understands everything … whether it's in French or in English, but she doesn't speak it very well." She did not seem concerned that this was the case and was happy that her child understood both languages. Like the teacher at the French public school, this participant interpreted bilingualism to be the use of language to meet individual needs, rather than being a fixed model of language usage.

Three teachers suggested students with SEND would progress in their language development if delivered suitably adapted materials or differentiated teaching, linking back to the idea that children with SEND are cognitively able to learn multiple languages if the teaching is rendered to their needs. The French public school teacher was adamant that teachers "go to the troubles to make it equal for everyone to succeed" by "levelling out the playing field." This teacher was certain that children with SEND could learn languages but that the school system might not be offering them the best way to do so: "I believe they can. I believe it takes more time. I believe we need to offer the opportunities and I don't think school necessarily are those opportunities to be learning second languages." A teacher working in the English Section of the Special School also believed in modifying language learning approaches for children with SEND "in a fun way. Not ahh, you need to know this. Then they learn you know. … I think they're capable of doing that." This same teacher touched upon the fact that these students have different learning styles and so there is not a one-size-fits-all to learning a language. For example students might "have a photographic memory, so you have sight words for them. You cannot have phonics for them and alphabets because they won't be able to read." This teacher commented that changes were necessary for

a special school class “when you want to teach any subject,” but “mainly language,” which implies that there are not many adapted materials readily available for teaching of a second language to children with SEND, making more work for the teachers themselves and possibly perpetuating the idea that in comparison to other subjects, languages are less important for children with SEND.

If the current school system is not providing the adapted tools and assessments suitable for this group to participate in language learning, as these teachers suggested, the system may be closing doors for these students, before they’ve been given a chance to develop in multiple languages. Two participants who initially expressed that they believed it to be cognitively possible for children with SEND to be learning multiple languages later suggested this did not mean it was possible in practice:

> There are students that, for instance, my son and other students who are learning a second language, we have the diagnostics that demonstrate that they can’t do it. They cannot do it, but yes, yet they are forced to write ministry exams. ... There are other students that I know that it is the exact same for them, learning a second language was not ... was not possible for them because they were on the spectrum, because they had a speech, learning impediment (Teacher, public school, French).

The above statement that learning a second language was not possible for students with SEND referred to the exams that students had to take, and the diagnostics produced as a result, rather than any inherent cognitive problems. A private school teacher described a student who was ineligible for English medium instruction at their school, which operated with both a French and English section. This student had been forced into learning through French, and the teacher believed that “he’s already at that concept of waiting to fail because he’s already a year back on what he’s supposed to be in multiple subjects because of language.” In this situation, the teacher lamented unnecessary language benchmarks or rules

being placed on students especially if they have additional learning needs. As previously highlighted in Chapter 2: Historical Context, it is possible to be exempt from French instruction through providing certification for a severe learning difficulty. Although the teacher did not clarify on whether the student ought to qualify for this, it was clear that this student had not been given this exemption.

Half of all teachers at Leaps Forward (pseudonym) attributed the diagnosis of autism as a possible reason for students' excellent linguistic talents, describing that some students took a special interest in language learning, despite a lack of support from schools for this interest. There were multiple accounts from teachers at the Special School of students learning a language as a hobby. One teacher in the English section described "several students who have gone on YouTube and who have taught themselves to read like the Polish alphabet" and another teacher had a student "interested in Russian, by himself he just learnt the alphabet". One teacher expressed being intrigued when a student was learning German because "all of a sudden he started counting in German". This also occurred at times with societal languages:

> *La majorité aime les langues ... je ne pourrais pas dire pourquoi. ... J'ai des élèves qui ne parlaient pas anglais à la maison et que spontanément ils choisissent cette langue pour parler sans que les parents aient enseigné ou nous à l'école*. [Most of them like languages … I couldn't say why … I have some students who didn't speak English at home and who suddenly chose to speak this language even though they hadn't been taught at home or school.] (Teacher, Special School, French section).

These teachers expressed surprise and confusion at these emerging linguistic talents which seemed to come out of nowhere for them.

This fascination with languages often appeared to manifest around scripts and alphabets, a phenomenon one teacher described as *hyperlexia*. Scripting is when those typically with autism learn lists or phrases by heart and then parrot them, which can help in managing social situations (Moller, 2024). Three teachers described students who were able to script in another language, such as a teacher from the Special School's English section who had "a lot of students who like script in French." Although the teacher didn't know "how much they understand the language" it was impressive to this teacher that one student could script the entire French voiceover from the metro announcements, which are in both English and French in Montreal.

Overall, teachers at this school were fascinated by students' capabilities in the field of language acquisition and how quick they were to pick up the initial building blocks to learning a language such as memorizing alphabets and counting systems. There was a consensus that the school was not the reason students were learning other languages, they were doing so on their own volition despite the school's lack of support.

5.1.2. Status and Solidarity

Conflicting attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND also arose from the perspective of the status and solidarity factors. Family connections (solidarity) influenced two parents' decisions regarding their language choices for their children in some way. For example, Parent A expressed the importance of learning French for ties to the francophone side of their family for their child to simply "communicate, or even just understand what they're saying."

However for Parent D, although family connections were considered in decision-making regarding language choices, daycare, and schooling, (status) issues, ultimately prevailed. Parent D, whose child's diagnosis was more severe, began by only speaking the HL (Finnish) to this child as a baby whilst the second parent spoke only French. At age three,

and upon gaining a better understanding of the child's language delay, this mother switched from Finnish to French to communicate with her child to ease a process of professional interventions and to help her integrate into daycare in French. Abandoning speaking the HL with this child was not an easy decision:

> It was very heart-breaking. I think there was like a whole grieving process when I first switched from Finnish to French. It was sort of giving up on any future over there for her ... her relationship with her grandparents who only speak Finnish (Parent D).

Although the mother decided to speak French to her child from age three, for practical reasons, clearly this parent felt the strong bond between language and family being sacrificed.

When this child reached the age of ten, Parent D again decided to switch the primary language with this child to English (although the father continued to speak to the child in French). This child was non-verbal, and using English meant better access to high-tech apps and devices for communication which were not available in French. With this switch, the parent described how the child's communication abilities "skyrocketed." Although the mother's decision for English to be this child's primary language was driven by the resources available for the child's communication, Parent D found that "English sort of brought back some hope" with the Finnish side of the family, as many relations in Finland had good English proficiency. Language was very important to this parent in ensuring family bonds were not broken for this child and their various relations. However, strengthening ties with the child's Finnish relations seemed to be a welcome outcome but not the driving factor when deciding to prioritize English for this child.

The rest of the parents did not express concerns about whether their child learnt a language for family reasons. For example Parent B described their family as bilingual so if their child "doesn't speak one language, we'll just change to the next."

However, three out of the five parent participants extolled the benefits of languages for their child when participating in an extracurricular activity. For example, Parent C realized "for skiing, the French would really help a lot." Parent A also saw the benefits for their child knowing French and English for summer sports teams made up of both francophone and anglophone children. The parent thought that being able to use both languages could have social benefits for this child to improve "that dynamic in the communication with your [sports] team." This suggests that Parent A believed that acquiring both French and English allowed for better integration into society.

Teachers' and parents' attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND reflected the status factor, when both groups spoke of the importance of French and English for future opportunities in Canada and worldwide. Nine out of fourteen teachers and four out of five parents believed bilingualism or multilingualism was important for their child's future. Six of these participants said that it was a requirement for being in Quebec to have at least basic French, with those participants employing words such as "should," "need," "100%," and "necessity" in their descriptions. Parent B thought that "around the world … at least two languages [will help you] get to know your way around stuff," which conveys the notion that languages broaden possibilities for life experiences. Parent C, when speaking about her children, said, "I don't know where their lives are gonna take them, but to be cultured and skilled in more than one language, it is a benefit. And in Quebec, it's a necessity." Again, this conveys that languages were perceived by these participants as the key to broadening opportunities.

The idea that French is essential to life and jobs in Quebec was also voiced by a teacher in the English section of the Special School: "if a lot of these guys want to go out into the workforce one day, like they should understand some or be able to communicate in basic French." On the French side of the same school, a teacher added that English was also

important in this context: "*Il faut être capable de s'adapter et de pouvoir proposer les deux langues. Donc forcément ça ouvre beaucoup plus d'opportunités de parler les deux langues*. (You need to be able to adapt and to apply the two languages. It's certain to open up many more opportunities if you speak both.)" In general, participants seemed to agree that knowing both French and English would provide additional security to these children when it came to looking for future employment. The teacher at the Private School described knowledge of both languages to act "like a safety net to a certain extent".

Although all participants thought that an additional language would be a help to children with SEND in the future, five teachers had more nuanced responses that indicated that the benefit of learning an additional language would depend on what these students were to progress onto next. For example, when a teacher in the English section of the Special School was asked about the importance of languages for students' future opportunities, she suggested that multiple languages would only be necessary for a "minority that are able to go to high school and beyond." One teacher expressed her opinion that for a non-academic pathway where students might obtain a basic job "working in a factory line or working at Super C bagging or assembling some sort of food" (Teacher, Special School, English section), languages were unnecessary. She stated, "they don't need a second language" unless they pursue "something academically higher."

This is at odds with the views of another teacher who suggested that two languages would improve future integration into society more broadly, regardless of employment. This teacher stressed more than once that knowing both French and English was about "understand[ing] society and community" (Teacher, Special School, English section). She explained that these languages were important because "we are helping … [students] … to understand society, and this is part of society."

Whilst languages may not be the sole barrier to future employment opportunities for those with more severe learning or developmental needs, such as nonverbal autism, it seemed that teachers were divided on the extent that multiple languages might be helpful for future employment and lifestyles. However, one teacher acknowledged that even if their students would not need languages in the future, it was not the role of the teacher to close those doors because "some of them will understand opportunity and will benefit from it ... some of them they can't, but our duty is to present these opportunities, you know?" This teacher implied that schools might have been acting as gatekeepers in barring access to language learning for children with SEND.

Although many teachers and parents thought that the two languages could improve future opportunities, especially in Quebec, these attitudes didn't translate into measures to implement language learning for children with SEND, supposedly because this would need to come from wider school policy. Two teachers expressed that equal language learning opportunities for children with SEND would exist in "a perfect world" where there was "money to do everything," but they explained, "I think it really comes down to funding". Another teacher on the French side of the Special School said that "*si on avait l'occasion, c'est sûr que parler deux langues, c'est toujours mieux"* (If there's a chance to, it's always better to speak two languages), the "if" being the operative word. The same teacher contrasted this with "*la réalité"* (reality) where it was not always realistically possible to develop these children's bilingual abilities.

Teachers discussed language learning as an ideal scenario for children with SEND rather than a possibility. This demonstrated a disconnect between the positive attitudes held towards multilingualism for this group of students and the realities of working within the education system. Parents and teachers expressed dissatisfaction with how the system was set up for children with SEND in general. I will discuss this further in the following section.

5.2. Parents and Teachers are Dissatisfied with Public Services for SEND.

Parents discussed the time period when they first began to suspect a language delay, SEND, or learning difficulties in their child, and they explained that seeking help was filled with challenges. Parents and teachers unanimously agreed that receiving a public diagnosis was an inefficient and arduous process. Parent B explained that they went to the private system "because the waiting list on the public side was about two and a half years." Another parent raised a concern that because her daughters were quiet, their difficulties could have easily gone under the radar, and she believed, "both girls would never have gotten, sadly enough, evaluated in the public sector." One teacher in the English section of the Special School also pointed to an unfair system of care. She described how it could be extremely difficult for recent immigrants who were still learning English or French, because doctors and educators often used academic and medical langauge to discuss routes to possible diagnoses for SEND, which might inhibit access to the services they needed for a child.

Once at school, special education services were spread thin or were offered sporadically, according to these parents and teachers. For example, one public school teacher reported that, when students with SEND were moved out of the regular classroom, they were often placed in groups with students from a range of ages and levels and "you can have a grade four student with a grade six student or a grade one with a grade three." This teacher explained that this further compounded an already challenging task of tailoring the approach and teaching to individual needs. This teacher resorted to using "noise cancellation headphones. … I'll tell my grade three students to put them on because I'm gonna be talking to grade four students" (Teacher, French Public School). This measure was clearly a last resort to be able to manage the varied levels this teacher had in one classroom.

Even in a more specialist setting, such as Leaps Forward, teachers suggested that they did not have sufficient resources to meet students' needs. One teacher in the English section

felt disheartened because she thought "this school is one of the best options out there, and it's still like we still don't have enough, we never will. We're always getting bigger class sizes and less staff." Equally, on the French side, a teacher at the Special School described a similar situation to the public school teacher regarding students of all different levels being grouped together: "*Il y a des niveaux vraiment très différents dans une seule classe. ... J'ai des enfants, par exemple, en français qui ne connaissent même pas encore leur alphabet.* (There are very different levels within a single class … I have children in French for example who still don't even know their alphabet.)" This again highlights how the specialist settings were experiencing similar challenges to the public sector.

Despite the challenges associated with managing multiple levels in one class, teachers acknowledged that the specialist setting was generally better equipped to meet student needs. For example, a teacher on the French side explained, "*On est quatre pour neuf élèves. Ça aide vraiment.* (In my class we're four per nine students. That really helps.)" It appeared that teachers at the Special school were able to rely on more in-class assistance than in the public system and recognised this advantage: "*C'est sûr. On est une école spécialisée, donc on a la chance d'avoir beaucoup de services.*" (Of course, we're a specialised school, so we have the chance to have many more services.) (Teacher, Special School, French section).

Parents made school choices according to where sufficient support was available for their child. Parent C chose to move their two children from a private school to a special school due to dissatisfaction with what the former had to offer. This parent stated:

> [We were] very disappointed ... [with] what we experienced previously, especially because it was private and we were paying. ... We were picking them up early for private therapies and so, I mean it was very draining, expensive for a few years ... it was French immersion with Hebrew.

Parent C seemed to expect the private system to offer better special education provisions but this was not the case in her experience. However, this was not a consistent finding across the participant group. Parent E moved her eldest from the French public system to a private school for high school because she felt the specialist services were better at the private setting. Therefore, there is not one consensus on where special education is best available and parents made decisions based on their individual child's needs. The important finding was that parents were making the crucial decision to move their child to a different setting based on the special education services available at a given school because often parents experienced dissatisfaction with the SEND provisions in their first choice of school for their child, as their child's needs developed.

5.3. Language Learning is Not the Priority.

This theme will explain a key finding in both the teacher and parent data, that additional language learning was not considered an educational priority for children with SEND, as other provisions were considered to be more important. To better understand this theme, context is provided through the following sub-theme.

5.3.1. Disparities in Second Language Education Across Schools

Disparities emerged in the amount of second language education offered at the different school sites discussed in this study, especially for students who accessed special classes or who were at a specialist setting.

At the Special School, students accessing the QEP modified curriculum, as described in Chapter 4. Methodology, had very limited FSL or ESL provisions as part of their learning. Teachers who taught either FSL or ESL described teaching only the very basics, having limited time to teach the subject. One teacher in the English section stated she had "one period per six-day cycle to teach French" and compared what was taught as "very minimal compared to, let's say, if they were in a regular school … [where] … they would probably have French immersion." Teachers at this school also suggested that they stuck to teaching the very basics because they "haven't had any training for [second language teaching]" and instead "just make it up" (Teacher, Special School, English section). Another teacher on the French side of the Special School believed her ability to teach French to be "questionable." This again underlines either a lack of training, with teachers feeling unprepared to teach a second language in this Special School, or it indicated that the school paid little attention to whether teachers had the skills to teach a second language when hiring. Instead teachers fell back on "*des comptines en anglais"* (English nursery rhymes) (Teacher, Special School, French section) in ESL or the "*Bonjour* song" according to a teacher on the English side teaching FSL. One teacher in the English section of the Special school wished for more

"guidance and like how to teach especially a child on the spectrum, a second language." Teachers confirmed that the alternative curriculum at the Special School, which students automatically begin in high school, offered no second language instruction at all.

In the public system, an ESL teacher at a French public school confirmed how language learning options decreased as specialist support increased. This teacher was instructing smaller specialist groups of students with SEND and described having to fight for these students' ESL allowance but failed to receive support from her previous school:

> I wanted to propose 1.5 hours for English … but it was denied at my old school and one of the reasons given [was] they have intensive English in Grade 6, so they said oh, it doesn't matter if they don't have their English [for] 1.5 hours, they're just gonna catch up for it in Grade 6. … The thing is that special ed students … don't have the opportunity to be in grade 6 intensive English (Teacher, Public School, French).

The teacher was describing intensive English, a unique program which exists in Quebec, where in Grade 5 or 6, students are immersed in English as a second language communicative classes for six months, and then return to their other subjects for the remainder of the year (*Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur*, 2017). The teacher explained that this offer makes up for a lack of ESL instruction in the early primary years. Students in special classes at this school were not offered the chance to improve their English through this program and instead continued with a limited number of hours of ESL per week. The teacher at this school recognized the injustice of this for students with SEND, hence defending the need to increase the number of hours offered for ESL overall.

At a private Jewish school, a teacher explained that students could receive additional learning support through access to "resource" classes, but at the expense of Hebrew classes. This showed that when special services were added to students' timetables, additional language learning was sacrificed. Parent A described her child's bilingual school, which

would have normally offered balanced education in both French and English. However because her child was moved from the regular class into a learning centre, which was for students with additional learning needs, learning became "80 to 90 per cent … [in] … English … so the French is there but it's a bit more of the like the basic, the greetings, like your colours, your numbers" (Parent A). Even though the amount of second language education differed between the education settings that participants experienced, the same story emerged throughout: when students were in either additional specialist classes or were put into a special school, they would be entitled to less second language education than their peers in the regular classroom.

5.3.2. Language Learning is Not the Priority.

Parents consistently sacrificed additional language instruction in pursuit of better special education services. When dissatisfied with the French immersion and Hebrew private school, Parent C sent both their two children with disabilities to an English Special School, thus greatly reducing their exposure to French and Hebrew. Parent C wished that "there was more French, but it is a special English school," so understood that "it's not something that can just be offered and it's not something all kids can handle." Parent C seemed resigned to a system which offered fewer second language options for children in specialist settings.

Parent A also accepted the fact that access to French would be reduced as soon as her child was moved from the main classroom to a learning center. She explained that the school wanted to "focus on what the child needs," which may have been referring to the core subjects at the expense of languages education. One teacher in the English section of the Special School agreed that these students had bigger priorities with "so much to fit into our schedules between the therapies", in explanation for why second language education was not given much time or thought for these children. Parent B also seemed to accept this was the way it went for children with SEND: "that's just part of her disability … They don't get as

much practice as they should in [second languages].” This insinuated that it was natural that having a disability entailed a lack of access to additional language learning.

Teachers at one public, the private, and the Special School explained that for parents, languages were not going to be the top priority. This opinion was based on discussions they had with parents of their students. The ESL teacher at the French public school tried to be understanding when her subject was simply not a priority for parents with children who have SEND:

> A lot [of parents] focus all their energy on French and math and the rest of the subjects … The teacher side of me gets annoyed because I feel like my subject is just as important … but the more human side of me says, you know what, they have a lot going on (Teacher, Public School, French).

This teacher seemed accepting that when there were a lot of other considerations to make for these students, learning English did not factor as a priority. During the interviews, when teachers were asked if parents ever discussed their child’s languages education, almost all teachers said no. This suggested that either langauges education was not a priority for parents of these students or that these parents simply did not expect their child to have much languages education. Findings from both groups of participants suggested that parents accepted that with more specialist settings comes fewer second language learning options.

As previous findings have already underlined, special education services are lacking in funding and resources. In response to a question regarding whether students had enough second language instruction at the school, one teacher in the English section of Leaps Forward stated that she did not think second language education was of as much importance as the core subjects such as math, language arts, and science. Teachers ascertained that language learning was not a priority in special education at their school and was treated as “an afterthought” according to a teacher on the English side of the Special School. This

teacher clarified that if they had time, they might "integrate a little bit of the second language, but it hasn't been a priority." This was echoed by a teacher at the same school in the French section. When referring to ESL and FSL classes, they stated "*Ce n'est vraiment pas une priorité pour nous."* (It's really not our priority.)

This attitude regarding language instruction not being a priority seemed to be influenced by a lack of wider institutional support for language learning for children with SEND, where teachers both lacked training and resources. One teacher on the French side of the Special School described support for French and math, "*qui sont quand même les matières principales. ... Pour le reste on n'a vraiment pas de soutien."* (which are of course, the main subjects … for the rest there is really little support.)

Some teachers at Leaps Forward seemed to lack knowledge of their students' home languages, or they were confused about which languages their students understood. One teacher in the French section of the Special School was not certain whether their student spoke Lebanese Arabic. Another teacher on the English side of the school had a student who enjoyed Greek songs due their Greek heritage, but the teacher did not know if this student understood the meaning of the songs. The latter example was of a non-verbal child, suggesting that with non-verbal autism, teachers learnt less about the languages spoken in the home. One teacher in the French section of Leaps Forward agreed with this: *"Ma classe ... a des enfants qui ne sont pas verbaux, ... du coup c'est difficile de savoir où ils en sont, qu'est-ce qu'ils comprennent"* (my class … has nonverbal children… so it's difficult to know where they're from, what they understand). Even though it was clearly more challenging to gather this information directly from the students themselves, the teachers' confusion suggested that they were not accessing this information from other means, such as from the school or through meetings with parents.

In addition, two participants at the Special School expressed that with non-verbal autism, focusing on multimodal communication had greater priority than spoken communication. A teacher on the French side of the Special School explained that there was not "*une barrière de langue parce qu'on entre le plus souvent en contact avec eux avec des images*" (a language barrier because we're mostly communicating through images). Where this may suggest that at times teachers did not perceive languages to be an effective tool or classroom aid, other teachers reported that languages were an invaluable resource. This developed into the final theme: Languages as a classroom tool/resource.

5.4. Languages as a Classroom Tool/Resource

For the teachers in this study, multiple language use proved at times to be an invaluable resource or tool as outlined below according to the following sub-themes: Practical Advantages, Social and Emotional Benefits, Managing Emotions. The final section of this theme will detail when attempts to draw on a child's HL from teachers fall short of success when students prefer English.

5.4.1.Practical Advantages

When communication barriers existed between teachers and their students, being open to integrating some of the child's home or first language(s) bridged a gap and led to some valuable exchanges. For example, one teacher working at Leaps Forward described a previous Jewish Special School she worked at where one student spoke Yiddish to the teacher and would not speak much English. This teacher described how she and the student compromised by collaborating to each learn words in both Yiddish and English: "I learned the word and she learned the word. So, it was a weird like interaction and interchange of languages." This teacher clearly wanted to make the student feel they were able to use their home language in the classroom while making efforts to learn some of that language themselves. Another teacher on the English side of the same school recounted a student who

spoke Arabic at home. This student's mother gave the teacher some vocabulary used at home, and the teacher embedded this into their teaching, so the student learnt "those words on top of the English ones" (Teacher, Special School, English section). The teacher recognized that this not only facilitated this child's learning but also forged "connections like with their kind of culture" suggesting that the teacher saw this as an endeavour with multipronged advantages for the child, which links to the next sub-theme: social and emotional benefits.

5.4.2. Social and Emotional Benefits

Seven teachers identified not only the practical but also the social and emotional benefits of permitting students to bring their home language to the school setting. For example, a teacher at Leaps Forward on the English side could speak Italian with a student and described how the student was able to "open up a bit more" during these exchanges. She described the unique relationship this offered teacher and student because "on an emotional level, like if he [the student] was upset … it was a nice way of connecting."

One FSL teacher at a public school shared that she spoke Spanish with Hispanic students "to build a relationship with these kids before they even wanna listen to me teach a language." This teacher seemed to suggest that making those connections with students could then improve the classroom dynamic and relationship between teachers and students, although she also described being penalized by the "school board, when they found out I've been speaking Spanish to the kids that have just arrived" and expressed frustration because of this. This teacher had been in the profession for many years and seemed comfortable to confront these criticisms and continued to flout the unwritten rules, because she had seen the benefits on the ground.

Where teachers shared a language with a student, they created a bond through that language. However, even where this was not the case, three teachers said they used Google Translate to put students at ease. One teacher in the English section of Leaps Forward noted

that this method was “necessary” with a student who “doesn’t have enough English vocabulary” and “if there’s really something important, you know, I want him to feel comfortable saying it in Spanish.” This teacher was adamant that it was important to put these measures in place but asserted that they were only for the short term. She described it being like “one of those Star Trek, you know, like the universe translators, that nobody has to learn each other’s language, which, you know, that’s not the goal in the future.” Although this teacher was eager to ensure their student was understanding, this seemed to be a short-term fix and the teacher did not seem aware of methods or benefits to integrating the home language in the classroom in the long term. Another teacher in the English section of the Special School described a student who had just moved to Quebec from China, and this teacher expressed confusion as to how to approach this student’s mix of languages to best support his learning. This teacher wanted to be able to understand his home language but was not sure how to fit this in when she was also required to teach him French. The teacher stressed that there was a real lack of support for teachers to know how to incorporate HL’s into the classroom, and she also resorted to the use of Google Translate to ease comprehension. In referring to having more resources in this child’s HL, the teacher concluded, “I think having more support would be appreciated”, for example she said that the school hadn’t yet found a way to switch the iPad to Mandarin.

For many teachers, the ability to use the HL in the classroom was a source of comfort for their students and helped them build their identity. Although teachers who were proficient in languages other than French and English were more likely to bring those other languages into their classroom teaching, some teachers only able to speak French and/or English nevertheless found other ways to integrate a students’ home languages. One teacher (French and English speaking) described a project they led to explore and highlight teacher and student ethnicities outside of the classroom at Leaps Forward. They celebrated these varied

ethnicities in the common room, where they put up flags, brought in food and put on music, all related to the countries that staff came from; the teacher was planning a similar project focused on students' identities, to expose them to the diversity within the student population and to provide students a platform to share this part of themselves.

Three teachers stated that learning languages was crucial to building self-confidence for students with SEND, not only by incorporating the heritage languages into the classroom but also by simply giving students agency to choose if they wanted to learn French and English. One teacher in the English section of the Special School described how students with special needs are sometimes treated differently because of their disability and have had decisions made for them: "people tend to treat them different … [and] … don't let them also choose things." This teacher saw the benefits of students having the agency to learn "a language that they choose by themselves … especially at their age. They are teenagers right now. So they are in the search of being themselves and that's what they choose." This implied that the teacher thought that denying students the opportunity to learn a language was not just about the language itself but also addressed a wider issue regarding the impacts of inaccessibility on students' sense of worth and self-esteem. Another teacher in the English section of the same school saw the tangible impact on a students' self-esteem when a student of hers learnt a bit of French. The teacher found the student started talking to the francophone caretaker at the school: "He goes up there and like starts saying hi, how are you, like in French." The teacher realized, "That's really cool because he felt confident enough to do that, whereas before, he might have been a little bit more shy." The teacher witnessed the way that language learning equipped a student to become a more sociable member of his community. As one teacher at Leaps Forward in the English section put it, language learning is part of developing "identity and personality, tastes and everything." These teachers believed that the

option to learn both societal languages would positively impact students' social and emotional wellbeing and personal development.

5.4.3 Managing Emotions

During challenging moments in the classroom, teachers sometimes used languages as a tool to de-escalate student distress. One teacher at Leaps Forward described a situation she faced with a student who came from a home where the mother spoke English but the grandmother spoke French:

> Even when he was getting really riled up, if I switched to French … he would like snap out of it and he would listen to me again. … either like a meltdown or having like too much sensory input, they can't process anything new … there was something that … it could kind of reset. … he was not processing any new English I said. But if I switched to French then he could like process that again.

This phenomenon, where the switch of language seemed to calm this student down, was a powerful tool for the teacher to help this student manage their emotions in a moment of dysregulation.

One teacher from the English section of Leaps Forward believed that for emotional regulation, having both languages could make a significant difference in the context of Quebec because "you're gonna hear both languages" in society. The teacher explained how it could be extremely frustrating for students with autism if they could not "express their needs, if they don't understand not to be upset and become aggressive" presumably if they were in situations where they could not understand either French or English. This teacher suggested that being ill-equipped in the basics in both French and English could result in frustrating social encounters for children with autism, many of whom already struggle to manage this emotion (Cappe et al., 2021).

Although many teachers valued incorporating and teaching different languages to students with SEND, three teachers explained that their efforts fell short of success because students preferred to speak English. Another teacher on the English side of Leaps Forward who spoke Arabic recalled trying to speak with a student who also spoke Arabic, but the student "refused to answer" (Teacher, Special School, English section) and the teacher quickly went back to speaking English. A different teacher at the same school also faced rejection from a student when she tried speaking Spanish with them. She described the student's reaction: "He says no, we speak English here" (Teacher, Special School, English section).

There could be many reasons why these students rejected speaking their home languages with their teacher, but what was evident from teachers was that when it happened, they accepted students' choice of English. Two teachers suggested that students might elect an English-only policy for school because they preferred a strict routine, which might be a part of their autism. According to Parent D, "For some kids, especially on the autism spectrum, I think sometimes being rigid is good and they require that."

Many teachers in this study displayed an interest in the repertoire of languages their students spoke, reflecting positive attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND. Teachers devised projects and strategies which integrated different languages, without any official training on this. They implemented these practices, despite criticism or with limited resources and support in schools to do so, when faced with increasingly diverse student populations.

Teachers reported limited support to implement long-term changes for language-related pedagogies in the classroom; their efforts to include different languages in the classroom were notable but unsustainable, because they lacked time to develop this type of instruction. Ultimately the efforts they put in could not dismantle the barriers to children with

SEND accessing equal language learning opportunities, ingrained at a systemic level. Parents largely believed it was their responsibility to right any imbalance that existed for their child with SEND in language learning, rather than it being the responsibility of the Quebec system to ensure all children, regardless of their disability, have access to both French and English through education. Parent B had to "compensate" on what they believed was missed in English learning at school and described her child's activities: "At home, she watches TV in English, she listens to music in English … I read to her in English." Parent C stressed the belief that responsibility for developing their child's English was theirs, despite not having the time to take this on: "I guess in theory … I can get a French tutor to work with them or I can like, I can do more."

This chapter explored the four main themes found in parent and teacher data regarding attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND in Quebec. These key themes linked together to discover that the reason that parents and teachers in this study have conflicting attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND is partly caused by the lack of suitably adapted langauges materials and teacher training for these children, which could help them in the path to becoming multilingual. Parents and teachers are dissatisfied with the SEND services which students are receiving and so inevitably, finding the best education setting to meet a child's needs becomes the priority endeavour and efforts are channeled towards this, highlighting the overarching theme: When resources are limited, we resort to priorities. Chapter 6. Discussion will further outline this theme and will organize these findings in relation to the research questions

Chapter 6. Discussion

This chapter will interpret the current study's findings in relation to the research questions as well as the literature relevant to parent and teacher attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND. This will be undertaken within a wider explanation of the overarching theme from this study: When resources are limited, we resort to priorities. I will begin with a discussion surrounding the possible environmental factors which influenced parental and teacher attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND in Quebec, which address the (a) subset of questions for each of the main research questions. The (b) subset of research questions will be reiterated below but addressed in the subsequent section. These research questions are:

1. What attitudes do Quebec parents of children with SEND have towards developing bi/multilingualism for these children?

    a) What are the societal, institutional, personal and cultural factors which might influence these attitudes?

    b) To what extent do these attitudes influence their Family Language Policy?

2. What attitudes do teachers in Quebec have towards developing bi/multilingualism for children with SEND?

    a) What environmental factors at the school as well as personal factors influence these attitudes?

    b) To what extent do these attitudes influence teachers' language practices in the classroom?

6.1. Environmental Factors

In general, parent and teacher participants expressed positive attitudes towards childhood multilingualism for non-typically developing children. It is important to note that, apart from the eleven teachers at the Special School who were signed up by their administrative

department, the three remaining teachers and five parent participants voluntarily responded to a call to participate. This may play a role in explaining the positive attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND in this study, as participants may have had a pre-existing interest.

Nevertheless, there were many reasons that parents and teachers in the study perceived multilingualism as an asset for children with SEND, reflecting recent research which has strongly advised on the benefits of language learning for this group (De Valenzuela et al., 2016; Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2021; Lindholm-Leary & Howard, 2008; Mady, 2018). It was nonetheless somewhat surprising that parents and teachers were mostly convinced of multilingualism being an achievable goal for children with SEND, as this does not mirror past findings on parental and teacher attitudes. Prior research, for example investigating parent and teacher attitudes towards French immersion (FI) for children with SEND in the Canadian context, painted a different picture. One teacher researcher, Mannavarayan (2002) suggested that FI classes were too challenging for children with SEND and found that parents of children with SEND were also questioning whether FI was appropriate for their child. According to Mady (2018), this has cultivated the perception of FI as elite and reserved for the most academic and high achieving students, which may be the case in the rest of Canada excluding Quebec where the majority of children are expected to learn French. Arnett (2013) believed that because of unremitting patterns exempting students with learning difficulties from FI, parents were selecting this program for their typically developing children so they were learning alongside fewer students with difficulties. Mady (2018) theorized that this view of second language learning being too challenging for children with SEND may have persisted in English-speaking Canada where parents feel that having English is enough to get by and French is a bonus. The findings from my study imply that attitudes may be different in a context where two languages are at play at a societal level.

Quebec is a distinct linguistic landscape from the rest of Canada, where there are high rates of French-English bilingualism and many individuals are using both languages daily.

With this in mind, parents and teachers have seen what is possible; in a province where the fluid use of two languages is considered the norm, especially in Montreal, there were more chances for children with SEND to be exposed to two languages. It is possible, therefore, that in this context, less thought is afforded to whether it is a good idea or even possible for a child with SEND to be picking up another language, when those children are already learning more than one language due to exposure in their homes or environment. One participant working at the Special School, Leaps Forward, explained that their students hear French on the metro voiceover and they see bilingual signs around the school such as for the toilets. Switching fluidly between the two languages is an idiosyncratic feature of language use in the province, and teachers reported using both languages in their classrooms. Therefore, the linguistic landscape may be one environmental factor impacting attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND; in other words, a multilingual setting may reduce deficit ideologies regarding the linguistic capabilities of children with SEND.

Furthermore, with increasing diversity changing the landscape and classroom demographics, the teachers in this study reported that in recent years they have worked with more students who both had SEND and were multilingual. Teachers' attitudes may have therefore expanded through their experiences with children with SEND who were managing and negotiating multiple languages in their repertoire when moving between home languages to the languages of school.

When it came to status and solidarity, considered to be the main dimensions which make up language attitudes, both were reflected in participant attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND. The former was discussed more frequently. Most teachers and parents were found to believe that knowing both French and English can open

many doors to future opportunities for children with SEND. In fact, many of them thought of bilingualism as being essential, when considering future employment, both in Quebec, where French is likely a requirement, and throughout the rest of Canada where English is needed. For the five teachers who were not as convinced, they thought that language skills may not apply to the manual jobs that they have seen their students go on to do. However, parents and teachers expressed concern that they might not be fully equipping children with SEND with the linguistic tools they would need and instead are limiting the opportunities for these children. Many participants in the study had first-hand experience of the barriers to employment that English monolingualism created in Quebec. There was a shared sentiment that not being proficient in French could disadvantage individuals, for example when an ESL teacher described feeling she had less power in staff meetings, because French was her second language. Being embroiled in this linguistic battleground may be a further environmental factor to have intensified the concerns that parents and teachers had for these children and their access to language learning. Genesee & Fortune (2014) agreed that denying opportunities for bilingualism to children with SEND could disadvantage them and is even unethical in a context where bilingualism is intrinsically linked to professional advancement, building relations and a sense of belonging to that society, which is the case in Quebec.

Fewer participants expressed attitudes which clearly intimated a link between languages and belonging to a group, concerning the solidarity factor, although questions which would draw out this factor were mainly directed at the parent group. For the few parents who had extended family who spoke a different language to the main language they used with their child, maintaining that connection through language was important to parents. A few parents thought that their child could better integrate into their extracurricular club if they could speak French and English.

Parents admitted to struggling to access public services in getting a diagnosis for SEND, a challenge parents have faced in other provinces in Canada (Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2021). They were having to cope with a whole new layer of bureaucracy, just to make sure their child was given an equal chance to succeed. Some teachers and parents talked about the financial pressures this added to family life: the public sector simply did not have the capacity, meaning parents were having to go private. These challenges imply that from an early stage, parents were having to make decisions for their child's needs that put pressure on their lifestyle and resources. This could be a further environmental factor which pushed parents into feeling that they were responsible for their child's special needs provisions when government funded provisions have not been adequate. This perhaps explains why, despite the positive attitudes shown for languages education for children with SEND, parents were making choices first and foremost based on special education support. This will be discussed further at the end of this chapter.

6.2. Attitudes versus Systemic Barriers

The remainder of this chapter will address the second sub-section of research questions, 1 (b) and 2 (b).

Teachers', parents', and children's use of plurilingual practices and fluid language use was common in this sample, at home and in the classroom. Historically, there has been a trend of professionals advising families to keep languages separate for children with SEND, despite this being unfaithful to the realities of communication within multilingual families (Yu, 2016). One parent recalled recommendations for the one-parent-one-language (OPOL) approach which was first proposed by Ronjat (1993). In the early years, this parent had tried to keep to this rule when speaking with their child. However, the majority of parent participants explained they were not worried about mixing languages with their children at home; Parent E lightly dismissed the idea that she might be doing it wrong. Some teachers

and parent participants challenged traditional views of what it meant to be bilingual or multilingual for children with SEND, whose language goals and needs may look different to those of a typically developing child. Instead they proposed manageable goals for children with SEND to build basic comprehension skills in two or three languages for use in different contexts these children might find themselves in.

Participants suggested that the standardized tests which children must complete in languages were arbitrary compared to what is important for this cohort's language use. When parents expressed doubts about their child's language proficiency, these doubts seemed to point to unsuitable assessments rather than to an inherent problem with the child. Many teachers stated their belief that with the right adaptations, children with SEND could participate in a language learning setting on an equal footing to typically developing children.

This reflects a growing trend of burgeoning research into ways to better integrate children with SEND into language learning programs, in the pursuit of more equitable language learning opportunities for these children. Some key studies have shown how language learning could be an effective framework for providing targeted interventions for children with SEND. Wise and Chen (2010) found that FI in the early years is suitable for at-risk readers; specifically a program which involved targeted phonological awareness instruction in French saw beneficial results for young learners. Baker et al. (2018) excel at offering teachers practical recommendations for inclusive methods in dual language classes in the US, such as using visuals and multimodal practices key to the principles of the universal design for learning (UDL), a multimodal teaching practice recommendation to engage all learners.

Many teachers in this study were aware of these strategies for effective differentiation for students with SEND in the language learning classroom and some were employing them effectively. However, they had developed these strategies through experience rather than

through specific training. Newer teachers, however, were at a loss as to how best to integrate these strategies when teaching languages, having received no training and not having the same amount of experience as their more senior colleagues. At Leaps Forward, some teachers felt that second languages education was not as important for nonverbal children, who needed visual tools to express themselves as well as gesture-based communication. This contributed to a sense that, for teachers, languages education was separate to special education strategies. On the other hand, Mady (2018) found that teachers in FI in Ontario, Canada, implemented special education strategies into languages education, using their skills to adapt task material for children in their classes with SEN although they doubted their abilities in doing this. A lack of confidence in how to teach a second language to children with SEND was voiced by teachers in this current study, who were implementing ideas based on trial and error. Mady (2018) suggested that developed pre-service and in-service training to break down the siloes separating languages education and special education could greatly benefit teachers.

Whereas Mady (2018) described languages teachers (specifically FI teachers) who were seeking better training in special education instruction, I heard from special education teachers looking for better training in second language instruction, especially at Leaps Forward. This demonstrates that professionals from both areas should be given more chances to work together and learn from one another, either in training or practice, which is supported in Mady (2018). Parents and teachers have made steps towards better inclusion for children with SEND in language learning, perhaps influenced to a great extent by their positive attitudes. However, these attitudes have come up against a lack of systemic support.

6.3. Plurilingual Practices

This study adopted the term *multilingualism* to underline the use of more than two languages by one individual or one society (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2007) and *bilingualism* when alluding to two languages in regular use by one

individual who would "need and use two (or more) languages in their everyday lives" (Grosjean, 1992, p.51). However, these terms have taken on different meanings in different contexts and have been assigned different definitions (Cenoz, 2013; Kay-Raining Bird et al., 2016). These terms were also chosen because they are used to refer to multiple languages co-existing at a societal, rather than just an individual level (Galante, 2022) and this study investigated the implications of multiple languages in society for children with SEND. However, I applied the terms flexibly with participants to understand how they use them in the context of language learning for children with SEND which showed there is not one fixed understanding of these terms.

Whereas multilingualism can be understood as a "social phenomenon of multiple languages that coexist in a given society" (Galante, 2022, p.478), plurilingualism is languaging at the individual level, illustrating the reality of a mixture of languages constantly interrelating and mixing in a multilingual's brain, in a state of flux (Piccardo, 2019). Learning languages therefore is a dynamic process through which the individual's linguistic repertoire is shaped, "where preexisting linguistic knowledge and competence is taken into consideration" (Piccardo, 2013, p.603), and proficiency levels are neither equal nor stable between languages (Galante, 2022).

Instructional plurilingualism can encompass a plethora of diverse practices and policies as outlined in Galante (2022). Many of these practices were evident in the classroom practices described in this study. For example, teachers discussed examples of code-switching or alternating between languages such as French and English (Green & Wei, 2014); plurilanguaging which is meaning meaning-making through access to all of one's linguistic and semiotic resources (Piccardo, 2019) such as when teachers were integrating multimodal assisted technologies and meaning-making gestures; translation using technology; intercomprehension (Candelier et al., 2010) where one language is understood using another

language, for example one teacher described being able to share a joke with a student in Dutch through her knowledge of German; and intercultural communication (Beacco et al., 2016) such as the project at Leaps Forward where students and teachers shared knowledge of their cultural background through food, dance, language and music.

In other words, teachers in this study were already employing the didactics of plurilingual pedagogies in the classroom, activating the broad scope of students' linguistic repertoires by integrating translation through technologies, the fluid incorporation of different languages, and projects which enhance plurilingual competencies and explore different cultures and languages. This reflects these teachers' positive attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND. They saw how these methods provided comfort and a sense of belonging to students in the classroom while increasing students' self-esteem. However, even when these practices were resourceful for students with SEND, without policies and support for integrating language-based practices in the classroom, they were used reactively or squeezed in as an afterthought or addition, rather than prioritized. Teachers reported not having the time to always implement these practices and importantly, not having been trained in a formal sense. Teachers independently took the initiative when they saw the need, even if this went against a wider school policy or was not a part of the formal curriculum.

Diaz and Schwarz (2022) wrote about how to introduce culturally and linguistically responsive teaching to a classroom with diverse learning needs. An illustrative example describes the teaching practices in a dual language classroom in the Rocky Mountain region of the US, which included students who had been identified as English Language Learners (ELLs) with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The researchers report that the teacher's practices were multifaceted and integrated with multicultural texts so students could also explore their identities, allowing for the use of translanguaging and differentiation of

material. The focus of the chapter is on the integration of both academic scaffolding and culturally relevant pedagogy to embolden students' confidence and is an example of the effectiveness of integrating strategies when teachers have the resources and appropriate training.

Although the teachers in this study have a growing awareness of the need for students with SEND to express themselves and learn multiple languages, they did not have access to the same resources and examples. Structured teaching and adapted methods may encourage students to understand these practices better, rather than shut them down by asking teachers to use only English or French. Teachers were also quick to resort to English when students rejected their attempts to incorporate their home language.

6.4. We Resort to Priorities

Because language instruction and special education services seemingly were not working together, many parents were making choices between special education support and second language input, and they typically opted for the special education support. Parents expressed resignation with a system that was not designed to prioritize languages education over their child's most immediate special educational needs. In these cases, the reality was that children with SEND were accessing less second language education than their typically developing peers, whether they were enrolled in public, private, or special schools, according to teacher and parental accounts. Second language education is limited in French public schools where ESL provision is minimal (Lamarre, 2007) and these hours were reduced further in either specialist settings or special and support classes.

Teachers reported the rarity of a parent demanding better languages education, when their child was accessing a specialist provision. One teacher at Leaps Forward was surprised because she initially had expected parents to query her students' academic progress, but they never did. Parents were more likely to ask about emotional regulation, communication, and

the basic wellbeing of their child. They seemed to accept that languages services and special education services did not work hand in hand, hence deciding to choose special education over languages education.

There was little parental expectation that children would gain dual proficiency in French and English at the Special School, according to teachers. Rather, they felt that they must invest more effort, time, and money into language learning for their child. Parent participants were divided on whether they had the capacity to do this or not, although they agreed that the responsibility was theirs. Whether this was because they did not believe the system could change or that they truly believed the onus was on them, was not clear. Kay-Raining Bird (2021) found similar parent beliefs in a study conducted in a large school district in Eastern Ontario, with parents going to extra measures at home, to ensure their child with SEND was keeping up in French immersion.

Without pressures from the system for there to be equal second language education for children with SEND, nor pressures from parents, teachers in this study focused on their priorities which were to differentiate for the gamut of different abilities in their classroom while managing behavioral challenges and keeping their children safe.

The competition at play between special education and languages education is not exclusive to the Quebec system. In a study conducted in Canada (including Quebec), the US, UK and the Netherlands, De Valenzuela et al. imagines a system where "students receive their special education services within language education programs, or their language education programs as a component of their special education services through collaborative program development" (2016, p.33).

Given that many parents and teachers strongly believed that children with SEND should be given equal chances to become multilingual for the many advantages and benefits

this may offer, there seems to be a pressing need to find a way for special education to work in tandem rather than against language education provisions.

This chapter has developed a discussion of the overarching theme found in this study, through a process of analysing parent and teacher data regarding their attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND in relation to the literature on this topic. The chapter also discussed the environmental factors underlying this theme (i.e., lack of resources, the linguistic landscape, years of teaching experience). Parents' and teachers' positive attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND could inform formal policies to promote equal language learning opportunities for these children.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

Through a small sample of interviews with parents and teachers in Quebec, this study corroborated that additional language learning opportunities for children with SEND were fewer than for typically developing children not accessing school-based special education services. This finding does not align with the philosophy of inclusive schools adopted in Quebec. The study focused on the dichotomy of this reality. It further focused on the dichotomy between the generally positive attitudes towards the benefits of multilingualism for children with SEND in Quebec among the teachers and parents, and the lack of prioritization of language education for these children.

This study contributes to language attitude theory and research, building on the status, solidarity, and cognitive dimensions underlying attitudes towards childhood multilingualism. It expands this field of research to include children with SEND. The findings confirm the triad of status, solidarity, and cognitive development as evaluative dimensions of attitudes towards multilingualism and found that even with the added factor that the children referred to in this study had SEND, positive attitudes towards childhood multilingualism reflected all three of these components. However, there were also conflicting and contradicting attitudes in these dimensions which complicated the findings and highlighted how attitudes were being affected by wider societal barriers for children with SEND.

The study then focused on the fact that attitudes could be conflicting towards multilingualism for children with SEND and the reason behind this. Parent and teacher attitudes were generally positive in terms of the potential and benefits of multilingualism for children with SEND, but attitudes towards the reality of students with SEND learning a language tended to be pessimistic within the current system.

Positive attitudes only went so far as to make any difference in ensuring equal access to language learning opportunities for children with SEND. This is because, at the

institutional level, additional language learning and special education services do not work together. In relation to this study's participants, this meant that teachers and parents were more focused on having the right special education provisions over options for langauges education because the priority was to ensure students' immediate learning and social and emotional needs were being met. Even though teachers and parents were frequently employing multilingual approaches and allowing for flexible language use in the home and classroom, there was little formal direction of how to implement these practices for children with SEND, leaving parents and teachers unsure of whether they were doing the right thing. A more tailored or specialized system of support to meet the needs of these students seemed to inevitably mean less time was allocated to ensuring for additional language learning in the same system that would be suitable for these students' needs. Thus, additional language learning and special education were seen to be conflicting services according to participants in this study.

Future research must explore whether multilingual pedagogical approaches are suitably adapted to diverse classrooms which include children with SEND, and teachers require access to learn these approaches through training and resources. This raises awareness of the gap between special education and languages education. Researchers in both fields must work together to inform best practice considering the reality of classrooms today, in the province of Quebec and beyond.

7.1. Limitations

There were considerable limitations to the present study. The number of participants included in the study was small. Although this meant that I obtained rich data, the findings cannot be generalised. Furthermore, there were a disproportionate number of teachers interviewed at one special school, comparative to participants in public or private schools which may have skewed the findings. There may have been cultural and linguistic barriers to participate in the

study as recruitment material was only publicised in French and English and used terms such as SEND, which are tied to specific cultural and social contexts, and might be understood differently in other cultures. The findings may be limited to those who were at ease with the research procedures and may have even wanted to be interviewed on the topic, as many participants responded to a call. Finally, the study cannot make any assumptions regarding how the children themselves felt about their language learning because the interviews were only with parents and teachers and did not directly involve the children.

7.2.Implications and Directions for Future Research

The overarching theme identified in this study through parent and teacher accounts—When Resources are Limited, We Resort to Priorities—has valuable implications for the future of SEND education and educational research in Quebec, Canada. Parents and teachers in the study believed that children with SEND could become bilingual or multilingual. This was reflected in their daily practices, which suggests that these participants may be open to support a structured and integrated program of languages education for this cohort.

This study revealed that parents and teachers were not satisfied with special education services, both for diagnosing children and placing students in the best setting for their needs. Therefore, my research proposes that change is needed at the systemic level, because attitudes on the ground are ripe to include children with SEND in language education programs. More research into possible routes for systemic change is needed, to raise awareness of the disparities in opportunities for equal second language education for children with SEND. An integrated system where special education services were to include second language education and multilingual approaches or vice versa is the only way forward, to ensure that students with SEND can benefit from both equally.

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on parental and teacher attitudes towards multilingualism for children with SEND in the province of Quebec. Research which captures these attitudes on a larger scale is essential in order to gain awareness of how best to support teachers and parents in managing the teaching of multiple languages for children with SEND and if indeed, these attitudes are consistent with a more diverse population. Studies which propose specific classroom interventions for students with SEND in languages education with adapted and differentiated materials, would be valuable in the future to present schools and institutions with models to implement sustainable classroom practices in languages education and multilingual approaches. Furthermore, future research should investigate the attitudes of children with SEND themselves towards their opportunities and language learning given that learner's attitudes towards languages impacts their outcomes in acquisition (Torpsten, 2018). Finally, further research is needed into the multidimensional benefits that may be afforded to students with SEND through plurilingual instruction and multilingual approaches.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Material

RECRUTEMENT DE PARENT !

JE SUIS ÉTUDIANTE EN MAÎTRISE EN ÉDUCATION DE LANGUES SECONDAIRES À LA RECHERCHE DE PARENTS D'ENFANTS QUI ONT DES TROUBLES D'APPRENTISSAGES OU DES BESOINS SPÉCIFIQUES.CE SERAIT POUR UN PROJET DE RECHERCHE.

- Est-ce que vous parlez plusieures langues à la maison ?
    - Est-ce que votre enfant qui a des besoins spécifiques apprend une deuxième/troisième langue à l'école ?
- Ou, est-ce que vous le souhaiteriez?

Dans ces cas, j'aimerais en savoir davantage sur vos expériences!

LE PROJET:

- un entretien virtuel, sur Microsoft Teams
- Une série de questions de 45 minutes à propos de vos expériences

McGill

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

CONTACT

(MA Second Language Education)
Email :
amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca
Phone:
438 921 2768

MERCI

RECRUITING

TEACHERS/EDUCATORS TO EXCITING RESEARCH STUDY!

LOOKING INTO TEACHER/EDUCATOR ATTITUDES TOWARDS LANGUAGES/BILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

COULD YOU HELP ?

I AM LOOKING FOR :

- Teachers/educators with more than a year experience in Montreal
- Experience working with children with special educational needs
- Experience teaching languages/ESL/working with multilingual students

McGill

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

WHAT WOULD IT INVOLVE:

- 45 minute interview on Microsoft Teams
- The chance to share your experiences in teaching!

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH AMY FAULKNER

(MA Second Language Education)

Instagram : amy.faulkner48

Email : amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca

Phone: 438 921 2768

McGill
Department of Integrated Studies in Education

AMY FAULKNER
Masters of Arts in Second Language Education

Are you the parent(s) of a child with special educational needs/a learning disability?

IF YES...

- **Do you speak more than one language at home? OR,**
- **is your child exposed to more than one language outside of the home?**

If yes, I would love to hear from you!

RESEARCH PROJECT!

- To learn from parents about their home language practices within families with children with special educational needs
- To learn about the opportunities for children with special educational needs to learn languages at school

AIMS!

I would like to hear directly from parents to better inform research into the intersection between language learning and special educational needs/ learning disabilities.

I aim to produce new findings into language learning experiences of children with special educational needs/learning disabilities in my thesis publication

Contact:
amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca

What would it involve?

- an interview with me on Microsoft Teams (in French/English/ other if needed)
- a space for you to talk about your experiences
- your name will be changed for the study
- taking no more than 45 minutes of your time

McGill
Department of Integrated Studies in Education

AMY FAULKNER
MAÎTRISE EN LETTRES
ÉDUCATION DE LANGUES SECONDES
UNIVERSITÉ MCGILL

Parents d'enfants ayant des troubles d'apprentissage à Montreal

J'ai besoin de vous!

PROJET

- *Le projet de recherche examine les pratiques linguistiques en famille entre les parents et les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques et des troubles d'apprentissage.*
- *Le projet examine les opportunités d'apprendre des langues différentes à l'école pour les enfants ayant des troubles d'apprentissages*

EST-CE QUE...?

Vous parlez plus d'une langue à la maison (français/anglais/d'autres langues)?
Ou...
Est-ce que votre enfant qui a des besoins spécifiques apprend plusieurs/d'autres langues à l'école?
Voulez-vous partager vos expériences?

Votre participation comprend:

- un entretien virtuel avec moi, chercheuse principale, sur Microsoft Teams
- Une série de questions à propos de vos expériences
- une durée de 45 minutes
- Noms et informations personelles ne seront pas divulguer

Contact:
amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca
T: 438 921 2768

Appendix B: Teacher Consent Form

Researcher:

Amy Faulkner

M.A student

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University

(438) 9212768

Supervisor:

Dr Susan Ballinger

Associate Professor

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University

(514) 398-4527

(Mady, 2018)

Title of Project: Attitudes of parents and educators towards bilingualism and multilingualism for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Montreal.

Purpose of the study: This is an invitation to participate in my research study investigating parental and educator attitudes towards the opportunities and potential for children with special educational needs, learning difficulties and developmental disorders to learn and speak more than one language through childhood. Among teachers, I seek to learn about perceptions and practices in the classroom regarding teaching languages to children with special educational needs.

Study Procedures: You will be invited to participate in the following activities:

- **Consent Form**: Please make sure to read through this document carefully before consenting to participate in the study. Then, please print, sign, and return a copy of the form to amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca. Once returned, all consent forms will be stored in a password protected file using McGill's Microsoft 365 platform.
- **Demographic Questionnaire:** Upon receipt of the initial consent form, I will send you a questionnaire by email, as a Microsoft Form, soliciting basic information in relation to the topic of the study. The questionnaire will take around 10-15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is voluntary and any questions you wish to leave unanswered can remain blank. The forms will be stored in a password protected file upon receipt using McGill's Microsoft 365 platform. Upon receipt of the demographic questionnaire, the researcher will assign you a pseudonym for interview.

- **Individual Interviews:** I will invite you to a semi-structured interview which will last approximately 45 minutes. This will take place online on Microsoft Teams at your convenience.

- The interview will be loosely structured, and I will welcome you to expand and lead the conversation. However, there may be moments when I re-direct the conversation if time is limited. Interviews will be audio recorded and video recorded for the purposes of transcription. You are welcome to turn off your camera at any point.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the study at any point. During data collection, any questions you do not wish to respond to, can remain blank or unanswered. If you choose to withdraw during or right after the study, all information obtained up until that point will be destroyed unless you specify otherwise at the time of withdrawal. Following publication of information, already published data can't be destroyed. I can only remove your dataset from further analysis and from use in future publications. Your consent document and other identifiable information will be kept for seven years. I will destroy the code key linking your information to the data seven years following publication, approximately June 2031 and once this code is destroyed, I will not be able to identify you and withdraw your data.

Potential Risks: There are no potential risks to you in participating in this study. Upon receipt of data, each participant will be assigned a pseudonym under which your responses will be associated. Any other individuals referenced in the study will also be assigned a pseudonym.

Potential Benefits: Participating in this study will not lead to direct benefits to you. However, the semi-structured interview and conversation will provide you the chance to speak about your experiences and voice any concerns and challenges you face. I hope the findings of this study will deepen your understanding of the policies and practices surrounding bilingual and multilingual opportunities for children with special educational needs, learning more than one language whilst growing up. The findings will highlight where there are shared challenges among educators.

Compensation: Participation is voluntary and there is no compensation

Confidentiality: All identifiable data collected as part of this study will remain confidential. Initial consent forms, questionnaires and raw audio and video recordings with any identifiable information will be collected and stored using the McGill's Microsoft 365 platform. In the event of an in-person interview, raw audio recordings will also be stored on McGill's Microsoft 365 platform. Participants will be assigned a pseudonym to be used in place of your name at interview, in interview transcripts and in publications. One month following the completion of this study, consent forms, questionnaire responses, and audio-video recordings containing identifiable data will be moved from the McGill Microsoft OneDrive and stored in a password protected file on the principal investigator's personal computer and in an encrypted external hard drive for a period of seven years following publication, before being permanently destroyed. Only the researcher and their supervisor

will have access to the file. The interview recordings are to be used by the researcher only, and for no other purpose. These recordings will not be shared with a third party. Any interviews conducted in French will be translated by the researcher who speaks French. However, I cannot guarantee protection against unwanted interception when communicating through the internet.

Dissemination of Results: The results from this study will be published in the researcher's master's thesis. It is likely the results will be shared at academic conferences and through publications for academic journals.

If you have any further questions regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca or phone: 4389212768. You can also contact my supervisor Dr Susan Ballinger with any queries or concerns susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca citing REB file number 23-06-021

For written consent
Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to
participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your (your child's) information. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Formulaire de consentement

Chercheuse:

Amy Faulkner

Maîtrise en lettres

Département d'études intégrées en sciences de l'éducation

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Directrice de thèse:

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Maître de conférences

Département d'études intégrées en sciences de l'éducation

Université McGill

(514) 398-4527

susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca

Titre du Projet: Attitudes de parents et d'éducateurs envers le bilinguisme et le multilinguisme pour les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques et des troubles d'apprentissage à Montréal

L'objectif de l'étude: Je vous invite à participer dans un projet de recherche qui examine les attitudes de parents et d'éducateurs en ce qui concerne les opportunités et le potentiel pour les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques et des troubles d'apprentissage d'apprendre et de parler plus d'une langue pendant l'enfance et de développer dans le bilinguisme ou multilinguisme. Parmi les éducateurs, je cherche à savoir les perceptions et les pratiques dans la salle de classe en ce qui concerne les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques, concernant l'enseignement de langues.

Les procédures: Je vous invite à participer dans les activités suivantes:

- **Le formulaire de consentement**: Merci de lire attentivement et en entier ce document avant de consentir à participer dans l'étude. Après, merci d'imprimer, signer, et envoyer une copie à amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca. Une fois reçus, je garderai les formulaires dans un dossier protégé par un mot de passe sur la plateforme Microsoft 365 de McGill.
- **Le questionnaire démographique :** Une fois que j'ai reçu le formulaire de consentement, je vous enverrai un questionnaire par courriel, dans un formulaire

Microsoft, qui sollicite des informations de base en relation de l'étude. Le questionnaire vous prendra environ 10-15 minutes. Le questionnaire est volontaire et vous êtes libre de laisser des questions vide si vous préférez. Je garderai les formulaires dans un dossier protégé par un mot de passe, sur la plateforme Microsoft 365 de McGill. Une fois reçu, je vous donnerai un pseudonyme pour ce qui suit.

- **Les entretiens individuels :** Je vous inviterai à un entretien virtuel semi-structuré d'une durée d'environ 45 minutes. L'entretien aura lieu sur Microsoft Teams. L'entretien aura une structure flexible. N'hésitez pas de diriger la conversation. Les entretiens seront enregistrés uniquement pour la transcription.

Participation volontaire: Votre participation est complètement volontaire**,** et vous pouvez vous retirer de l'étude à n'importe quel moment. Si vous choisissez de vous retirer pendant l'étude ou juste après, je détruirai les informations qui vous concernent, obtenues jusqu'à ce moment-là, au moins que vous décidez autrement. Après la publication, je ne peux pas détruire les informations. Je ne peux qu'enlever les données d'une possible publication dans le futur. Je garderai le formulaire de consentement et d'autres informations identifiables pour une période de sept années. Je détruirai la liste de pseudonymes qui vous identifie sept années après la publication, vers juin 2031. Après ce moment-là, rien d'identifiable reste accessible.

Les risques possibles : Il n'y pas de risques pour vous. Je vous donnerai un pseudonyme pour l'entretien, la transcription et la publication. De plus, je donnerai un pseudonyme à d'autres individuels à ceux qu'on fait référence pendant l'étude.

Les bénéfices possibles: La participation ne vous confiera des bénéfices directs. Cependant, l'entretien semi-structuré vous offrira l'opportunité de parler de vos expériences, des préoccupations et défis auxquelles vous faites face. J'espère que les résultats vous aideront à mieux comprendre les pratiques et les politiques en ce qui concerne les opportunités pour les enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques d'apprendre des différentes langues. Les résultats souligneront les défis communs entre éducateurs.

Rémunération: Il n'y a pas de rémunération.

La confidentialité: Toutes les informations identifiables qui font partie de l'étude resteront confidentiels. Je garderai les formulaires de consentement, les questionnaires et les enregistrements sur la plateforme de Microsoft 365 de McGill. Je donnerai un pseudonyme à chaque participant, au lieu de votre nom à l'entretien, dans les transcriptions et dans les publications. Un mois après la fin de l'étude, je transférerai les formulaires de consentement, les réponses aux questionnaires et les enregistrements des entretiens de la plateforme Microsoft OneDrive de McGill à un dossier protégé par un mot de passe sur l'ordinateur de la chercheuse principale et dans un disque dur pour une durée de sept années après la publication, avant de les détruire pour toujours. L'accès au dossier sera limité à la chercheuse principale et leur directrice de thèse. Personne n'aura l'accès aux enregistrements sauf la chercheuse. La chercheuse principale traduira les entretiens français en anglais. Cependant, il est impossible de promettre la protection contre l'interception non souhaitée à travers l'utilisation de l'internet.

Diffusion de résultats: Les résultats de cette étude apparaîtront dans la publication d'une thèse pour la maîtrise en lettre de la chercheuse principale. Il est possible que les résultats soient partagés dans les conférences académiques et dans des revues académiques.

Si vous avez des questions de plus, n'hésitez pas de me contacter par courriel amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca. Sinon, vous pouvez contacter ma directrice Dr Susan Ballinger si vous avez des questions ou des soucis susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca. Si vous avez des soucis ou des plaintes éthiques concernant votre participation, et vous voulez parler à quelqu'un d'autre, merci de contacter la directrice associée de la recherche éthique sur 514-398-6831, lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca et fait référence au numéro du dossier 23-06-021.

Le consentement à l'écrit
Après avoir lire ce formulaire pour donner votre consentement, merci de signer en-dessous. Pour assurer le comportement correct tout au long de l'étude, des individuels autorisés, par exemple un membre du comité de recherche éthique aura l'accès à vos informations.

Nom: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Parent Consent Form

Researcher:

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Title of Project: Parental and educator attitudes towards bilingualism and multilingualism for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Montreal.

Purpose of the study: This is an invitation to participate in my research study investigating parental and educator attitudes towards the opportunities and potential for children with special educational needs, learning difficulties and developmental disorders to learn and speak more than one language growing up. Among parents, I seek to learn about perceptions and practices in the home regarding speaking different languages with children with special educational needs.

Study Procedures: You will be invited to participate in the following activities:

- **Consent Form**: Please make sure to read through this document carefully before consenting to participate in the study. Then, please print, sign, and return a copy of the form to amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca. Once returned, all consent forms will be stored in a password protected file using McGill's Microsoft 365 platform.
- **Demographic Questionnaire:** Upon receipt of the initial consent form, I will send you a questionnaire by email, as a Microsoft Form, soliciting basic information in relation to the topic of the study. The questionnaire will take around 10-15 minutes to

complete. The questionnaire is voluntary and any questions you wish to leave unanswered can remain blank. The forms will be stored in a password protected file upon receipt using McGill's Microsoft 365 platform. Upon receipt of the demographic questionnaire, the researcher will assign you a pseudonym for interview.

- **Individual Interviews:** I will invite you to a semi-structured interview which will last approximately 45 minutes. This will take place online on Microsoft Teams at your convenience. The interview will be loosely structured, and I will welcome you to expand and lead the conversation. However, there may be moments when I re-direct the conversation if time is limited. Interviews will be audio recorded and video recorded for the purposes of transcription. You are welcome to turn off your camera at any point.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the study at any point. During data collection, any questions you do not wish to respond to, can remain blank or unanswered. If you choose to withdraw during or right after the study, all information obtained up until that point will be destroyed unless you specify otherwise at the time of withdrawal. Following publication of information, already published data can't be destroyed. I can only remove your dataset from further analysis and from use in future publications. Your consent document and other identifiable information will be kept for seven years. I will destroy the code key linking your information to the data seven years following publication, approximately June 2031 and once this code is destroyed, I will not be able to identify you and withdraw your data.

Potential Risks: I understand that there may be a degree of discomfort or emotional distress caused by the nature of this research study, due to the heightened emotional challenges associated with raising a child with additional learning needs or developmental disabilities. Any questions which trigger emotional distress can be left unanswered.

Potential Benefits: Participating in this study will not lead to any direct benefits. However, the semi-structured interview and conversation will provide you with the chance to speak about your experiences and voice any concerns and challenges you face in this area of study. I hope the findings of this study will deepen your understanding of the policies and practices surrounding bilingual and multilingual opportunities for children with special educational needs. The findings will highlight common themes and challenges shared between participants.

Compensation: Participation is voluntary and there is no compensation

Confidentiality: All identifiable data collected as part of this study will remain confidential. Initial consent forms, questionnaires and raw audio and video recordings with any identifiable information will be collected and stored using the McGill's Microsoft 365 platform. In the event of an in-person interview, raw audio recordings will also be stored on McGill's Microsoft 365 platform. Participants will be assigned a pseudonym to be used in place of your name at interview, in interview transcripts and in publications. One month following the completion of this study, consent forms, questionnaire responses, and audio-video recordings containing identifiable data will be moved from the McGill Microsoft OneDrive and stored in a password protected file on the principal investigator's personal

computer and in an encrypted external hard drive for a period of seven years following publication, before being permanently destroyed. Only the researcher and their supervisor will have access to the file. The interview recordings are to be used by the researcher only, and for no other purpose. These recordings will not be shared with a third party. Any interviews conducted in French will be translated by the researcher who speaks French. However, I cannot guarantee protection against unwanted interception when communicating through the internet.

Dissemination of Results: The results from this study will be published in the researcher's master's thesis. It is likely the results will be shared at academic conferences and through publications for academic journals. The findings will be made available to the organization you are part of.

If you have any further questions regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email amy.faulkner@mail.mcgill.ca or phone: 4389212768. You can also contact my supervisor Dr Susan Ballinger with any queries or concerns susan.ballinger@mcgill.ca.

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the Associate Director, Research Ethics at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca citing REB file number 23-06-02102

For written consent
Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to
participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals, such as a member of the Research Ethics Board, may have access to your (your child's) information. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Teachers

Thank you for your consent to participating in a semi-structured interview. I will be asking a series of questions over the next 30-45 minutes. Although I have prepared questions, this interview can develop into a conversation, please don't hesitate to expand on your answers, raise different points and ask me questions or for clarifications at any point. You can withdraw your consent to participate or terminate the interview at any point. Please be aware that I will be recording this interview for the purposes of transcription.

The principal investigator can also conduct the interview in French, upon request. Questions to be translated.

1. To confirm from the results of the demographic questionnaire, the subjects, and grades and setting you teach in are…
2. What has been your experience teaching students with special educational needs in the classroom?
3. What is your experience of the process of referral and assessment for students with special educational needs in Quebec?
4. Do you believe that students with special educational needs can become bilingual/multilingual? Why/why not?
5. Do you feel the school you work with supports students with special educational needs and disabilities with becoming bilingual/multilingual? Why/why not?
6. Do you believe that it is important that students with special educational needs have equal opportunities to become bilingual/multilingual?
7. Do you believe it is important for a child's future with special educational needs to become bilingual/multilingual and why?
8. Did you believe you received sufficient training to adapt to your classroom practices to teaching students with special educational needs?
9. Have you had any interaction with parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities on language learning and bilingualism/multilingualism?
10. Can you describe any practices you use in your teaching to adapt to classrooms with students of different learning needs?
11. Do you face challenges with integrating students with special educational needs specifically into the language classroom/ into language learning settings?
12. What services are available to you to support your teaching languages to students with special educational needs?
13. Are there any integrated languages and special education services at your school?

Guide d'entretien pour les enseignants

Merci d'être venu(e) et d'avoir accepté de participer à cette étude. Je vais vous poser des questions sur une durée de 30 à 45 minutes. J'ai préparé ces questions mais n'hésitez pas à diriger l'entretien dans la direction que vous voulez : c'est une conversation. N'hésitez pas à me poser vos questions ou à me demander des clarifications si vous en avez besoin. Vous pouvez demander à mettre fin à cet entretien à n'importe quel moment.

Veuillez noter que cet entretien est enregistré pour des raisons de formation personnelle. Vous pouvez vous y opposer.

1. Pouvez-vous d'abord me confirmer quel(s) sujet(s) vous enseignez, pour quel(s) niveau(x) et dans quel(s) type(s) d'école(s) ?
2. Pouvez-vous me raconter vos expériences en tant qu'enseignant auprès d'enfants à besoins spécifiques ou ayant des troubles des apprentissages ?
3. Comment ces enfants ont-ils, le cas échéant, obtenu leur diagnostic ? Que savez-vous du processus de diagnostic de ces troubles ?
4. Croyez-vous que des enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques ou des troubles des apprentissages peuvent devenir bilingues ou multilingues ? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas ?
5. Avez-vous des enfants à besoins spécifiques qui parlent d'autres langues qu'anglais et/ou français dans vos classes?
6. L'école dans laquelle vous travaillez vous semble-t-elle offrir un soutien suffisant aux enfants à besoins spécifiques ou ayant des troubles des apprentissages pour devenir bilingues ou multilingues ?
7. Selon vous, faut-il offrir une égalité des chances sur le bilinguisme/le multilinguisme aux enfants à besoins spécifiques ou ayant des troubles des apprentissages ?
8. Croyez-vous que le bilinguisme/multilinguisme est un atout nécessaire pour l'avenir professionnel des enfants à besoins spécifiques ou ayant des troubles des apprentissages ?
9. Avez-vous reçu une formation pour enseigner à des enfants à besoins spécifiques ou ayant des troubles des apprentissages ?
10. Avez-vous abordé l'apprentissage des langues étrangères avec les parents d'enfants à besoins spécifiques ou ayant des troubles des apprentissages ?
11. Pouvez-vous décrire les pratiques/outils que vous employez pour vous adapter aux classes avec des enfants ayant divers besoins d'apprentissage ?
12. Faites-vous face à des défis particuliers pour intégrer des enfants ayant des besoins spécifiques dans l'apprentissage des langues ?
13. Bénéficiez-vous, dans votre établissement, de services pour vous soutenir dans vos missions d'enseignement auprès des enfants à besoins spécifiques ou ayant des troubles des apprentissages ?
14. Y a-t-il des services intégrés de langues et d'éducation spécialisée dans votre école ?

Appendix E: Interview Guide for Parents

Thank you for your consent to participating in a semi-structured interview. I will be asking a series of questions over the next 30-45 minutes. Although I have prepared questions, this interview can develop into a conversation, please don't hesitate to expand on your answers, raise different points and ask me questions or for clarifications at any point. You can withdraw your consent to participate or terminate the interview at any point. Please be aware that I will be recording this interview for the purposes of transcription.

The principal investigator can also conduct the interview in French, upon request. Questions to be translated upon request.

1. As described on the initial demographic questionnaire, could you tell me about the diagnosis/assessment of your child(ren) for special educational needs.
2. Was this diagnosis conducted at the child's school or privately?
3. Could you briefly describe the current schooling situation of your child with special educational needs.
4. Could you talk briefly about the languages you use at home?
5. Could you talk about the way you manage your language practices at home? (For example, do you mix languages, stick to specific routines with your children, use the one language at specific times or one language one parent approach etc.?)
6. If there are siblings in the home, are you consistent with your language choices with all your children?
7. Do you believe it is important for children to grow up with the chance to be bilingual/multilingual in Montreal?
8. Is it important for you, that your child with special educational needs becomes bilingual/multilingual for their future opportunities in Montreal or elsewhere?
9. Is it important to you, that your child becomes bilingual/multilingual for purposes of family ties and family communications?
10. Are there any other social groups or activities where you believe it is important for your child to speak more than one language?
11. Do you believe your child with special educational needs can become bilingual/multilingual?
12. What supports have you received in school with regards to your child's special educational needs/learning difficulties?
13. Are you satisfied with the language support your child is offered at school?
14. Have you communicated with your child's school about their language education?
15. Do you believe your child has the same opportunities as typically developing children to become bilingual at school and in society? (Learn French and English)
16. Is there any support at school for your child's home language? (*Only applicable to parents when the language at home is neither French nor English)*
17. Have you received any services at school which integrate the home language into diagnosis or assessment for special educational needs? (*Only applicable to parents when the language at home is neither French nor English)*
18. Have you received specific professional help with regards to language choices for your child with special educational needs?
19. Is there any additional support you/your child currently needs with regards to the languages your child is learning at school?