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# **Dynamics of bilingual early childhood education: Parental attitudes and institutional realisation**

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**This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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I acknowledge the Darug people as the traditional custodians of the land on which the research that is presented in this thesis was carried out. I also wish to pay my respects to their elders, both past and present, and extend that respect to all other Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

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## Abstract

Bilingual education in Australia is widely considered to be highly desirable but unsuccessful. This study seeks to explore this tension through an ethnographic investigation of a bilingual German-English programme at an early childhood education centre operating at two locations in Sydney. The study addresses the complex relationship between the childcare provider and its clientele in the socio-political context.

Four sets of data were collected for the research, namely documents, on-site observations, interviews with educators, directors and parents, as well as a demographic survey. The triangulation of these different data sets results in a holistic picture of the dynamics at work in early childhood education. These dynamics include the complex interplay between parental attitudes and their expectations of the bilingual programme and language learning, as well as the childcare provider's background, linguistic practices, orientation and public image. Based on this analysis, the research problematizes the ways in which Australia's ideological environment influences and shapes the implementation and value of bilingual childcare in Sydney.

At the time of data collection, the childcare centres where the research took place had only recently been established. Therefore, programmes, policies and practices were still under development and in flux, while parents encountered bilingual education as a novel experience. This allowed the research to focus on bilingual education as a dynamic set of tensions between opportunities and constraints. Sites of tension include language choice, internal policies, bilingual qualifications, parental involvement, centre marketing, and the German language.

Overall, the study finds that internal and external constraints militate against the success of the bilingual programme. The research has implications for language policy at family, institutional and state levels.

## Statement of Candidate

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Dynamics of bilingual early childhood education: Parental attitudes and institutional realisation” has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree, to any university or institution other than Macquarie University. I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and that it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee, reference number: 5201100818 on 10 November 2011.

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42512174

09/07/2015

## Glossary, Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ALLP	Australian Language and Literacy Policy
CCB	Child Care Benefit
CCR	Child Care Rebate
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DEC	Department of Education and Communities
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (until 18/09/2013)
ESB	English-Speaking Background
ESL	English as a Second Language
EYLF	The Early Years Learning Framework
GER	German
HSIE	Human Society and its Environment
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
LDC	Long Day Care
LOTE	Language Other Than English
LOTEoG	Language Other Than English or German
MD	Managing Director
NALSSP	National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program
NESB	Non-English-Speaking Background
NPL	National Policy on Languages
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
USP	Unique Selling Proposition / Unique Selling Point

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# **1 Introduction to the research problem**

It is well known how important the early years are for children's wellbeing and their future educational trajectories and personal development. Educational programmes in the early years carry immense potential in terms of offering valuable experiences to support children's positive development. This includes bilingual education programmes. Bilingual education in early childhood can foster a life-long love of language and bilingual proficiency, which is known to have a variety of benefits for the learner. Particular conditions in Australia additionally highlight the great promise that bilingual education in the early years holds. In order to introduce the research problem for this study, this chapter first outlines why bilingual early childhood education is regarded as promising, focussing on factors such as the logistics of childcare in Australia as well as Sydney's linguistic diversity. The chapter then looks into the languages involved in this study and justifies why a German-English programme deserves attention, before closing with an outline of the study's organisation.

## **1.1 Potential of bilingual education in the early childhood sector**

### **1.1.1 Language learning in the early years**

When embarking on research into the topic of early childhood education, one inevitably encounters statements about the crucial importance of the early years for development, learning, relationships, mental health and life success. An Australian government initiative argues that, "if we get it right in the early years, we can expect to see children thrive throughout school and their adult lives". Likewise, research has shown that the early childhood years are also an ideal time to foster bilingualism. The European Commission has argued that early language learning has great potential for the development of children's identity, values, attitudes, awareness, empathy and respect, all in addition to learning a second language:

Opening children's minds to multilingualism and different cultures is a valuable exercise in itself that enhances individual and social development and increases their capacity to empathise with others. [...] As young children also become aware of their own identity and cultural values, ELL [Early Language Learning] can shape the way they develop their attitudes towards other languages and cultures by raising

awareness of diversity and of cultural variety, hence fostering understanding and respect. (European Commission, 2011, p. 7)

This is reason enough for various Commission initiatives in Europe to promote and support early language learning. Such support includes the implementation of language learning into the early childhood education sector. In Australia, the compulsory implementation of languages into education is currently restricted to schools (see Chapter 2.3 for details). This is unfortunate, because the early childhood sector seems to be an ideal ground to introduce bilingual education, particularly in Australia, as I demonstrate in more detail in the following section.

Before I do so, a note of usage is in order. Here and elsewhere in this thesis, the term *bilingualism* is used frequently. It generally refers to “bi- and multilingualism”. It stands for high-level bilingual proficiency, where the learner understands and speaks two languages. Once the bilingual child reaches school age, it also denotes the ability to read and write in two languages. Where a distinction is made between oral and written proficiency, I use the terms bilingualism to refer to oral proficiency and biliteracy to refer to written proficiency.

### **1.1.2 “Killing two birds with one stone”: Bilingual education in childcare**

The advantages of early language learning are not restricted to children’s development. Additionally, the logistics of early childhood education in Australia are conducive to bilingual education. This section first explores the significant potential for bilingual education in relation to organisation and staffing in childcare centres and how this affects teaching and learning. After outlining these conditions, the section sheds light on the potential for families.

The organisation of a childcare centre differs from that of a school in regards to staffing and hence budgeting and as such offers a great advantage. Unlike most school classes where only one teacher is normally present at a time, in childcare centres more staff are required. According to the Children’s Services Regulation in Australia (Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2011), a centre-based children’s service has to ensure a staff to children ratio of one carer for every four children under the age of two, for every eight children between the ages of two and three and for every ten children between the ages of three and six (the overall ratio for family day care services is 1:7). Furthermore, a minimum of two primary contact staff has to be ensured at

all times. Therefore, every childcare centre could provide a full-time bilingual programme without any additional cost, room or time allocation, simply by employing English-speaking as well as target language-speaking staff.

These staff allocation ratios allow another crucial factor for successful bilingual education to be realised in early childhood settings, namely the use of the language as a medium of instruction and throughout all activities and subjects (see e.g. Corson, 1990). To do so, the (minimum of two) staff members have to speak two different languages to the children throughout the service hours, with each member of staff using a different language. This one-person-one-language approach resembles the one-parent-one-language method, which is a common and effective approach to early bilingual education in the home (Döpke, 1992; Grosjean, 1982; Piller, 2001; Romaine, 1995). It allows the target language to be used throughout the day and in all situations: playtime, music, arts, movement, storytime, literacy and numeracy, mealtimes, organisation (structure of the day, routine), praise, corrective feedback and more. As in the home scenario, this method is known to be an effective language learning approach institutionally, since children learn communicative as well as academic language skills and a wide range of vocabulary. In addition to this, children know that two languages are being spoken and accepted, which does not put them under pressure to perform.

Such organisational conditions are not only favourable for childcare providers and children as language learners. For attending families too, bilingual early childhood education sounds equally promising, as childcare and language learning occur at the same time. This has the advantage for families attending childcare centres that no extra time, effort or money has to be spent on language learning. If the service of a long day care (LDC) centre is utilised daily for a full work day (up to approximately ten hours), the caregivers at the childcare centre play a vital role in children's language development. In 2010 for example, children in Australia spent an average of 26 hours per week in long day care (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2011), which equates to three eight-hour or five five-hour days. Consequently, in contrast to isolated ethnic schooling, after-school-hours classes or the like, a bilingual childcare centre can be a major source of language input for children attending such facilities.

This is also underlined by the high levels of child participation in institutional care in Australia, which is examined in the following section.

### **1.1.3 Childcare attendance rates**

This thesis examines early childhood education in centre-based settings for the care of children between the ages of six weeks and six years, that is before they enter primary school. Such centres include preschools, long day care or family day care services (both may run preschool services as well). Childcare services may be non-profit or for-profit organisations. In Australia, they are run by local councils, community organisations and private services. Preschools providing educational programmes for children one year prior to the start of compulsory schooling may be funded and managed differently from community-based or private preschools and are sometimes located within public schools. I use the terms childcare centre or centres, provider, facility or institution when referring to the research site, Fritzkidz.

In Australia, childcare attendance varies with the age of the child (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). On average, about one third (33 per cent, N=528,000) of all children under the age of six years were in some kind of centre-based care in 2008, most in LDC. The number of zero- to four-year-olds was higher than the number of four- to six-year-olds, as many of them then started preschool or school. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) specifies the percentage of children attending centre-based care as nine per cent of under one-year-olds, 35 per cent of one-year-olds, 48 per cent of two-year-olds, 50 per cent of three-year-olds, 36 per cent of four-year-olds and 20 per cent of five-year-olds. Comparing these numbers internationally, Australia ranks 11<sup>th</sup> for under three-year-olds and 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> (out of 19) for three- to six-year-olds (see Figure 1.1 and 1.2, respectively).

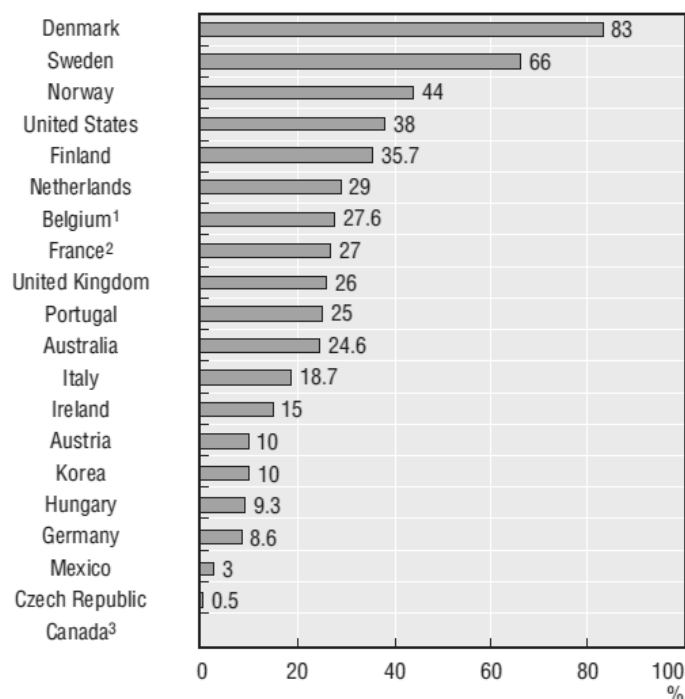


Figure 1.1 | Percentage of children under the age of three in licensed childcare services across OECD countries (Source: OECD, 2006, p. 86)

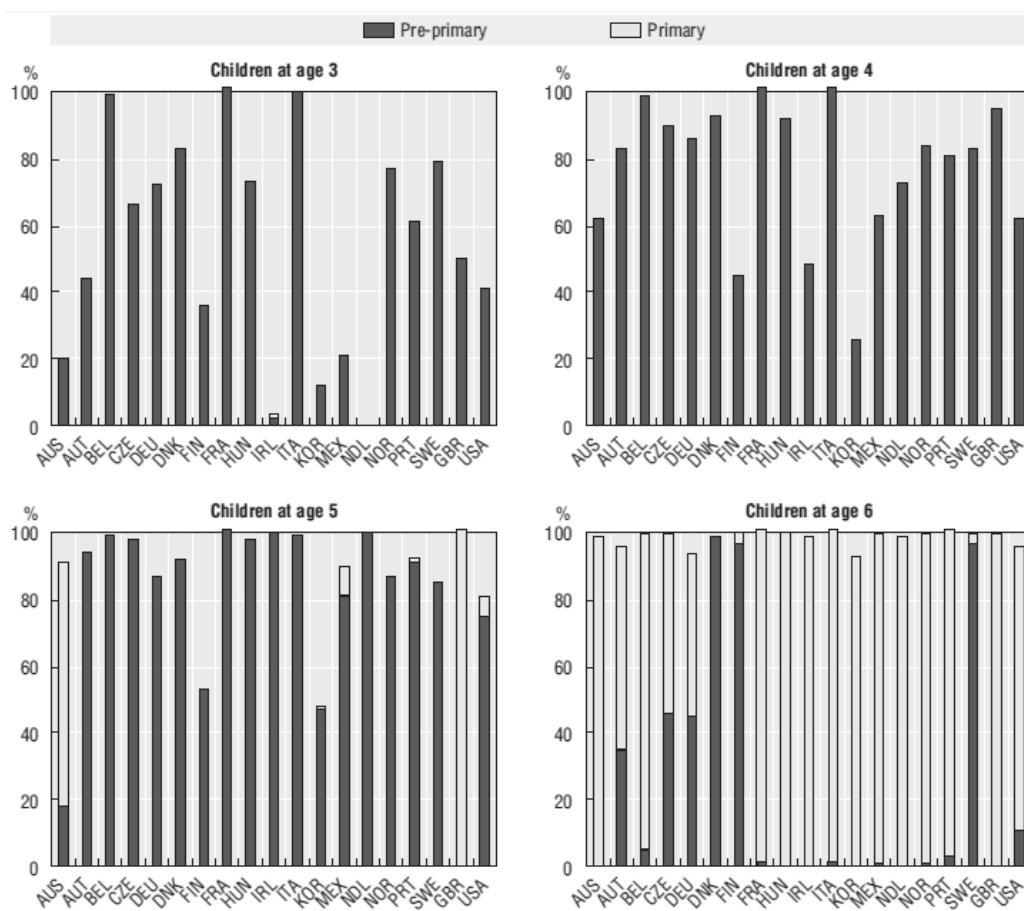


Figure 1.2 | Enrolment rates for children aged three to six years across OECD countries (Source: OECD, 2006, p. 78)

Although the early childhood education sector in Australia has recently been growing rapidly, it is largely neglected in many educational policy domains (Elliott, 2006), such as language policies (see Chapter 2.2 for details). Nevertheless, Elliott (2006, p. 2) argues that “[t]he growth in child care, and especially the ‘child care chains’ in the private for-profit sector, has resulted in its increasing political importance”. Hence, early childhood education is not only interesting in terms of its importance for children and their trajectories, families and childcare providers. It is also important in social and political terms.

The potential for bilingual early childhood education in Australia is thus immense. Its potential is further underscored by the linguistic diversity of Australia and Sydney, which is investigated in the following section.

## **1.2 Bilingual education in Sydney**

In line with the reasons why bilingual education carries great potential, this section examines why bilingual education programmes in Sydney sound particularly promising. To do so, the section first looks into Australia’s linguistic diversity, before focussing on Sydney and the city’s largest linguistic groups as an ideal context for such programmes.

According to the 2011 census data, Australia is home to many languages: 20.4 per cent (N=1,579,949) of Australia’s population speak two or more languages at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b). In fact, it is likely that the actual number of speakers of languages other than English is even higher, because the census question refers to languages spoken at home. However, some bilinguals might not speak a language other than English at home, but rather with friends, with other family, in the community and so forth.

It is also noteworthy that almost one third of Australia’s population (30.2 per cent, N=6,489,870) was born overseas. This represents an increase in immigration from the 2006 and the 2001 censuses, where 29.1 per cent and 27.4 per cent respectively were born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b). Hence, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010a, p. 46) states that “Australia is becoming increasingly diverse”. World migration statistics in 2010 confirm this claim. According to The World Bank (2011), Australia ranks 9<sup>th</sup> among immigrant-receiving countries with 5.5 million in 2010 (preceded by USA,

Russian Federation, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Canada, UK, Spain and France respectively). However, of these top nine immigrant-receiving countries in absolute numbers, Australia is ranked second in terms of the percentage of immigrants as a share of population (preceded only by Saudi Arabia).

Australia's largest city, Sydney, is even more linguistically diverse. In Sydney, 40.1 per cent (N=1,759,129) of the population were born overseas. The number of residents speaking only English at home is also lower than the Australian average. Only 62.2 per cent (N=2,732,449) live in monolingual English households, whereas 35.5 per cent (N=540,507) speak two or more languages at home (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a). The most frequently spoken language other than English (LOTE) in Sydney is Arabic, followed by Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Greek, Italian, Hindi, Spanish, Korean and Tagalog (see Table 1.1). Other than these languages, many more are spoken by thousands of Sydneysiders.

Language	Number of speakers	%
Arabic	178,662	4.1
Mandarin	133,887	3.0
Cantonese	132,136	3.0
Vietnamese	85,029	1.9
Greek	80,778	1.8
Italian	68,532	1.6
Hindi	50,785	1.2
Spanish	49,829	1.1
Korean	46,103	1.0
Tagalog	34,337	0.8

**Table 1.1 | Most frequently spoken languages other than English in Sydney  
(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a)**

Sydney's linguistic diversity seems to be the ideal context for bilingual education and, in fact, has recently stimulated some discourse about language education in newspapers, parenting websites and research (see e.g. Australian Family, 2013; Demuth & Rattanasone,

2014; Ham, 2014; Nguyen, 2014; Raising children network. The Australian parenting website, 2014). Could multilingual Sydney be fruitful soil for bilingual early childhood education? And if so, what languages should be involved? Although German is not in the top ten of Sydney's most frequently spoken LOTE's, the present study is concerned with bilingual German-English education in Australia. The question of why German is an interesting language to investigate for this purpose is examined in the following section.

### **1.3 Why German?**

This section focuses on a rationale for German as an interesting research topic and as an attractive language to include in a bilingual programme in Sydney based on its different roles internationally and in Australia in particular.

German is both an international language of high status as well as a minority language with a long history in Australia. Today, Germany is one of the strongest economies in Europe and the world (World Economic Forum, 2013), which gives the language a status of high economic value. In addition to its economic value internationally, Germany is also economically important for Australia in particular, ranking as one of Australia's top ten two-way trading partners (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2009), as well as being one of the top ten destination countries for Australian emigrants (The World Bank, 2011). Apart from its economic status, German is also socially, culturally and historically important. According to the German Federal Foreign Office, German is spoken as a first language by 100 million people, making it the most frequently spoken first language in Europe. In addition, about 15 million people worldwide speak German as a foreign language (Federal Foreign Office, 2011). Consequently, it is not surprising that German language skills are considered to open doors to a better future and that German classes are booming (Roth, 2014).

Besides being a high-status foreign language, German is also a long-standing community language in Australia. To date, German language enclaves which were established in the 1800s still exist, though the number of speakers of these language varieties is miniscule (Riehl, 2014). About 0.5 per cent (N=108,001) of Australia's population were born in Germany. "Born in Germany" can be used as a proxy for speakers with German as a first language, even if it may include some German-born people who have another first language and even if it does not include German first-language speakers from Austria,

Switzerland and other European countries. Furthermore, 0.4 per cent (N=80,370) of the population speak German at home, which makes it the country's tenth most widely spoken community language in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a). This represents an increase in total numbers for the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Sydney, the total number of German speakers has also increased since the 2001 and the 2006 censuses. With Sydney now home to 16,044 German speakers (0.4 per cent), German is the city's 23<sup>rd</sup> most widely spoken community language (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a).

Although these numbers show that the German language retains a presence in Australia and Sydney, its low number of speakers can be explained by language maintenance and shift patterns amongst German speakers. The sociolinguistics of German in Australia has been investigated extensively by Clyne and colleagues (Clyne, 1991a, 2005; Pauwels, 2005), who found that the rate of language shift among German speakers is particularly high. These high rates of language shift are due to a range of factors, including low geographical concentration, high exogamy rates, high English proficiency and cultural proximity. By contrast, recent transitional developments such as feasibility of access to a wide range of language media (internet, TV, radio, books, etc.) and better connections to family overseas through cheap airfares and disappearing phone costs (skype, emails, social media, etc.) can be expected to have a positive effect on the maintenance of community languages (Duff, 2015), including German.

Furthermore, institutional access to the minority language, particularly in the early years, is already known to support language maintenance (Fillmore, 1991). This shows how important bilingual early childhood education centres are for minority language groups and for German, which has traditionally not been maintained well in Australia in particular. Childcare centres with German-speaking staff, children and other parents provide children with the chance to experience active language use outside of their home, which supports efforts at language maintenance. That said, bilingual early childhood education is not only a valuable resource for minority parents trying to maintain their first language; it is also a resource for monolingual English families desiring to experience a LOTE.

In sum, German plays a dual role in Australia both as a community language and a valuable foreign language. Bilingual early childhood education has the potential to support both of these roles. It can support the language maintenance efforts of a long-standing

migrant community as well as the language learning aspirations of those wishing to learn a high-value foreign language.

#### **1.4 The research problem: The reality of bilingual early childhood education**

As described above, bilingual German-English early childhood education in Sydney and in Australia more generally has significant potential. This includes the following four factors: 1) the age of children attending early education services; 2) the organisation of childcare in Australia; 3) the location's linguistic diversity; and 4) the role of German in Australia and the world. But although these potentially promising aspects may apply in an ideal scenario, the reality in Australian childcare centres is, in fact, quite different. The successful implementation of a bilingual programme faces many obstacles. It is one aim of this sociolinguistic study to reveal these obstacles and to gain an understanding of why they exist and how they influence the implementation of a bilingual programme in the pre-primary sector.

Interestingly, although early childhood education and bilingual education are increasingly important fields of research, linguists have contributed surprisingly little to a better understanding of their intersection. This thesis brings these two fields together in an attempt to arrive at a broader understanding of institutional bilingual education in early childhood. This has been realised by examining a bilingual German-English childcare provider, which runs two non-profit long day care centres in urban Sydney (see Chapter 4). By offering German-English childcare, the childcare provider, which has been given the pseudonym of Fritzkidz, is a case sui generis in Sydney. Being ahead of their time, the centres and their clientele are an immensely attractive research subject. In addition, the bilingual centres were only in their third year of operation when data collection for this study commenced. As such, the programme's infancy provided an excellent opportunity to investigate the challenges and structural issues that arose (Amrein & Peña, 2000). To capture this complexity, a multi-method qualitative approach was used to explore both sides of bilingual childcare: the institutional and the private aspects. After presenting results from the institutional level such as the childcare provider's background, its bilingual practices and challenges faced in the implementation process, the study also sheds light on the families who enrolled their children in a bilingual childcare centre. More precisely, results are presented regarding their demographics, reason for enrolment and attitudes

towards language learning, and towards German in particular. By including the private domain, the study helps to draw a picture of early language acquisition wants, needs, developments and opportunities in Sydney. This, in combination with the information about the institutional domain, will help raise awareness of the issues that arise during the bilingual programme implementation process. By doing so, this work aims to inform theoretical, pedagogical, social, and political innovations. It is hoped that these may contribute to promoting, realising and publicising bilingual programme planning in order to achieve a more positive redefinition and effective public image of bilingual early childhood education in Australia – for both childcare providers and families.

## **1.5 Outline of the thesis**

As explained in this Introduction, this thesis sets out to investigate the processes at work when implementing a bilingual programme in the early childhood sector. To achieve this, the thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature. This consists of an overview of bilingual education and parental attitudes towards bilingual programmes. The focus then turns to language ideologies as the forerunner of language attitudes in the context of Australian language policies. After an overview of the history of Australian language policies, the chapter reviews the power of those ideologies in the area of languages in education, beginning with school education, and followed by early childhood education and German language education. The chapter concludes by highlighting the existence of a lacuna regarding the early childhood sector and a non-dominant community language and by explaining how this thesis sets out to contribute to filling this gap.

Chapter 3 explains the methodological decisions that have been made in order to realise this attempt. The study employs a flexible multi-method qualitative approach in order to capture the ongoing changes and dynamics in a newly established bilingual childcare centre and among its clientele. After providing the rationale for the research design, the various methods of data collection such as interviews, questionnaires, on-site observation and document collection are described. This is followed by an explanation of the different research instruments such as interviews, the survey and participant observation, which were used with the various participants such as parents and staff members. A closer description of participants and how the data was analysed is also included in this methodological chapter. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations and the limitations of the approach.

Chapter 4 provides an insight into the research site, the bilingual childcare provider Fritzkidz. This starts with the background of Fritzkidz in Germany and the vision that executives had when establishing such a facility in Australia. It then goes on to describe the infrastructure and organisation of each of the two Fritzkidz centres. The following section deals with the educators working at Fritzkidz. In addition to staff and programme development, the educational and language background of educators as well as their attitudes towards the bilingual programme are examined. The concluding section explains the challenges in respect of the successful implementation of a bilingual programme faced by providers with a profile such as Fritzkidz.

Chapter 5 presents more challenges faced in the implementation process of the bilingual programme. The chapter begins with a description of the implementation of the bilingual programme by looking at the daily routines and language practices. Some challenges based on the programme's infancy are highlighted before exploring challenges based on larger socio-political conditions in the form of funding, asymmetries and beliefs towards the use of English. These are punctuated by the perceptions of educators in respect of parents' interest in the language programme and the centres' public marketing. The conclusion raises the question of the impact such practices and decisions have: whether they result in the perpetuation of existing attitudes and ideologies, or whether a change can be achieved under these conditions.

Chapter 6 answers questions about the Fritzkidz clientele. After presenting parental demographics such as languages spoken, age, gender, place of birth as well as their educational and socioeconomic status, the chapter also sheds light on parents' reasons for placing their offspring in childcare. First, their reasons for seeking childcare in general are presented, followed by a description of why they sought out Fritzkidz in particular and what role the bilingual programme played in their decision. Based on these findings, the conclusion points to the possibility that if policy makers and childcare providers extend the provision of bilingual education, it will be positively received and used, even in the absence of an initial desire for such a programme.

Chapter 7 first shows how the bilingual programme has resulted in attitudinal change on the part of parents and influenced their language practices. It then demonstrates the

importance parents place on language learning, before outlining how inadequately these positive developments translate into future actions and why. The chapter brings to light influences on the decisions of parents regarding their children's future education and concludes with further discussion of this attitude-action gap.

Chapter 8 reveals the value parents place on languages: the German language in particular, and language learning more generally. It begins by outlining parents' beliefs about the value of language learning, which are largely focused on creating some kind of advantage for their children. The next section attends to the role parents ascribe to the German language in particular, which for the German-speaking clientele is essentially restricted to considerations of identity and family communication. After discussing the role of the German language, the conclusion outlines what bilingual education means for parents and what such attitudes mean for future developments.

Chapter 9 summarises the key findings presented in this thesis. After reviewing results based on the research questions, the chapter formulates the study's implications for institutional, family and state policies. The chapter concludes the thesis by outlining directions for future research.

## **2 Literature review and theoretical framework**

This research builds on two main pillars: the wider social and political context of bilingual education in Australia and parental reasons for and attitudes towards bilingual education. This chapter is intended to provide an overview of this work. Specifically, this chapter introduces bilingual programmes and the challenges they face, going on to outline parental reasons for choosing bilingual education and their attitudes towards such programmes. Parental attitudes show the positive stance of parents towards their children's bilingual education. Parents with a minority language background often exhibit a different motivation from that of majority language parents, but bilingualism as the anticipated goal when enrolling their children in a bilingual programme emerged in all previous studies cited below. Following these attitudinal studies, language policies as a public embodiment of values, ideologies and political interests are addressed. These show that historically Australia has promoted neither language learning nor bilingual education despite the country's linguistic diversity. Next, this chapter sheds light on areas which are heavily influenced by such policies. Namely, it looks at languages in education, and bilingual early childhood education in particular. Finally, the landscape of institutional German learning opportunities is examined, revealing limited provision of bilingual support in early childhood institutions in Sydney. The conclusion argues that the role and place of languages in Australian early childhood education is not only underrepresented in practice, but also in theory. Here, I highlight the paucity of relevant research and locate the present study in this lacuna.

### **2.1 Bilingual education**

Bilingual education is distinguished from foreign language education by the use of more than one language as the medium for teaching non-language subjects during some part of the school day (Gibbons, 1997). Bilingual programmes include strong programmes (e.g. maintenance, immersion and heritage programmes) as well as weak programmes (e.g. transitional programmes), provided that two languages are used as a medium of instruction and to deliver curriculum content (May, 2008). Accordingly, bilingual education neither refers to education programmes where a foreign language is taught as a subject only, nor to bi- or multilingual classrooms with monolingual majority language instruction only. A good example of the latter is the submersion model. Here, the existence of a difference between students' first languages and the school language is simply ignored. Minority

language children are instructed alongside their monolingual and/or other bilingual peers in monolingual-dominant language classes. In this scenario, the first language of bilingual students is institutionally neglected and gradually replaced by the majority language (eventually resulting in assimilation and language loss/shift). Hence, this is not a bilingual model, although it is often described as such.

Bilingual models fall into two types: weak and strong. A classic example of weak models is the transitional programme. Here, the minority children's first language is used initially to prepare children for monolingual mainstream schooling. Once sufficient language proficiency in the dominant language has been achieved, they are transferred into a monolingual majority language class. This can either be an early or late exit, depending on how quickly they reach the desired language level. With this transition, the institutional maintenance of the first language ends. Initially, the first language is viewed as an instrument to assist children, but it is not accorded any intrinsic value in itself (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). The underlying intention is transition from bilingualism to monolingualism as well as social and cultural assimilation into the dominant language (Baker, 2011; May, 2008).

By contrast, the central objective of strong models is bilingualism – for the minority, and in some settings (see below) also for the majority group. Language maintenance or heritage programmes focus on minority groups. Children with the same (mostly low-status) first language are instructed through the medium of their mother tongue. Both the first and the second language are present in the curriculum. The second language is being taught as a subject first. Gradually, some non-language subjects will be taught through the second language by a bilingual teacher. The aims are to attain native-like levels of competence in both languages in order to become fully bilingual, and to strengthen the child's bilingual and cultural identity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). However, language maintenance programmes are not widely available internationally, vary greatly in structure and content, and often overlap with 90:10 dual language programmes (Baker, 2011).

In dual language or two-way immersion (TWI) programmes, language maintenance programmes are combined with immersion (see below) and consequently focus on both minority and majority children. Equal numbers of majority and minority children (sharing the same first language) are taught in both languages by bilingual teachers, partly together,

partly separately. Apart from this 50/50 or balanced model, two-way immersion can also be minority language dominant (90/10 distribution) or differentiated (varying ratios of instruction) (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003). The aim is for all children to become bilingual and biliterate (Baker, 2011).

Apart from the two-way programme, the only type of bilingual education for majority children is immersion. Immersion is strongly associated with Canada, where the earliest and for a long time largest body of research was conducted. In immersion models, a class of majority children with a usually high-status first language is instructed in non-language school subjects through the medium of a second language, which is also often a high-status language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). This is either realised by a bilingual teacher or by two teachers: one target language and one majority language teacher. Immersion is based on the assumption that a first language is acquired relatively unconsciously and that in immersion environments the second language is acquired equally, as children are unaware that they are in a language learning environment (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). In immersion programmes languages are used as medium of instruction, with the focus on the content of the language rather than on its structure. Accordingly, a more natural acquisition process is created than in traditional language-as-a-subject teaching situations. Only later may a child be made aware of language as a system (Baker, 2011). The intensity of second language instruction varies between partial immersion (e.g. 50 per cent) and total immersion (100 per cent). Usually, the amount of first language instruction gradually increases over time (Baker, 2011). The timing of commencement of such programmes also varies. Early immersion programmes can start at the pre-primary stage, while delayed immersion starts at the middle or late primary stage, and late immersion targets secondary school students and/or adult learners. Early immersion at the pre-primary stage often combines language maintenance as well as early second language learning objectives. As a consequence, this composition frequently results in a two-way immersion style programme.

Education through immersion in a second language has been the subject of academic study for around four decades. This research, predominantly from Canada and the US, generally focuses on four different aspects: a) the bilingual (dis)advantage with many referring to the work of psychologist Ellen Bialystok (e.g. Bialystok, Craik, & Freedman, 2007; Bialystok, Craik, Klein, & Viswanathan, 2004; Bialystok, Luk, & Kwan, 2005; Bialystok, McBride-Chang, & Luk, 2005); b) the education of minority children speaking languages other than

the majority language (e.g. Greene, 1997; Rossell & Baker, 1996; Rossell & Kuder, 2005; Slavin & Cheung, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 2002); c) the education of majority children in high-value language immersion programmes (e.g. Genesee, 1985; Johnstone, 2002; May, 2008; Wesche, Toews-Janzen, & MacFarlane, 1996); and also sometimes on d) indigenous or autochthonous languages and their maintenance or revival (for Australia see Devlin, 2009, 2010, 2011).

However, students' achievement is not the focus of this thesis. By contrast, it is the development and maintenance of such programmes as well as parents' attitudes towards them that are important for the present study. Therefore, research focussing on these issues is reviewed in the following two sections, before looking into the Australian situation.

### **2.1.1 Challenges for bilingual education programmes**

Research from the United States has brought to light a variety of challenges for the successful development and maintenance of bilingual education. In her frequently cited book about two-way immersion education in the United States, Lindholm-Leary (2001) ascribes the success of bilingual school programmes to the following aspects: effective leadership, school environment, teachers and staff, instructional design and features, and students. In more recent work, she arrives at similar conclusions (Lindholm-Leary, 2012), as do other studies such as Alanís and Rodríguez (2008), who conducted their research in a Spanish-English school in Texas. Although these aspects refer to two-way immersion programmes at the school level, Lindholm-Leary (2001) suggests that they are relevant beyond this type of programme or its location. Hence, similar requirements can be expected for the early childhood sector.

Standing out among these factors for success is the need for well-trained teachers and educators, as these constitute the basis for other factors as well. Teacher qualification refers to both a qualification in teaching (ideally in both early childhood and bilingual education) and excellent language skills. Regarding the former, research conducted in Californian public schools shows that teacher training significantly influences teachers' attitudes towards minority languages and their maintenance. Teachers without professional bilingual training consider the majority language as the first priority in language education, whereas trained bilingual and ESL teachers consider students' first language as important and crucial to maintain (J. Lee & Oxelson, 2006; Schwartz, Mor-Sommerfeld, & Leikin,

2010). Schwartz et al. (2010) conducted similar research in a Russian-Hebrew pre-school in Israel and additionally report that teachers without professional bilingual training and experience rely on instinct when teaching. Jalongo et al. (2004), too, argue that effective teaching strategies in early childhood education are not a matter of instinct, but a consequence of good preparation, knowledge and skills. Consequently, professional training for educators is vital for effective bilingual education. Such training is crucial for the bilingual educators as well as for the majority language educators without proficiency in the target language. They also play an important role in the support for the non-majority language by displaying a positive attitude towards them and towards bilingualism in general (J. Lee & Oxelson, 2006). It is therefore imperative that teachers recognise the benefits of bilingualism – something which could also be accomplished by formal training.

Other than didactic and theoretical training, an educator's qualification in bilingual education also encompasses language skills. In her work about multilingual language awareness and teacher education, Garcia (2008) goes one step further, claiming that in addition to knowledge about the language, bilingualism and bilingual teaching, all teachers in bilingual education settings including the monolingual teachers should have some degree of proficiency or fluency in the second language offered. This is not comprehensively realised in many English-dominant countries, which results in numerous problems, such as the prominence of English in particular. When examining a bilingual programme in Arizona, Amrein and Peña (2000) identified three forces favouring English over the minority language: instructional asymmetry, resource asymmetry and student asymmetry. They found that the Spanish teachers were bilingual and the English teachers were monolingual. This in itself is already an imbalance, but the result of such an imbalance is that bilingual teachers translate for the monolingual teachers as well as for the students. In Amrein and Peña's study, students and English teachers learned to rely on their translations, a factor which further undermines the use of the non-dominant language. The study also found additional imbalances favouring English, such as resources, which were again either bilingual or English, as well as student asymmetries with a higher number of monolingual English students. This renders bilingual education into bilingual education for the Spanish-speaking teacher and to monolingual education for the English-speaking teacher.

In the context of the early childhood sector in Australia, a similar picture seems to emerge. Jones Díaz (2013) conducted research in Australian bilingual Spanish-English early childhood centres and found here too a lack of resources, funding, qualified staff (also due to regular staff turnover) and ideological support for bilingual early childhood education. In regards to student asymmetry, her study also discovered barriers faced due to unequal student distribution. In this case, students' language proficiency levels were extremely diverse, which poses a major challenge for teachers (untrained teachers in particular). Under the premise that bilingual early childhood education services oftentimes incorporate two-way immersion programmes, a large percentage of children may be expected to communicate in English as well. Jones Díaz' (2013) study also revealed that of the very few bilingual centres that do exist in the early childhood sector, many operate ad hoc programmes. Thus, "in many prior-to-school settings bilingual support rarely goes beyond the use of the occasional nursery rhyme or greeting" (Jones Díaz, 2013, p. 10). She claims that this preference for English over the minority language offered contributes to children's indifference towards the language, leading to language shift for the minority language children and the preservation of English dominance.

Such findings indicate another vital factor for successful bilingual education programmes: the social-political context within which such programmes are embedded, partly but not exclusively because these directly influence specific programme implications as well. Socio-political aspects such as the history of language policies in Australia are examined in Section 2.2 below.

In summary, a number of barriers need to be addressed when developing and sustaining bilingual programmes. Foremost, socio-political conditions need to be considered and language policies and curricula as well as teacher education programmes need to be developed (Garcia, 2008) in order to create qualified bilingual educators for successful early childhood immersion education. In addition to the need for staff and teachers (who are also responsible for the programme design, leadership, etc.), the students and the institutional environment, including the support of parents, have been found to play a crucial role. Accordingly, Young and Tran (1999, p. 226) argue that "Parental attitudes toward bilingual education and language learning play a large role in the success of any language program". Research about parents' attitudes towards bilingual programmes is reviewed in the following section.

### 2.1.2 Parental attitudes towards bilingual education

There have been a number of studies regarding parents' reasons for choosing bilingual education for their children and their attitudes towards such programmes. Most studies address Spanish and English in the United States (Amaral, 2001; Craig, 1996; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; S. Lee, 1999; Parkes, 2008; Parkes & Ruth, 2011; Ramos, 2007; Saucedo, 1997; Shannon & Milian, 2002; Whiting & Feinauer, 2011), or French in Canada (Dagenais, 2003; Gardner, 1985). Other studies focus on a few Asian languages in the United States (Lao, 2004; Shin, 2000; Young & Tran, 1999) or on minority languages and on English in non-English-speaking countries (Axelsson, 2008; Oladejo, 2006). An emerging trend is to examine two-way immersion programmes and compare different linguistic categories such as minority versus majority parents. Although linguistic categories are the most common basis for comparing school community sub-groups, not all studies exclusively compare linguistic variables. Lindholm-Leary (2001) also compared income categories and Parkes (2008), who carried out his research in a Spanish-English two-way immersion school in New Mexico, compared neighbourhood versus transfer parents. Conducting research in a newly established two-way immersion programme in Utah, Whiting and Feinauer (2011) claim that beside language-related categories other social and demographic categories are needed. Hence, they also compared categories such as education, income, religion, family structure and distance from the school.

Regardless of the different sub-group comparisons, all studies revealed favourable attitudes towards bilingual education. In regards to parents' reasons for choosing a bilingual programme, most parents from these studies seemed to expect that enrolment in a bilingual program would result in bilingualism and biliteracy (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Parkes, 2008; Ramos, 2007; Whiting & Feinauer, 2011). Lindholm-Leary (2001) for example found that all parents in her study aimed for high-level bilingual proficiency, and the only difference across language categories was the reason why they wanted their children to be bilingual. This finding is in accordance with Whiting and Feinauer (2011, p. 647), whose research revealed that despite their surveyed parents' diversity, 92 per cent primarily aimed for bilingualism and biliteracy, but "that parents may see bilingualism as important for different reasons".

Parents' motivation for bilingualism and biliteracy is often described by using the terms *integrative* and *instrumental*. These social psychological terms were established by Gardner

and Lambert (1972) and have been the subject of many scholarly debates over the past decades (e.g. Dörnyei, 2003; Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Gardner, 1985, 2001; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994). Even so, they continue to be influential in contemporary research. The value parents appear to see in bilingualism varies across different parental categories, particularly between minority and majority language parents. Minority language speakers are more likely to claim identity and language-related reasons (e.g. language maintenance, identification with heritage culture, communication with heritage community), whereas majority language speakers usually claim cognitive, cross-cultural and economic reasons (Craig, 1996; Giacchino-Baker & Piller, 2006; Lao, 2004; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Parkes, 2008; Whiting & Feinauer, 2011).

Nevertheless, for all parents in these studies the link between bilingualism and future advantages of an economic or intellectual nature is of significant value. Young and Tran (1999) for example conducted research in a Vietnamese-English school in California and found that almost all parents considered bilingualism as advantageous for their children's career (91.1 per cent), for superior cognitive development (92.2 per cent) and for language maintenance (96.1 per cent). Lao (2004), in her work on parental attitudes in a Chinese-English pre-school setting (for children aged three to five) in California, also suggests that cognitive benefits were important for parents, ranking fourth for English-dominant parents and fifth for Chinese-dominant parents. Career advantages were also mentioned and ranked first for Chinese-dominant parents and third for English-dominant parents. Similar results can be found in Giacchino-Baker and Piller's (2006) study in a Californian two-way immersion school. They found that both linguistic groups regard bilingualism as advantageous for their children's career. Craig's (1996) research, which was conducted in a Spanish-English two-way programme on the East Coast of the United States, is particularly explicit in this regard. This study revealed that learning the LOTE offered in the bilingual programme under investigation was only of secondary importance for English-speaking parents. The pre-eminent reason was cultural enrichment, intellectual stimulation and enhanced career opportunities, which was considered to be achieved through the "vehicle" of bilingual education. While future job opportunities were also an important reason for the minority parents, language and cultural maintenance were still fundamental for this group.

It is not only language-related reasons that attract parents to a bilingual programme, as Parkes' study (2008) revealed. This research found that many parents chose to enrol their children into a bilingual school because of its convenient location. More than half of the school community attended the programme due to its close proximity, while approximately one quarter went out of their way to have their children attend the bilingual programme. Parkes found differences between parents who actively transferred their children to the school under examination and parents who enrolled their children at the school based on convenience and proximity. Transfer parents were more likely to be English-dominant and to have higher educational attainments. In contrast, approximately 80 per cent of the school neighbourhood families belonged to the minority language community and had themselves received only a high school education or lower. Nonetheless, as well as selecting the school based on its neighbourhood location, approximately 94 per cent indicated that they expected that the bilingual programme would result in their children's bilingualism and biliteracy.

Also considering proximity as a reason for selecting a bilingual programme, Whiting and Feinauer (2011) report that many parents were committed enough to the programme to travel a considerable distance to their children's two-way-immersion school, with only a small number of minority and majority parents choosing the programme due to proximity. From the "other-ethnicity" category (neither Anglo nor Spanish), 40 per cent of parents chose the programme due to proximity. However, even if proximity is an important reason for this group, this does not mean that they are indifferent towards bilingualism and biliteracy, as 90 per cent of parents in the "other-ethnicity" category still indicated that their aim was bilingualism and biliteracy. Dagenais (2003, p. 273) also refers to transnational families maintaining their minority language at home in addition to enrolling their children in bilingual French-English programmes in order to achieve trilingualism, calling this a "dual strategy". She argues that by increasing their children's language capital, parents attempt to place them in an advantageous position, facilitating access to participation in worldwide language communities.

In summary, despite some differences between minority and majority groups or neighbourhood and transfer parents, all studies cited show that the vast majority of parents who enrol their children in bilingual education programmes have been found to aspire to bilingualism or even biliteracy for their children. The underlying belief which many parents

in these studies from predominantly two-way programmes in the United States have been found to share is that the resulting bilingualism or multilingualism will confer an advantage in later life, such as enhanced job prospects, an intellectual benefit or being able to connect to two different language communities.

### **2.1.3 Summary**

Different bilingual models exist, most of which are being researched in regards to their academic or language learning outcomes. Whereas immersion programmes have been the focus for many years, particularly in Canada, research into two-way programmes has recently become more common. These studies focus on features of success (such as trained staff and teachers, programme design, leadership, students and school environment) as well as reasons for selecting bilingual programmes and parental attitudes towards them, particularly in the United States. Reasons for desiring bilingualism vary in weight across different studies and across different parental categories, but encompass the maintenance of language and culture, promotion of self-esteem, cognitive and academic advantages, social and cross-cultural competencies, economic benefits as well as the acquisition of English for minority communities. The commodification of language in terms of the expected career advantages to be gained through bilingualism has long been a reason for bilingual education decisions. Cognitive advantages seem to emerge as an increasingly substantial argument for such decisions as well. Regardless of parents' reasons, their attitudes towards their children's programme are positive. The following section also focuses on attitudes and ideologies, shifting the focus from bilingual programmes in North America to Australian language ideologies in the face of language policies.

## **2.2 Australia's explicit language policies: An overview**

Parents' attitudes towards language, language learning and bilingualism can be influenced and shaped by experiences at a bilingual programme as well as through personal circumstances, aspirations or interests. Attitudes are mostly held by individuals and are reflected in what people think or say about a language (i.e. in research interviews). Dyers and Abongdia (2010, p. 121) explain that:

Individuals are born into societies where particular ideologies of languages already exist and as such will definitely be influenced but [sic] what is already present in their surroundings. But individuals have the choice of either accepting the

dominant ideologies or resisting them, and shaping their own attitudes towards languages.

Thus, language attitudes are shaped “within the broader context of socially and politically created” language ideologies (Dyers & Abongdia, 2010, p. 121) and as such these need to be considered here as well.

Language ideologies are a set of beliefs about language held by a group or community, large or small but often powerful, constructed to serve their interest (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). They are substantial as a social construct rather than as a linguistic one because they are powerful. They relate “the microculture of communicative action to political economic [sic] considerations of power and social inequality, confronting macrosocial constraints on language behavior” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 72). Amongst other things they are reflected in language policies as an embodiment of language ideologies. These would not come about without the existence of people’s language attitudes in the first place, which in turn are influenced by dominant language ideologies. Hence, language ideologies do not exclusively precede language attitudes. There is a dialectical relationship or dynamic between the two and also between these and other factors. One can only understand the dynamics at a bilingual early education centre and its clientele’s attitudes towards it by contemplating the powerful ideologies in which these are embedded.

Language policies and the implementation of languages in education (or the lack thereof) are a manifestation of pervasive ideologies. For the most part, this chapter draws on the excellent body of research about Australian language policies that exists in Australia, dominated by the work of Joseph Lo Bianco, Michael Clyne and Uldis Ozolins. Clyne and associates (Clyne, 2005; Clyne, Pauwels, & Sussex, 2007) repeatedly claim that Australia is characterised by the neglect of vast linguistic resources due to a monolingual mindset. Although English predominated from the very start of European settlement, there were also many non-English-speaking European settlers. As well as the diversity that arrived along with these first settlers, several hundred indigenous languages and dialects were already established. However, contact between the first settlers and the indigenous population was never conflict-free, with indigenous languages and cultures seen as inferior and consequently not accepted (Leitner, 2004). Although there is (or was) a wide variety of indigenous and community languages, English is the only de facto national language.

Apart from the settlement history which led to this result, there are also different phases in Australia's language policy history which contributed to it. Clyne (1991a) calls the first phase from 1788-1870 "accepting but laissez-faire", which is followed by "tolerant but restrictive" (1870 to early 1900s), "rejecting" (1914-1970) and "accepting" (from 1970). Lo Bianco (2004) calls these phases "Britishism", "Australianism" and "Multiculturalism", but also describes phases following the "accepting" phase designated by Clyne, labelling these "Asianism" and "Economism".

Clyne calls the first years of European settlement accepting and tolerant because despite the absence of an explicit policy, (European) languages and multilingualism were accepted and promoted in these early days (Clyne, 1991a). From the 1850s until the turn of the century, bilingual education was practised in schools with the aim of maintaining the respective community language and learning a language other than English. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were almost one hundred bilingual schools (mainly German, French and Gaelic), predominantly in Victoria and South Australia, but only a very small number in New South Wales and Sydney (Clyne, 1991a). This seemingly positive situation was, however, restricted to European languages, while attitudes towards Asian and indigenous languages were much more hostile (Lo Bianco, 1990).

During the second phase from the late 1800s on, languages other than English gradually came to be seen as a problem, or even as a threat to Australia's national identity. In 1901 this was explicitly manifested by the so-called White Australia policy, which strictly controlled immigration, LOTE instruction and bilingual education. During the period of the White Australia policy, immigration slowed down, and ethnic and linguistic intolerance spread in Australia. By the beginning of World War I, community languages had been banned from schools and churches. In addition, the use of LOTEs was prohibited in the press and media. Radio broadcasting had to be in English only, later accompanied by English translations (Lo Bianco, 2004). Lo Bianco (2004, 2008b) claims that these measures were ideologically underpinned by what he calls "Britishism", a monolingual model symbolising identification with England.

Apart from controlling and restricting the non-English press, anti-German sentiments after World War I resulted in the enforced change of German place names (Clyne, 1991a; Lo Bianco, 2004; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009) as well as a change from German-medium

schools into monolingual English schools. Such anti-German feeling combined with an ideology of Australianism (one nation, one language) not only led to the prohibition of German, but to general xenophobia and the prohibition of any LOTE as the medium of instruction in schools, since the use of LOTEs was considered disloyal (Clyne, 1991a; Ozolins, 1993). This ideological, political and official rejection and mistrust also continued after the Second World War and into the 1970s. The aim was to establish Australia's national identity in terms of English monolingualism (Clyne, 1991a), which was realised through enforced assimilation and continued intolerance towards LOTEs. To assist this process of assimilation, English as a second language (ESL) has been taught to adult immigrants through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) since 1947. However, English was not taught systematically to children, the expectation being that this would be just picked up in monolingual English groups and classes (Djité, 1994; Ozolins, 1988). In the 1970s, professionals and ethnic groups working together succeeded in promoting languages as a right rather than a problem, and LOTEs began to be accepted (see Clyne, 1991a, above). Nevertheless, when teaching minority languages to speakers of languages other than English, the main goal was to improve learners' English rather than their first language (Lo Bianco, 1990). These were more or less the same assimilative motives as in the previous phases. Only in 1978, after a long period of neglect, the Report on Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants (commonly referred to as the Galbally Report) finally signalled the acceptance of multiculturalism (see Lo Bianco, 2004, above; Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009).

Accordingly, in the 1980s the demand for a systematic national approach to language policies – including Aboriginal languages, Australian sign language and community languages – became stronger and led to the first language policy on a national level in Australia in 1987 (Lo Bianco, 1987): the “National Policy on Languages” (NPL). This was a comprehensive, pluralism-based language policy which acknowledged cultural, intellectual and economic benefits and social equity in overcoming disadvantages (Scarino & Papademetre, 2001). It had four major goals: English for all, support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, a language other than English for all in regular schooling programmes and widespread language services. Accordingly, community language maintenance and bilingual education as well as second language teaching were strongly advocated. For this reason, the NPL identified nine “languages of wider teaching” (Lo Bianco, 1987, p. 124), either because of their presence and history in Australia and/or

because of their global standing. These languages were: Mandarin Chinese, Indonesian/Malay, Japanese, French, German, Italian, Modern Greek, Arabic and Spanish. Programme quality, language teaching and support were also addressed. The goal was to develop Australia's "imposed" monolingualism into conscious and active multilingualism by encouraging speakers of languages other than English to maintain their mother tongues and transmit them to their children. Measures devised to realise this goal centred on the improvement of LOTE teaching in school and the acknowledgment of the value of Aboriginal languages and other community languages. Clyne (1991a) argues that these policy changes were successful in increasing language education and improving language maintenance.

But these positive developments did not continue in the 1990s and 2000s. The NPL was replaced just four years after its release by the second national policy on languages, the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP). The ALLP was considered a continuation of the NPL; however, it narrowed the NPL in a number of aspects, particularly noticeable being the shift from the pluralism-based approach to a focus on national benefits and the economic spectrum (Lo Bianco, 2001). The ALLP began advocating English and Asian languages as economic capital and by doing so, undermined the NPL's community-based and more universal interests and pluralistic aims. At the time, it followed the trend of language commodification. While it did not advocate individual advantages for personal development or cultural awareness, it did propose "further promotion of the teaching of key languages in the national interest" (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1991, p. 61) and promised \$300 to each school in which a student completes a Year 12 language course (Welch, 2010a), albeit without any proposed strategy to improve continuity through to Year 12 (Liddicoat, 2010). The ALLP identified 14 national "priority languages" in order to achieve its aims: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1991, p. 76). Apart from the objectives of improving language learning programmes or the quality of teachers, it also proposed increasing student motivation, and "public awareness of the educational, social, cultural and vocational benefits of language learning" as well as enhancing the awareness of the crucial role of parents and other adults in the child's language learning (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1991, pp. 61, 112).

The NPL and the ALLP are the two main language policies implemented on a national level in Australia. But there are two more texts that are regarded as language policies, since they had an impact on language maintenance and teaching. In 1994, parallel to the ALLP, the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Strategy (NALSAS) was released. The NALSAS was based on trade reports and statistics and consequently focused on the teaching of languages exclusively in relation to potential economic benefits. Thus, the four languages to be taught were Chinese, Japanese, Indonesian and Korean. This policy, as the only language policy for almost a decade, neglects other Asian languages and non-Asian languages, and consequently many Australian minority communities. Lo Bianco (2004, p. 25) summarises this phase of “Asianism” thus:

In education, Asian languages have been the boom subjects of the 1990s, not always comfortably aligned with multiculturalism, sometimes distancing that legacy (Singh 2001) drawing on a stream of thinking of Asia-literacy as a national capability deficiency, a missing part of needed human capital, and as such required by mainstream English-speaking Australia, not its minority populations.

Meanwhile, a fourth interest group became stronger in the 1990s: the English First Movement, which considered community languages as a problem and English as economic and human capital (Economism). In 1997, this led to the Commonwealth Literacy Policy (CLP). The CLP is not a language policy per se, but important for language policy studies nonetheless as it does not advocate or even mention any other language but English. This policy is based on the assumption of a monolingual English-speaking society, neglecting Australia’s multilingual, multicultural and multi-social background (Lo Bianco, 2001). With the shift from a multicultural to an economic perspective following the NPL’s subsequent policies, tailored ESL funding (as promoted by the NPL) was narrowed by subsuming it under general literacy provision (McKay, 2001).

All in all, the NPL remains the best Australian policy in terms of prioritising community language maintenance and education for the sake of intercultural enrichment over commercial interests. But although the NPL was acclaimed internationally, it has not been effectively implemented. It is also noteworthy that in its introduction to the discussion of language education the NPL states that “at least one language in addition to English ought to be an expected part of the educational experience of all Australians, *ideally* throughout the years of compulsory education” (Lo Bianco, 1987, p. 120; emphasis added). This

means that the most progressive Australian policy on languages represents an understanding of an ideal situation where one foreign language is learnt from primary school on. By contrast, European Union language policy statements such as a White Paper in 1995 argue that as part of basic knowledge two foreign languages should be learnt starting as early as pre-primary education: “Early teaching of language, starting at nursery school, should become part of basic knowledge. [...] In order to make for proficiency in three Community languages, it is desirable for foreign language learning to start at pre-school level” (European Union, 1995, pp. 13 and 47, respectively). In contrast to the continuously weakened NPL statements, this statement has often been reaffirmed subsequently (e.g. Barcelona European Council, 2002; European Commission, 2011; The Council of the European Union, 2008). Comparing Australian language policies to European language policies is particularly important considering that many immigrant parents to Australia, particularly those from Germany and other European countries who are the focus of the present study, will have developed attitudes towards language and language learning in contexts shaped by European policies. Such comparisons also show that Australia is out of sync with international developments. In fact, the early childhood sector is always missing from Australian language policies and related discussions, whether they are considered progressive and affirmative or not. This neglect leaves language programme planning for the zero to six-year-old age group entirely to the private sector. Consequently, this dearth of support for language maintenance or second language learning will result in (partial) attrition before children even reach school age. By then, many may have turned monolingual already. At the same time, there is a push for English in the early years, evidenced for example by the primary school entrance test “Best Start” in NSW, which tests literacy in English only (NSW Department of Education and Communities: NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre, 2011).

To summarise Australian language policies, Clyne (2005) points out that although there have been historical periods where LOTEs were accepted or tolerated, more recent developments in Australia display a monolingual mindset. While prevailing ideologies around the time of the NPL were positive towards pluralism, these quickly turned into ideologies rooted in economic reasoning. Since then, language learning and pluralism in Australia have been regarded as economic capital only, outweighing intercultural, ideological, individual and community-based benefits. Overall, Australian language policies have been characterised by a narrowing of scope and complete neglect of LOTEs in early

childhood education. Welch (2010b) describes policies as procedures to shape reality, in the sense that certain situations show deficiencies and the need for action to improve them. Over the last decades, Australian language policies and other official reports and documents have been put in place then replaced again, which indicates ongoing shortcomings in the policies themselves in terms of their effectiveness in shaping reality. In an opinion paper on language education in Australia, Clyne et al. (2007) argue that “[a]lthough Australian governments and agencies have been active in commissioning reviews and reports, to date the core recommendations of such reports have not been implemented, so the problems are mounting”. The consequence of neglecting to implement these recommendations in school and pre-primary education are examined in the following section.

## **2.3 Languages in education**

### **2.3.1 School education**

Since 2009 the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) reference group has been responsible for the development of a national curriculum for primary and secondary schools. While the curriculum is written by ACARA on a federal level, the subsequent implementation falls under the responsibility of the states and territories. State and territory school and curriculum authorities also develop additional syllabi or other documents, which may incorporate parameters provided in the Australian Curriculum, but will also be shaped according to the states’ or territories’ specific situation, procedures, learning content and time on task allocations. As a consequence, the curriculum actually implemented may differ widely between the different states and territories. Generally, different policies apply in different jurisdictions and may differ between states. Additionally, different researchers examine different contexts. In the following, the relevant level of government or context is specified where relevant. While ACARA suggests the continuous implementation of language teaching from the first year of primary school (including German as one of the eleven proposed languages), this has not been put into practice at the time of writing. It remains to be seen how the implementation can be realised under the present circumstances (staffing, staff training, funding [by states and territories], etc.). Policy changes and implementation plans would seem necessary in order to effectively achieve ACARA’s aims.

For the time being, New South Wales students are required to study 100 hours of one language over one school year between Years 7 and 10, preferably in Years 7 to 8 (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2003). In addition to this low requirement, a recent review of languages education in NSW indicates further weaknesses in the approach, such as the neglect of students' previous experience and existing skills and the fact that some schools use the four terms of the school year to introduce four different languages in one year (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2013). Rather unsurprisingly, the continuance rate in Year 10 is very low. Only 13 per cent of students study a language in Year 10, 9.7 per cent in Year 11 and only 8.6 per cent in Year 12, most of whom are in NSW metropolitan areas (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2013). In some states the number of students studying a language in their final year of school is even lower (Group of Eight, 2007).

In NSW primary schools LOTE learning is not compulsory. Languages are part of the Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) syllabus, which describes learning "about" and "through the medium of" languages as well as learning how to use them (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2006, p. 5). Primary schools can choose individually whether to introduce a LOTE programme or not. The aforementioned review of languages education in NSW states that 30 to 40 per cent of primary schools ran a language programme in 2012, including an Aboriginal Languages programme. However, LOTE instruction generally refers to only one school hour (30-40 minutes) per week in mostly metropolitan schools (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2013). Hence, little time is devoted to the teaching of LOTEs in NSW primary schools.

In national terms, a much-cited plan for languages education in Australian schools from 2005 states that only half the children in Australian mainstream schools studied a LOTE in 2003 (not to mention a second foreign language) (Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs, 2005). In addition to the results of the above-mentioned Board of Studies' review from 2013, it is safe to say that languages are still not an integral part of every student's school experience in Australia. In comparison with other OECD countries, Australian students spend least time on language learning (Group of Eight, 2007). An OECD report (OECD, 2011) indicates that the average instruction time for modern languages across the curriculum in OECD countries is nine per cent for nine- to eleven-year-olds and 13 per cent for twelve- to 14-year-old children. The average

instruction time in New South Wales, by contrast, is zero and two per cent, respectively (Macgibbon, 2011).

Another institutional language learning option offering more weekly instruction time is community or Saturday schools (usually for background speakers). At the time of writing, 57 languages were taught at NSW community schools with more than 30,000 students attending such classes each year (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2014). Some languages were represented in fewer schools (e.g. Tibetan with one school), whereas other community languages were represented in several dozen schools (e.g. Arabic). In Australia, these schools are subsidised by the state government, but operated by the ethnic group concerned. The amount of language input time is approximately three to four hours weekly. Hence, community schools offer more instruction time than common language-as-a-subject classes (in Australia), and provide support for background speakers as well as for majority language speakers to achieve a level of proficiency. However, such programmes cannot be characterised as bilingual programmes; for this, two languages have to be used as a medium of instruction to deliver curriculum content during some part of the school day (see Section 2.1 above).

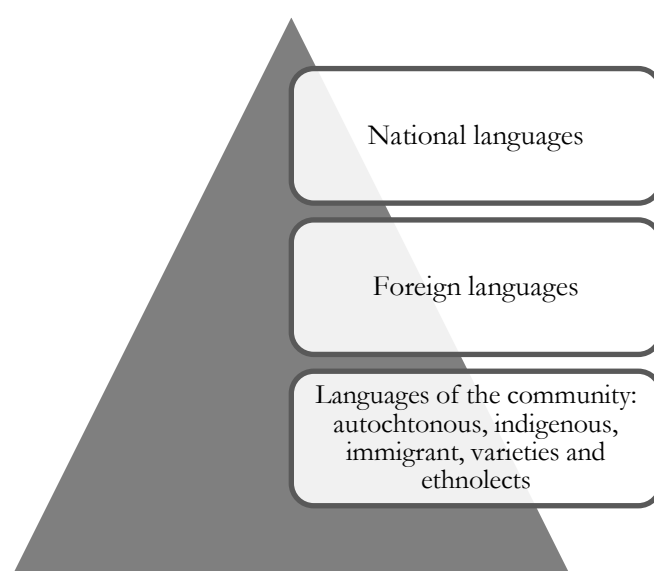


Figure 2.1 | The hierarchy of languages (Source: Ellis, Gogolin, & Clyne, 2010, p. 442)

Bilingual education in Australia struggles with varying levels of acceptance to the point of a double standard (Lo Bianco, 2008a, p. 41):

Public sympathy for and political discourse in favour of two-language competence is most ambivalent and sometimes hostile when Indigenous languages are involved, sometimes hostile or at least ambivalent when particular immigrant origin languages are involved and most favourable when languages associated with trade, foreign relations or prestige cultures are involved.

Ellis et al. (2010) extend this hierarchy with national languages and visualise it in a diagram (see Figure 2.1). The authors also see Indigenous languages at the bottom of the language hierarchy, followed by foreign languages and topped by national languages.

Consequently, in Australia less than one per cent of all students access bilingual education, although many more speak a LOTE when they start school (Gibbons, 1997). The few existing opportunities oftentimes cannot provide continuity at primary and secondary school.

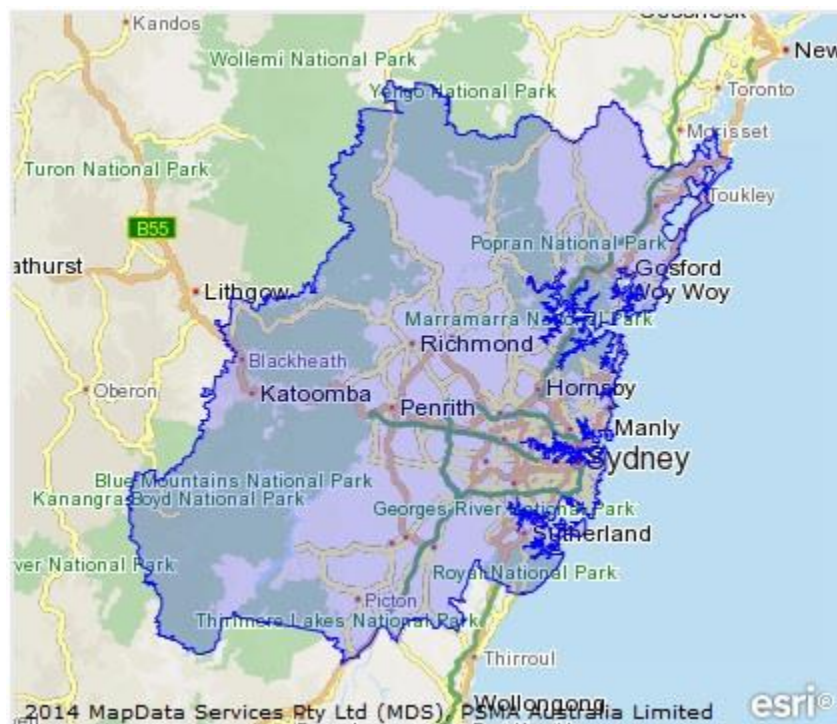


Figure 2.2 | Greater Sydney (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b)

In regards to the specific situation in Sydney, a city of 4.4 million with 35.5 per cent (N=540,507) of households where two or more languages are spoken (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b), this becomes bluntly evident. In order to shed light on the number of

institutions offering bilingual education in Sydney (for German, see Section 2.3.3 below), the point of reference is the area of “Greater Sydney” as used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Greater Sydney is defined as a very large area including towns as far as 120 kilometres away from Sydney city centre (see Figure 2.2). This means that the number of institutions offering bilingual education (or German) in Greater Sydney does not necessarily equal the number of such institutions accessible to families. However, even the Greater Sydney reference shows a rather gloomy picture.

In Greater Sydney, continuous bilingual education from pre-primary to senior school level is only available in certain private international schools, usually following the education system of the relevant home country. Sydney has four such international schools which are registered with the Board of Studies offering “education of a kind or for children of a kind” (Board of Studies New South Wales, 2014). These schools are German, French, Italian and Japanese. As the Board of Studies does not collect any data in relation to the language of instruction used within a school, other independent bilingual schools do not appear in such statistics. However, a few more private schools (primary to secondary school level) exist in Sydney where a non-language subject, mostly religion, is taught in a LOTE (e.g. Armenian, Hebrew and Arabic). These seem to follow a partial immersion concept. Partial immersion in French, Italian, German and Japanese for the pre- and primary school level is also offered by a private international grammar school. At the international grammar school, students can continue with language as a subject studies to their final school year. At the public school level, Sydney has even fewer options, all of which are primary schools only. There is one French-English bilingual school as well as three schools which participate in the NSW Department of Education and Communities’ Bilingual Schools Program. These teach through the medium of Korean, Japanese and Mandarin (funded by the NSW Government and aligned with NALSSP) (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2011).

In sum, bilingual education is extremely scarce in Sydney. Furthermore, most of the schools offering such programmes are privileged private institutions, a situation which turns bilingual education into an even more exclusive commodity. The chapter continues with an examination of the situation in the early childhood sector.

### 2.3.2 Early childhood education

Apart from the four public and five independent schools, there is a paucity of institutions offering bilingual education in the early childhood sector. When introducing an educational programme such as a bilingual learning curriculum, early childhood institutions refer to the Early Years Learning Framework (2009), which describes the anticipated learning outcomes for this sector. This framework states five educational outcomes, considered as important skills in a child's development: a) children have a strong sense of identity; b) children are connected with and contribute to their world; c) children have a strong sense of wellbeing; d) children are confident and involved learners; and e) children are effective communicators (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace, 2009). Within these outcomes, language-related statements are very vague. Learning outcomes for children are described as "children [...] show increasing knowledge, understanding and skill in conveying meaning in at least one language" (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace, 2009, p. 40). In regards to children from LOTE backgrounds, educators are to "actively support the maintenance of home language and culture" and "value children's linguistic heritage and with family and community members encourage the use of and acquisition of home languages and Standard Australian English" (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace, 2009, pp. 23 and 40, respectively). Furthermore, task areas for educators are described as to "expose children to different languages and dialects and encourage appreciation of linguistic diversity" (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace, 2009, p. 27). However, within the framework no statements are included with regards to how exactly this can or should be realised. There is no mention of specific guidelines, or of appropriate educator training. Childcare services are to implement the framework with appropriate strategies based on their individual context, which means that childcare providers can decide individually how and to what extent they might work towards these outcomes.

For the reason that offering education in a LOTE is a decision for individual childcare service providers and not subject to regulation, the responsible Australian Government department for early childhood education (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) does not keep such data either and thus data is not centrally accessible (similarly to the Board of Studies, see Section 2.3.1) (personal email from DEEWR, 2012). This means that people interested in accessing such information (e.g.

parents) would have to contact all services individually to enquire if a bilingual programme was offered. The same applies when trying to find specific language programmes this way. Oftentimes, parents are dependent on the relevant community to either obtain information about language programmes in childcare centres or to access a community school. Some of the community schools offer classes for pre-school aged children as well (e.g. Czech and Slovak), but as mentioned above, time on task does not allow children to achieve high levels of proficiency (see Section 2.3.1). Some community schools in NSW have connected childcare centres, with language programmes in Arabic, Chinese, Filipino, French, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Lao, Macedonian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish operating in the Greater Sydney area (Languages Australia, 2014). However, for the most part these are not labelled or registered as bilingual centres and may only be known as such by the local community, with many unable to be identified by either the responsible department or the two major websites for childcare in Australia.

On the other hand, some centres may label themselves bilingual even though they only provide isolated language classes, equating to a formal language input of 30 minutes to one hour per week. As such, despite labelling themselves bilingual, these providers do not fulfil bilingual education standards. Such language classes are often conducted by private language teaching networks or companies, with childcare centres or schools functioning as hosts. At the time of writing, online research identified four such providers offering Mandarin, French, Spanish and Italian for pre-school-aged children in Sydney.

Using the keyword “bilingual” while searching for childcare centres on the two main childcare search websites in Australia, the results for the entire Sydney region revealed the two Fritzkidz centres and one bilingual school’s out of school hours care. Fritzkidz was the only long day care early childhood service in the whole Sydney area offering bilingual education that could be identified through these commonly used search tools.

In summary, bilingual early childhood education is only a very small sector in Sydney. As pointed out in the previous section, it is prominent neither in Australian nor in New South Wales schools. Yet the predominance of English-only childcare centres and lack of support in language learning for the early years results in the loss of skills of thousands of children and thus supports the transformation of bilingual children into monolinguals. Considering the benefits of bilingual early childhood education and its rise in other

countries, the market may grow in Australia as well. But given how slowly Australian policies and educational sectors have reacted to the demand for speaking LOTEs, Australia is already and may continue to be behind when it comes to tapping its full potential. Specific language maintenance programmes or other forms of bilingual education still need to be developed if Australia wishes to discontinue its support of language attrition and shift in its educational system.

As the focus of the present research is the German language, the chapter continues with an examination of Sydney's educational landscape for German in particular.

### **2.3.3 Institutional German in Sydney**

#### **2.3.3.1 School education**

Although German used to be one of the most widely taught LOTEs in Australia before the World Wars, the number of German learners has since dropped significantly. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, German ranks fifth after the most commonly taught languages behind Japanese, Italian, Indonesian and French, and followed by Mandarin, Arabic, Spanish, Greek, Vietnamese and other languages (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2009). Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2009) point out that Japanese and Italian alone constitute around half the languages (47 per cent) taught in Australian schools. Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs (2005) quotes that the six most commonly taught languages account for 90 per cent of language students in Australia. More recent data for NSW primary schools indicate that Japanese and Italian are also taught frequently in this sector, but Chinese has become more dominant here, particularly in government schools (see Table 2.1). German is not in the top ten for NSW government primary schools, but ranks 8<sup>th</sup> for independent primary schools. Overall, German does not figure prominently as an instructed language in Australian formal education in various states and at various levels.

Government primary schools		Independent primary schools	
Language	Number of students	Language	Number of students
Chinese (Mandarin)	18,771	French	11,649
Italian	14,193	Japanese	4,928
Arabic	9,220	Chinese (Mandarin)	4,496
French	7,445	Arabic	4,460
Vietnamese	6,191	Italian	2,740
Japanese	4,592	Indonesian	2,338
Greek	4,195	Spanish	2,335
Indonesian	3,472	German	2,114
Aboriginal languages	2,389	Greek	1,061
Spanish	1,539	Aboriginal languages	22

**Table 2.1 | Top ten languages taught in NSW primary schools (Source: Board of Studies New South Wales, 2013, p. 10)**

On a national level, Curnow (2010) found that German was the fifth most widely taught language in the first decade of the 21st century. However, the number of school students studying German in Australia dropped during this period: it dropped slightly between 2001 and 2005 (Curnow, 2010) and then more drastically in the five year period to follow (Kretzenbacher, 2011).

There are only two public primary schools offering German as a subject in the Greater Sydney area, bringing the total number of students learning German between Kindergarten and Year 6 to 380 in 2011 (personal email from the NSW Curriculum & Learning Innovation Centre, 2012) (see Table 2.2). In the Greater Sydney area, there are also 23 schools offering German between Year 7 and Year 9, bringing the total student number for this category to 2,464. Finally, there are 24 schools in the Greater Sydney area offering German for students in Years 10 to 12, adding up to 618 learners in total, 146 of which study German in Year 12. There are also 44 independent schools in the Greater Sydney area (74 in NSW) teaching German as a subject (personal email from The Association of Independent Schools NSW, 2012).

School level	Number of schools in Sydney	Number of students in Sydney	Number of schools in NSW	Number of students in NSW
Primary (K-6)	2	380	6	878
Years 7-9	23	2,464	66	4,809
Years 10-12	24	618	43	955

**Table 2.2 | Government schools in Sydney offering German as a subject**  
(Source: NSW Curriculum & Learning Innovation Centre, 2012)

Starting at the primary level, another way to learn German institutionally is through the German Saturday School, which at the time of writing operates in four different Sydney locations (German Saturday School Sydney, 2014). A community-based school of the German catholic parish also offers German classes starting at the age of four up to adult learners' classes (Deutschstunde, 2014).

As mentioned previously, the time on task offered by these two methods render this option unsatisfactory when aiming for bilingual education. However, as also demonstrated in the previous section, approaches that employ LOTE as a medium of instruction are sorely underrepresented. Furthermore, bilingual education for German in particular is scarce in Australia, New South Wales and Sydney. Explicit immersion programmes are offered by an international grammar school and a German school, both of which are private. What is more, the German school is located approximately 25 kilometres outside of the city centre in an area with a much lower population density. As such, this may also involve additional constraints of time and effort for many families seeking German-English bilingual education who live outside this suburb, unless they opt to move to the area. In fact, this area has become increasingly popular amongst German speakers (Ting, 2014). Using census data, Piller (2014) shows how the numbers of Germany-born residents and those speaking German at home in the catchment area of the school are in contrast to the same categories for Greater Sydney and Australia. The percentage of those born in Germany and those who speak German at home as well as of those maintaining German is much higher there than in Greater Sydney or Australia. As these numbers increased in the period since the German school moved to this suburb, Piller (2014) argues that the school in fact attracted the German-speaking community and consequently changed the community profile of this area.

The international grammar school is located in central Sydney (about 3 kilometres from the city centre), but has considerably lower time allocation for German.

### **2.3.3.2 Early childhood education**

Both the German school and the international grammar school also operate services for preschool children. Both accept only children aged three years plus and operate for a maximum of 6.5 hours per school day. These are the only options to continue with German as a medium of instruction from the early childhood stage through to the senior school level. Aside from these two institutions, only the two Fritzkidz centres offer bilingual German-English education at the early childhood level in the Greater Sydney area. Furthermore, Fritzkidz is the sole bilingual long day care provider. Apart from subsidies for childcare fees, such early childhood programmes receive no funding from the responsible department or state, or at the federal level. This leads to situations in childcare centres where programmes are subject to staff turnover, resulting in temporary and ad-hoc programmes only (Jones Díaz, 2013). Hence, such programmes are not only scarce but also constantly endangered.

In addition to institutional early childhood language learning options, non-institutional alternatives exist, such as German playgroups, of which there are currently seven in Sydney (Languages Australia, 2014), as well as private tutors, nannies, au-pairs and suchlike. However, these options also require time, effort, money, space and commitment from parents (for a cost calculation in an US example see Demont-Heinrich, 2011). With research showing that German is one of the languages with the highest shift rates in Australia on the one hand (Clyne, 1991a), and more studies showing that this language shift is accelerated when children attend English-only early education settings (Fillmore, 1991) (see also Chapter 1), the importance of bilingual German-English childcare centres is obvious. However, the present scarcity of such institutions means that their potential to support language maintenance remains largely untapped.

### **2.3.4 Summary**

As evidenced by Lo Bianco and Slaughter (2009), Lo Bianco (2008a), Board of Studies New South Wales (2013), OECD (2011) and my own research for the Greater Sydney area and the German language, the status of language teaching and of bilingual education in particular in Australia, NSW and Sydney is rather poor. This is true for all educational

stages, but particularly the early childhood sector. It is also true for most languages, including German.

This gives rise to a situation where Fritzkidz clients who would like their children to continue with German education after Fritzkidz (whether as a medium of instruction or as a subject) have very few options available to them. It is highly unlikely that there is a public school which offers German in the parents' catchment area. The German school is 21 kilometres away from Fritzkidz 1 and 30 kilometres from Fritzkidz 2, which may create added constraints of time and effort, rendering German-English bilingual education after Fritzkidz unfeasible. The international grammar school is seven kilometres from Fritzkidz 1 and four kilometres from Fritzkidz 2. In order to continue with a minimal exposure to German outside of the home, parents would have to go out of their way and walk the path of "linguistic extremism" (Demont-Heinrich, 2012), paying high tuition fees and travelling long distances, necessitating the investment of considerable time, money and effort.

The only way to improve this situation is to make bilingual education more widely available in the public sector in order to make it accessible to the whole spectrum of society. In addition, the value of bilingualism itself and the existence of bilingual education opportunities need to be brought into the public consciousness, a job for which policy entrepreneurs at all levels are needed (McGroarty, 2006). So far the perpetuation of negative ideologies has prevented community attitudes to language education from developing positively, and bilingual programmes remain marginalised. Under these conditions, parents are unable to access bilingual or language education, which will have the effect of reproducing the same deficient system over and over again. This shows how a monolingually oriented country prevents a more positive development in attitudes, and will inevitably impact negatively on (bilingual) students and (multilingual) society as a whole.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In the first part of this chapter, I have reviewed the literature concerned with bilingual education, parents' attitudes towards it as well as the challenges that face such programmes. Looking into the Australian situation in Section 3 and 4, I have shown that Australian language policies and mainstream institutions fail to meet the needs of families seeking to maintain their first language or to educate a functionally bilingual child. There is a particular lack of bilingual institutions in the early childhood sector. Some do exist, but

these are often hard to access, either because the public is not aware of them or cannot locate them, or because they are cost-intensive, for example by being affiliated with private schools. The ones that exist usually run minimalistic programmes and face multiple hurdles (see also Section 2).

The lack of provision in bilingual early childhood education in Australia is replicated in the scarcity of research in this field. Most studies that exist are concerned with language maintenance at home, including some research into German-English education (Döpke, 1988, 1992; Leopold, 1939-1949; Saunders, 1982, 1988). As valid as these studies are for the home domain, they overestimate the role of the family in education today from an ideological viewpoint. With family structures frequently comprising two working parents, these studies no longer reflect the reality parents face today. More recent studies take the institutional domain into greater consideration; however, these either focus on the school sector (including literacy) or on the maintenance of and support for home languages or indigenous languages. Sociolinguistic studies focussing on parental attitudes are almost totally lacking. Studies about parental attitudes have been undertaken in other countries, but these too either ignore the early childhood sector or focus on English as the target language in non-English-speaking countries, which does not offer an equivalent comparison when taking into account the global stance of English. Although these predominantly quantitative studies do reveal interesting results, they are mostly based on the comparison of language majority and minority groups. However, the minority groups are usually large – not only at the investigated site but also in society or at least in the investigated area (e.g. Spanish in the United States, French in Canada or Spanish in the catchment area of the examined institution). In many researched families, English is only practised alongside a minority language or not at all. Even when comparing dominant English and dominant minority language groups, in these studies the dominant English group often reports a minority language background.

In Australia, there is no equivalent local dominance and no predominating minority language; rather, pluralism is distributed across many different languages and across the country. In particular, there is no high concentration of German in Sydney or even in the area of the childcare centres under investigation, as is the case with languages programmes examined in previous studies. Although there used to be areas in Sydney with a high concentration of German-speaking immigrants (e.g. Woollahra or North Sydney) (Clyne,

2003; Clyne & Kipp, 1998), today's numerical strength of German speakers in Australia and in Sydney is dispersed (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a). In Sydney there is no German-dominated suburb as is the case with Italian, Turkish, Spanish, Vietnamese, Greek and other large minority groups. However, possibly due to the location of the German school, German seems to have become the most frequently spoken LOTE in some of Sydney's wealthy Northern Beaches suburbs (see above). In addition, previous studies mostly examine bilingual schools and only very few examine the early childhood sector for children aged six weeks to six years.

In sum, a lacuna exists regarding research about bilingual early childhood education internationally, and specifically in Australia. Existing Australian research in the field is mostly restricted to the maintenance of and support for home languages or indigenous languages and rarely focuses on parental attitudes. The present study is situated in this lacuna and sets out to examine the following research questions:

- What are the prevailing language attitudes, ideologies and practices in a bilingual German-English childcare centre in Sydney?
  - What are the characteristics of parents who enrol their children in a bilingual German-English early childhood education centre in Sydney?
  - What are the reasons for parents to enrol their children at FritzkiDz?
  - What are parents' future aspirations in terms of language learning?
  - What are parents' attitudes towards the bilingual programme?
  - What are educators' attitudes towards the bilingual programme?
- How does bilingual education work in this context?

By doing so, this thesis addresses the paucity of investigations into the early childhood sector as well as into a non-dominant minority language. Particularly, it examines attitudes, expectations and dynamics of parents in a German-English bilingual early education centre in Australia.

### **3 Research design and methodology**

Chapter 2 has revealed gaps in previous research. This chapter outlines the methodological decisions taken to fill this void. After delineating a rationale for the methodological approach of the study, the strategy and method of data collection is described. This is followed by a profile of the study's participants and a description of data analysis approaches. The chapter closes with a discussion of ethical considerations and the study's limitations.

#### **3.1 The research design: A qualitative approach**

The bilingual German-English childcare provider Fritzkidz is the first and only one of its kind in Sydney, Australia. By having their children enrolled in one of its centres, parents in the focus of interest in this study were in a different situation from many other parents in Australia, making them a unique and atypical case. These parents had different lifestyles and backgrounds (culturally, economically, linguistically, educationally, etc.), but all converged socially, constructing a shared reality. This reality was relative, constantly changing and re-constructed through interaction of these individuals with their social world. I was interested in investigating this interaction, and how the different aspects worked together in this particular context. The aim was to examine the organisation, meaning and role of the centres, parents' underlying reasons for enrolling their children and their language attitudes, values and practices, and the intersection and structure of these processes, and to derive new concepts and theories from the findings.

Qualitative research allows an understanding to emerge in respect of how these different aspects work together to form a whole. Hence, the research strategy had to have many qualities. In addition to a strategy which allowed for examination of the situation holistically and in-depth, a flexible strategy was needed. Because the childcare centres were reasonably new at the time of the research project (two-and-a-half years old at the start of the project), they were constantly in the process of development on many levels. Over the three-year study period the physical setting changed regularly. For example, between December 2011 and July 2012, furniture at Fritzkidz 1's preschool was re-arranged, wall decorations changed and a stage was built. The outdoor areas in both centres were also renovated (see Chapter 4.2.1.1.1). Additionally, documents such as brochures and handbooks as well as times of the daily routines were amended. Furthermore, staff changes

occurred, which then resulted in some implementation changes during the course of the research project. These changes, however, were partially the result of the dynamics of interest here, such as re-constructing relationships between the centres and their clientele (see Chapters 4 and 5). Due to their adaptability and flexibility, qualitative research strategies enabled me to “capture the lived experience of participants in order to understand their meaning perspectives, case by case” (Janesick, 2003, p. 73) – a quality which was needed for this study. The changes are presented in more detail in Chapter 4, but all numbers cited henceforth in relation to the two Fritzkidz centres, its educators (qualifications, languages spoken, etc.), capacities, and numbers of children and parents refer to the first stage of my fieldwork in December 2011.

In regards to researching philosophical stances, qualitative researchers “do not subscribe to a strong form of realism (as their ontology), nor do they believe they can carry out truly objective, value-free research (as their epistemology); they fall somewhere on the continuum between positivism and interpretivism” (Duff, 2008, p. 29). In accordance with Duff’s statement about the philosophical orientation of qualitative researchers, answers to the whats, hows and whys of the phenomenon under investigation have been explored from the middle of the continuum. Taking this position, the purpose of the study was not to describe the entire reality surrounding attitudes, practices and ideologies in early childhood education. By using a qualitative approach and an inductive research strategy, it was the aim to capture as much as possible, to understand the meaning of processes and to provide a thick, detailed and systematic description of the locally, temporally and situationally limited phenomenon under investigation (Flick, 2006). Ethnography as the chosen methodology to realise this aim is outlined in the following section.

## **3.2 Methodology**

Heller (2008) states that “ethnographies allow us to get at things we would otherwise never be able to discover. They allow us to see how language practices are connected to the very real conditions of people’s lives, to discover how and why languages matter to people in their own terms, and to watch processes unfold over time” (Heller, 2008, p. 250). Her statement describes precisely the aim of the present study. As set out at the end of Chapter 2, this study pursues the following two broad research questions: What are the prevailing language attitudes, ideologies and practices in a bilingual German-English childcare centre in Sydney? How does bilingual education work in this context? Addressing these questions

allows me to demonstrate the affordances and constraints of bilingual education in the context under investigation.

Hence, this study is about values, attitudes, ideologies and structures. It is also about the relationship between these elements and the way they intersect, and particularly about the processes of their co-construction between individuals in their social world. These can be holistically examined using ethnography as a research strategy. As the study is also about language practises at the bilingual childcare centres, the ethnography employed was initially inspired by Heller's study of a French minority school in Toronto (Heller, 2006). Similarly to her investigation, the present study relies on interviews with a variety of stakeholders (administrators, educators and parents), questionnaires, observations (on-floor with educators, in the staff room, at parent-teacher interviews, at parent-committee meetings, etc.) as well as a wide variety of documents (see below). The resulting diversity of data sources and the rich description of their analysis constitute the strength of this study.

The study is a sociolinguistic ethnography in that it aims to examine language attitudes, ideologies and practices of a particular group in a particular setting at a particular point in time. It is also an educational and an institutional ethnography as the particular setting is two early childhood education centres, the particular group are parents, educators and administrators, and the particular time is the early stages after the establishment of the two centres in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Because it is an institutional ethnography, the study has clear boundaries: two physical centres, a clientele of 127 families and 32 staff members. Fritzkidz Australia as an institution is a bounded system and the two centres are the two cases in this ethnography. Due to the unique nature of the centres in Sydney and the fact that they are a contemporary phenomenon (operating since 2009 only), the present ethnography has a predominantly (but not exclusively) exploratory and heuristic nature realised by an intensive and holistic examination of these two cases.

The chapter continues with a description of the various data collection methods employed in this study.

### **3.3 Methods of data collection**

In order to provide a deep, robust and comprehensive account of the previously mentioned research questions, various data collection methods were employed. In addition

to methods strongly associated with qualitative research and ethnography in particular (open-ended interviews, observation, and document collection and analysis), structured data collection methods (demographic questionnaires) were used to analyse structural features. Interviews were used to gain an understanding of what educators and parents do and why they think they are doing it. These were also used to elicit a wide variety of information influencing the practices of educators and parents, such as attitudes, ideologies and personal experiences. Interviews with Fritzkidz' staff were conducted between December 2011 and September 2012, whereas interviews with parents were conducted for an extended period between December 2011 and February 2013 (for both see Appendix 3).

In a research process, on-site observations are also essential to capturing the whole context first-hand. This holistic perspective facilitates experience and understanding of the interactions, processes and relationships as well as teachers' and parents' practices in the childcare centres. It also allows the researcher to see what participants may not have revealed and is consequently also a complementing tool. During and after the observation, notes were taken on the physical setting, organisation (groups, daily routines, policies, programme), staff, parents, activities and interactions (amongst staff and between staff and children/parents), communication and language practices. On-site observations at both centres were made within the same period between December 2011 and September 2012.

During the same time period, material such as policy documents, brochures and booklets, newsletters, weekly programme plans, rosters, etc. was collected repeatedly during site visits. The collection and interpreting of documents is also crucial as they are "produced independently of the research study. They are thus noncreative and grounded in the context under study" (Merriam, 1998, p. 133). In this way, documents complement the data set from a new perspective. In addition, other complementary data was independently collected by the centres. The managing director (MD) provided results from internal parent surveys conducted by the provider, which were then used to compare data from the project questionnaire to the results obtained by Fritzkidz (see Chapter 6.2.3).

Additionally, questionnaires were used to elicit the clientele's demographic background and distribution across attitudes (see Appendix 2). The term *clientele* is used in a similar way to Heller (2006) to refer to the childcare provider's community. Although clientele is a

consumer-oriented term, it is not an inappropriate one, as parents are paying approximately one hundred dollars per day to receive the service of childcare and bilingual education. Clientele is used interchangeably with “families” or “parents”. The term *parent* includes foster parents as well as other guardians with children in their care. In terms of eliciting the clientele’s background, the questionnaire’s purpose was twofold. Firstly, it helped me to prepare for the fieldwork and to gain a preliminary understanding of the participants’ backgrounds, later to be interpreted with in-depth knowledge gained through interviews to present a more specific picture. Accordingly, participants representing the different identified categories were systematically selected for the in-depth interviews (see Section 3.3.3). Secondly, the questionnaire was also used to determine quantified demographic information about the clientele (socioeconomic and language background, age, place of birth, etc.), which functioned more globally as a framework for the project to enable me to understand the structure of the clientele. This numerical distribution complemented other sources of data collected, which together provide an in-depth and holistic insight into the situation under examination.

The survey was taken by 93 participants, which accounts for approximately three quarters (73.2 per cent) of the entire parent body. Based on this frame, a context-bound qualitative inquiry through in-depth interviews was conducted using a sample of 28 purposefully selected previously surveyed families to gain an understanding of parent’s language attitudes, ideologies and practices. One week before the questionnaires were distributed, information posters explaining the purpose of the study were put on display across the centres. Information letters were also distributed alongside the questionnaires. At Fritzkidz 1, the questionnaires were placed next to the attendance folders that have to be signed by the parents of all attending children whenever they drop off or pick up their children, and parents volunteering for the study took a questionnaire from the pile provided. At Fritzkidz 2, a questionnaire was placed into each “parent pocket” (a pigeon hole for parent information) at the main entrance of the centre. A subject information statement outlining contact information, the purpose of the study, confidentiality and ethical considerations, and a re-statement that participation was voluntary, was attached to each questionnaire (see Appendix 2). A detachable consent form for participation in an interview was also attached to the questionnaire for those wishing to volunteer further. Questionnaires and detached consent forms were returned into a closed return box, which was emptied regularly.

Based on qualitative research strategies, data from the questionnaire was triangulated with in-depth interviews with parents to extend and complement the numerical data. Additionally, data was triangulated with a) information from 19 formal (structured and semi-structured) and several hours of informal interviews with educators, centre directors, the managing director (MD) and the chief executive officer (CEO); b) four weeks of continuous and several days of recurrent intensive and systematic on-site observation; and c) the collection and review of policies, programme descriptions, daily routines and rosters, the website, brochures, newsletters, parent information booklets, the history of the centres and publicly available data. Each method has its own strengths revealing different aspects of the empirical reality, which can be put forth when bringing multiple sources together. Additionally, triangulation enhances the study's validity, credibility and reliability by providing mutual cross-data validity checks (Patton, 1990, p. 188). The different research instruments are described in the following section.

### **3.3.1 Research instruments**

A number of research instruments were employed over the course of the study. Technically the chronology of their implementation starts with informal observation and interviews prior to the research project, which facilitated both the formulation of the research questions as well as the research design. Once the research project had started, observations and material collection were conducted continuously. The survey was employed after a period of observation time and prior to the first parent interviews. After the first round of interviews with childcare seekers, the childcare providers were interviewed, followed by a second round of interviews with childcare seekers. The description now begins with the primary research tool, the researcher.

#### **3.3.1.1 Researcher**

It is often argued that a qualitative researcher's attributes must include a high tolerance for ambiguity. The ambiguity inherent in qualitative research was reduced to some degree by combining multiple research methodologies. As the researcher is the primary research instrument in many qualitative studies, the resulting subjectivity and bias are frequently cited as a weakness of qualitative research. On the other hand, researcher subjectivity is also often used to describe a study's strength. Heller (2008), for example, affirms the latter by pointing out that neither bilingualism itself nor research into bilingualism are neutral. A critical and flexible researcher can do more justice to the subject of bilingualism than static tools do.

My own background and research qualities indeed facilitated many aspects of the research process. From 2009 to 2010, I assisted in setting up Fritzkidz 1's preschool and worked at the centre. However, I resigned before officially beginning this research project. From an ethical perspective, no conflict of interest arose from my former employment and my research did not cause any harm to those involved. As was made clear (e.g. in information letters), the research project was independent, and information provided was treated confidentially and did not affect the children's care at the centre.

Neither is my own stance towards the centre influenced by my positive relationship with my former employer. Rather, having been an "insider" helped me to take a critical view and to hold an informed and balanced perspective of the centre. This is the closest I would venture to make any claim to approaching the concept of objectivity, keeping in mind that "neutral objectivity is an impossibility" (Gray, 2003, p. 74). My personal experience formed the basis of the systematic enquiry I carried out: my one-and-a-half years' (part-time) experience at the preschool helped me to observe all the different aspects of the centre and to carry out informal interviews on an ongoing basis. Both contributed significantly to the process of slowly establishing my research questions. Being a familiar face to many parents and carers certainly encouraged them to participate voluntarily in the project by completing the questionnaire and taking part in interviews. The level of familiarity and trust I had gained well before the start of the research project also helped to put participants at ease in interview situations, since good rapport had already been established. When gathering first-hand data through observation on both separate and ongoing occasions, familiarity with the environment at Fritzkidz also facilitated the various observer roles I assumed:

- I became an intimate participant by engaging with staff and parents. Although it seems contradictory, this role was unobtrusive, because it was precisely in this role that parents, their children and staff knew me. It enabled me to gain a time-, person- and location-specific understanding of the environment.
- I also deliberately took the role of spectator, withdrawing myself from activities and silently moving around the rooms to gain a more overarching and processual understanding of the environment.

Consequently, being the primary research tool myself was a factor that facilitated rather than hindered quality. My own perception was (and post-interview questioning of

participants confirmed this impression) that parents did not feel inhibited about voicing critical opinions of the centre.

At the same time, it is undeniable that my identity as a previous carer and co-worker, as a German-speaker, as a linguist or simply as a researcher, would have had some influence on parents that may not have been entirely positive. Equally undeniable are possible mistakes arising from the fact that I am the primary research tool. But by being reflexive about my own role, these limitations have been balanced against the aspects described above as well as positive researcher attributes such as a high degree of empathy and sensitivity, flexibility, adaptiveness, good communications skills, an unbiased approach, and a capacity for careful and unobtrusive observation (Merriam, 1998).

### **3.3.1.2 Survey**

A survey was made available to all families whose children are enrolled at Fritzkidz Australia (n=127). The cross-sectional questionnaire consists of four sections and 38 items. Following five items concerning the children (age, centre, etc.), section one is composed of seven items aimed at obtaining information about the family background (linguistic, educational, socioeconomic, age and gender). One item is a family tree, in which parents indicated information regarding languages and place of birth for themselves, their partners (in the following grouped as parents), their children and the children's maternal and paternal grandparents. Demographic information regarding language, birthplace and family income are grouped for the entire nuclear or extended family, whereas most other factors are reported for participants only. Nuclear family is herein defined as parents and children; the extended family additionally includes grandparents. Section two is composed of five items focusing on the Fritzkidz centres. Section three consists of 13 items regarding bilingual education and language learning more generally, and section four consists of eight items concerning language maintenance and revival. The last section is relevant for German language background families only.

For the development of the survey questions a dual strategy was employed: first, existing relevant literature was surveyed and a first version of the questionnaire was drafted on the basis of questions used in Craig (1996); Whiting and Feinauer (2011); Young and Tran (1999) (see also Chapter 2.1.2). Second, observations in the centres were used to refine those questions and adapt them to the specific context. Finally, the wording of the draft questions was discussed with a number of stakeholders in the centres (parents, educators

and management) and in my academic environment (peers, supervisor) and adapted as necessary. The same applies to interview questions (see 3.3.1.3 below).

Against the backdrop of the wording relying on direct observations, special focus was placed on the readability of the questionnaire in terms of complexity and response identification. For example, the variable “prefer not to answer” was included in item 1.7 due to feedback from parents about previous centre-intern development surveys, where they expressed their discontent with questions about their income. Consequently, this variable was included in order to prevent arbitrary variable selection. It was chosen 25 times (26.9 per cent). The design of the questionnaire is thus responsive to parents’ previous feedback about the centres, language learning and maintenance. Special focus was also placed on the readability of the questionnaire in terms of complexity and response identification. By accommodating to the parents’ language, an attempt was made to facilitate parents’ dealings with the research instrument, including non-English-speaking background (NESB) parents. Accordingly, the survey was composed in plain English, and was pretested with five participants, three of whom spoke English as a second language.

The types of questions in the survey are predominantly multiple choice, allowing either one or several variables to be selected. The survey incorporates both closed and open-ended questions. Although Parkes (2008) suggests not to use closed questions to identify parents’ reasons for enrolment, this type was used primarily since the questionnaire functions as the frame, with the interviews then employed to elicit detail and explanation. Only three questions are open-ended. Other types of questions incorporated are one ranking question and eight rating scale questions (on a scale of three or five). However, most questions include a space for “other” enabling parents to add to or elaborate on the item. An introductory statement on the survey’s first page also encourages participants to do so. When parents enrolled more than one child, they were asked to use one child (e.g. the oldest) as a model and to add written information if details differ amongst their children.

The survey was administered at the end of the calendar year in order to include parents of children starting school at the beginning of the new school year. Parents were informed via information posters displayed for one week prior to the survey administration time. The duration for completing the survey was approximately two weeks in each centre. Late

returns were also accepted. Approximately fifteen minutes were needed to complete a questionnaire. Of the 127 questionnaires distributed, 93 were returned (73.2 per cent). The return rate varied between the two centres, with 81.5 per cent in Fritzkidz 1 and 63.3 per cent in Fritzkidz 2.

### **3.3.1.3 Interviews**

In the course of the holistic inquiry, different aspects were elicited from different participants, hence the distinction between the childcare provider (Section 3.3.1.3.1) and the childcare seeker (Section 3.3.1.3.2) below. Due to the wide variety of information required and the range of participants, various interview forms were employed over the course of this study (see below). As outlined above in 3.3.1.2, all interview questions were based on relevant literature, previous observations and discussions as well as on results from the questionnaire. In total, 51 face-to-face interviews were conducted until the data saturation point was reached. All were conducted in either English or German, according to the preference of the participants. After seeking participants' consent to do so (by obtaining signed consent forms), interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. German interviews were transcribed and analysed in German and English interviews were transcribed and analysed in English (see also 'Transcription Conventions on pages 210–219). All participants were fully informed about the process and purpose of recording, transcribing, accessing and storing data. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. If no consent to audio-recording was given, notes were taken during the interview. This occurred only in interviews with the MD and the CEO. Interviews were between twenty and sixty minutes' duration.

#### **3.3.1.3.1 The childcare provider**

Research about the organisation of the centres was undertaken by interviewing educators and directors until the data saturation point was reached (N=19). Out of 25 educators working at Fritzkidz during the period of my fieldwork, 14 volunteers were selected to participate in an interview. Additionally, both centre directors and everyone on the executive level (MD and CEO) were interviewed at least once. Interviews with the MD, who leads the two Australian centres in Sydney, were first conducted in December 2011, with a follow-up interview in July 2012. The CEO of the Fritzkidz chain, who is based in Germany, was interviewed during a visit to Sydney in December 2011. Interviews with educators and the centre directors were conducted in August 2012. Additionally, staff

members were interviewed informally on several occasions during my fieldwork. All interviews with staff were conducted on the premises of the centres, either in the staff room or on the educators' floor. The same applied to centre directors; however, their interviews were held in their offices. Interview questions related to their work experience at Fritzkidz, their beliefs about languages, their language practices at work, and their perceptions of parents' motivations, involvement and attitudes. Formal interviews (both structured and semi-structured) with the MD and CEO took approximately an hour and were all held in the Australian head office. Interview questions related to the planning, establishment, organisation, structure and management of the centres in Australia.

#### **3.3.1.3.2 The childcare seeker**

Research about the parents' attitudes, expectations and motivations was conducted by surveying and interviewing a variety of parents, who had previously participated in the survey. Interview questions related to the participants' experience at Fritzkidz, their language ideologies, attitudes, practices and expectations.

Due to the study's exploratory purpose, interviews with parents were semi-structured in order to provide the opportunity for probing, or for adjustments to questions or the entire interview process in response to the way the interview evolved. In order to explore a wide range of topics and attitudes, several types of questions (hypothetical, devil's advocate, ideal position and interpretative, about feelings, etc.) were employed.

Parents chose the location for the interview. Most interviews were conducted in neutral locations such as a park or café, either close to their home or close to one of the childcare centres. Coffee, tea and/or snacks were ordered and some time was used to converse informally before the interview in order to develop a good level of rapport.

### **3.3.2 Summary**

In summary, different research tools were employed at different points in time, none of which can be considered to be value-free. It is also safe to suggest that the chronology of their implementation influenced outcomes, such as survey questions influencing parents' thoughts or reflections when later participating in an interview (e.g. Crystal, Excerpt 95 in Chapter 8.1.1). These interferences were minimised by various tools, strategies or qualities but must also be considered as one of the project's strengths.

The chapter continues with a description of how participants were selected.

### **3.3.3 Participant selection**

On the basis of on-site observations and survey findings, the following three major subgroups were identified:

- The clientele with a German background aiming for educational support and opportunities for language maintenance of their community language
- The monolingual English-only clientele (without a German-speaking background) seeking childcare but not interested in the bilingual programme nor specifically interested in the (alleged) benefits of early language learning opportunities
- The LOTE clientele, with a transnational, but no German background, interested or not interested in the bilingual programme (LOTEoG)

Parents were not approached directly to take part in an in-depth interview. Rather, they could detach a slip on the last page of the questionnaire to indicate their interest, which 38 parents did. Participants for interviews were then purposefully selected under the criterion of heterogeneity, to capture the diversity of the clientele, ensuring that various representatives of each category were interviewed. In the first more exploratory interview round, 16 parents were interviewed. After identifying information-rich participants and establishing new sub-categories, the second round comprised 17 interviews with twelve new parents and five follow-up interviews until the data saturation point was reached (N=33).

The next section describes the data analysis strategies employed.

## **3.4 Data analysis**

As explained in the previous section, data for analysis included the following four sources:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Field notes from participant observation
- Documents

First, questionnaire data was coded and later cross-tabulated using a computer programme. Most items where only one variable could be selected were coded with ascending numbers (1-x). Multiple-choice-type variables in the questionnaire where more than one option could be marked were coded with prime numbers. This was a more “elegant” and less cell-consuming method. Multiple selected items were multiplied and could later easily be re-identified with appropriate commands. Closed ended questions were coded with prime numbers, as were all open ended questions after categorising the different answers.

While analysing the questionnaires, data collection from other sources occurred and different patterns started to emerge. Thus, simultaneous content analysis and interpretation of the relationships between variables in quantitative and qualitative data were employed in order to make informed decisions about further collection and analysis. Interview data was then coded based on salient categories that emerged while interviewing, transcribing and organising data. The use of content analysis also provided “a quantitative measure of the concepts under investigation not provided by other methods, such as narrative or discourse analysis” (Hall, 2008, p. 264). In addition to this quantitative measure, relevant information from other related studies was used to compare results. By doing so, the study gains a firmer basis and consequently enhanced generalizability (Silverman, 2010). While collecting and analysing data, the following ethical issues were taken into consideration.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

Although all participants in the study were adults, the study is linked to children and their care at a childcare centre. To safeguard the rights of this vulnerable group and maintain an ethical form of research, five principles were employed in this study:

- Voluntary participation: all participants were continuously informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point and without any consequences
- Educational advertising: information posters were put on display in the centres and all participants received information letters informing them about the process and the aim of the study
- Informed consent was obtained from every survey and interview participant
- Confidentiality: maintaining anonymity, controlling access to data and destroying sound files once the study has ended

- Avoiding harm and doing justice when collecting and analysing data

These principles were also included in the application for ethics approval from Macquarie University and its Human Research Ethics Committee. Regarding the last point, many parents expressed their thanks (face-to-face or in a follow-up email) for the opportunity to participate in the study as it had made them reflect on their attitudes and practices. Feedback from parents demonstrated that data collection methods were not perceived as harmful, but rather as supportive and helpful.

All participants received an information statement about the project and their written consent was obtained prior to interviewing (see Appendix 4). In the information letter as well as prior to every interview, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and without any consequences for themselves or their children. It was pointed out that the study was independent and not linked to the centres' care or daily procedures and that no consequences for their children or themselves would result from their participation in or withdrawal from the study. They were also informed that they would not be identified by name, but that pseudonyms would be used instead. Despite having taken all possible measures to ensure the anonymity of the provider, the centres and individuals, it has to be acknowledged that anyone determined to identify the provider would be able to do so. Additionally it was stated that files and transcripts would be stored securely, with only the investigating team having access to them, and that these would be destroyed after the study.

The chapter concludes with an examination of the study's limitations.

### **3.6 Conclusion and limitations of the study**

This chapter has outlined the research design and reasons for the qualitative approach. It has also described ethical considerations and analytic decisions as well as the various research tools and sources of evidence. In regards to the latter, questionnaires were employed in order to elicit family background and numerical distribution across major categories. Disadvantages in employing questionnaires have been recognised. An attempt was made to minimise a degree of expected bias by focusing on context-bound questions. This ensured that the attitudes expressed by parents were not context-free and somewhat biased, but based on their own experience at Fritzkidz (see Craig, 1996). In the first

approach, participants in the survey and in the interviews were self-selected, so it can be expected that these parents were above average in terms of their level of interest and commitment.

Qualitative research and thick description in ethnography increases understanding of the phenomenon investigated, but does not necessarily provide generalizability. Statistical generalization is not the aim of this study. In the first place, the selection of a case on the grounds of its uniqueness already implies that it does not represent the larger population. FritzkiDz and its clientele are certainly not representative of all minority and/or foreign languages, parenting decisions, institutional organisations and so forth. But by closely exploring this phenomenon, conditions influencing strategies and discourses as well as their consequences for people and the institution they participate in could be identified (Heller, 2006). The study is therefore neither suited to achieving generalizability nor was it my intention to do so. Rather, it was my aim to “understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (Merriam, 1998, p. 208). Based on the knowledge gained from this institution, theories and hypotheses have been generated that might inspire future studies to pursue them further. However, measures which are generally used to increase generalizability have been employed to reduce systematic bias in the data, namely triangulation through multiple sources of data and multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Additionally, findings have been compared to results of other studies and the wider population to enhance credibility, validity and reliability (Silverman, 2010).

Apart from triangulation, strategies such as member checks, regular and long-term observations at both sites and interviews over a period of ten months, peer examination with colleagues, outlining of the investigator’s position, selection and description of participants (this chapter) and rich description have been employed to bolster such strengths (Merriam, 1998). However, as mentioned previously, the centres are still in their developmental phase, which is why another study at a different time would surely arrive at different results. Despite all efforts, the results from this small group may not be representative of all parents seeking or not seeking institutional bilingual education.

## **4 Fritzkidz: Infrastructure and background of the bilingual childcare provider**

The bilingual programme at Fritzkidz as well as parents' attitudes need to be understood within the material conditions in which they are embedded. Thus, based on the analysis of observations, collected documents, and interviews with key personnel such as directors and permanent staff, this chapter explores the physical environment and organisational structures and demonstrates how they function as a basis for language attitudes and practices. The chapter is structured as follows: Firstly, it describes the characteristics of the early childhood education centres such as background and organisation, which show that the large Germany-based childcare provider intended to create an Australian outpost with a stronger immersion concept than the one realised. The two centres have no explicit language policy nor do their internal or other organisational features support a bilingual approach. As educators are key figures in the implementation process, the last part of this chapter looks into staffing issues and educators' characteristics as well as their attitudes. Limited enthusiasm for and positivity towards the bilingual programme is evident, which, as the conclusion asserts, constitutes a challenge in implementing a successful bilingual programme.

### **4.1 Fritzkidz' background and vision**

The early education and care service provider Fritzkidz is a subsidiary of a large German childcare service provider with its head office in Berlin. In both countries it is a not-for-profit organisation catering for more than 10,000 children in over 100 centres. At the time of the research only two of these operated outside of Germany, namely in Sydney (hereafter referred to as Fritzkidz Australia, or Fritzkidz 1 and Fritzkidz 2 if the two centres require distinction) (Fritzkidz website, July 2012). According to the interview with the CEO, Fritzkidz Australia was founded in 2009 to respond to the increasing recognition of the importance of language abilities, with bilingual education regarded as both an essential part of a holistic and sustainable pedagogical approach as well as a unique selling proposition (USP), a profitable marketing concept to ensure high enrolment rates. The centres in Germany have implemented a bilingual programme with the aim of introducing partial immersion, with 15 to 20 per cent of educators being English speakers. This required the recruitment of English-speaking educators, and an outpost in Australia was

established to this end. However, Fritzkidz decided against the establishment of a mere recruitment office, instead planning to combine the recruitment of native English-speaking staff for their Germany-based operations with international expansion. In business terms, the motivation to offer a bilingual programme was based on the possibility of providing a USP, as no comparable institution operated at the time in Sydney. Fritzkidz' executives considered offering a bilingual programme in a language other than German, because they felt that German in Australia has no "business value" (CEO, December 2011). However, authenticity considerations quickly won out over economic considerations. Consequently, it was determined that the primary target market would be German-speaking parents, particularly German expatriates. The social and pedagogical motivation was to provide a platform for this sector to raise awareness of diversity, multilingualism and identity, to enable the children and the community as a whole to experience a LOTE in an institutionalised but informal way.

While offering a bilingual programme, the aim was neither to teach children without a German background the language to any degree of fluency, nor to prepare children for any formal language assessment. The provider explicitly rejects the idea of pressuring children to perform. Therefore, the bilingual programme at Fritzkidz needs to be understood within the institution's broader educational philosophy, which sees Fritzkidz not as a teaching institution, but as a learning institution. Several brochures (Fritzkidz 1, Fritzkidz 2, Fritzkidz Australia) that were available in July 2012 clearly stated, "We strongly believe that language learning should not be forced upon a child; we offer *opportunities* to learn" [emphasis in the original]. Thus, children should decide for themselves to what extent they want to take advantage of the experiences offered to them. They may choose to participate in playful bilingual activities, developing skills in the second language in the process. On the other hand, they are equally free to choose to exclusively spend time with an English-speaking educator. The goal was to provide the opportunity to experience a LOTE, to improve general linguistic abilities, to support multicultural awareness and to familiarise children with the "language melody" of German (CEO, December 2011). The centre philosophy that was available at the centres in December 2011 and presented in several brochures (Fritzkidz 1, Fritzkidz 2, Fritzkidz Australia) also stated, "Thus, every child is immersed in a second language on a daily basis, gets familiar with the language melody, and learns it in a playful way without the need of 'language classes'" [quotes in the original]. The term "language melody", which is repeatedly used in documents and

interviews, is most likely a literal translation from the German *Sprachmelodie*, which refers to the term “speech melody”. Speech melody refers to pitch patterns related to tone and intonation (Xu, 2005). Publicly available material also emphasised future career opportunities resulting from early bilingualism. For example, the website (July 2012) and a brochure (available in December 2011) referred to exposure to a second language as a “head-start.” In another example, the aforementioned philosophy and the Parent Handbook stated, “Early bilingual education gives children advantages in their future professional life”.

Accordingly, the bilingual model of choice was the partial immersion concept, which is not based on explicit instruction but rather on the use of and exposure to languages as a medium of communication and delivery of content (see Chapter 2.1). In theory, according to almost all brochures as well as interviews with the MD, German- and English-speaking educators would work together collaboratively and always speak in their respective language, which would result in the implementation of a one-person-one-language model (see Chapter 1.1.2). However, adjusting to a low explicit demand and difficulties in staff allocation and retention (see Section 4.3 below), FritzkiDz changed from the original aim of a partial immersion concept to a 75/25 distribution of the two languages with German-speaking educators accounting for 25 per cent of staff members, as explained by the MD during the first interview in December 2011. Language exposure occurred throughout the day during different routines such as arrival and departure, mealtimes, hygiene, and playful activities such as outdoor and indoor play, singing, physical exercises, games, use of media and books, and art and craft. These were conducted either in English or partly in German. This allowed children to experience both languages through various stimulating activities without restriction to certain topics or curriculum areas. By integrating children from the dominant language group with a minority of children from the target language and other minority language groups, the centres ran not a pure immersion, but rather a two-way-immersion programme, which combined both maintenance and foreign language immersion with the aim of initiating and guiding bilingual support for both minority and majority language groups (different from well-known Canadian immersion models, as described in Chapter 2.1).

## 4.2 Fritzkidz' physical infrastructure

Fritzkidz Australia commenced operation in May 2009, taking over from an insolvent childcare service provider. By December 2011, Fritzkidz Australia catered for 127 families in its two centres and had become an approved children's service accredited by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC). Both facilities were long day care centres, with 10.5 service hours each workday over 52 weeks of the year. According to promotional material and the website, they offered full-time and part-time care for children between six weeks and six years of age. With rates of 94.50–102 AUD per day at Fritzkidz 1 and 92–98 AUD per day at Fritzkidz 2 in July 2012, depending on the child's age, the fee structure was within the Sydney average of around the 100 AUD per day mark (Dunlevy, 2011). As both centres were accredited, subsidies were available and families were eligible to claim a "Child Care Benefit" (CCB) and a "Child Care Rebate" (CCR). The CCB is a government income-based payment to assist parents who meet residency, income and immunisation requirements with the costs of approved childcare (Australian Government Family Assistance Office, 2011). The amount of CCB payments depends on the number of children, the reason for using care and the amount of care used. In addition to the CCB, parents can apply for CCR, which covers 50 per cent of out of pocket expenses incurred by parents who are working or studying (maximum of 7500 Dollars per child per year) if they use approved childcare services (Australian Government Family Assistance Office, 2011). The CCR is not income tested. Once parents are eligible for the CCB (even if their entitlement is rated at zero), they can claim CCR.

Both Fritzkidz centres were located in two different suburbs in close proximity to the CBD. Their economic and social context differed only slightly. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data (2012b), the suburb where Fritzkidz 1 was located (suburb 1) had a higher average household income (approximately 110,100 AUD/year), with more professionals and managers as well as slightly more people speaking a LOTE at home (29.6 per cent) than the suburb where Fritzkidz 2 was located (suburb 2) (approximately 106,800 AUD/year, 27.2 per cent respectively) (see Table 4.1). The average income for both suburbs was above the Australian and Sydney average (approximately 64,200 and 75,200 AUD/year, respectively) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b). The number of people speaking a LOTE at home was lower than the Sydney average, but higher than the Australian average (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b). The slightly differing ethnic and linguistic context is also exemplified in Table 4.1.

	Suburb 1	Suburb 2	Greater Sydney	Australia
<b>Average household income</b>	110,084 AUD	106,756 AUD	75,244 AUD	64,168 AUD
<b>People speaking a LOTE at home</b>	29.6 %	27.2 %	37.8 %	23.2 %
<b>Most common LOTEs</b>	Mandarin 2.8 %	Cantonese 2.2 %	Arabic 4.1 %	Mandarin 1.6 %
	Cantonese 2.5 %	Mandarin 2.0 %	Mandarin 3.0 %	Italian 1.4 %
	Japanese 1.7 %	Indonesian 1.4 %	Cantonese 3.0 %	Arabic 1.3 %
	Spanish 1.3 %	Spanish 1.4 %	Vietnamese 1.9 %	Cantonese 1.2 %
	Korean 1.1 %	Vietnamese 1.2 %	Greek 1.8 %	Greek 1.2 %
	...	...	...	...
	German 0.7 %	German 0.5 %	German 0.4 %	German 0.4 %
<b>Most common countries of birth</b>	Australia 53.6 %	Australia 59.9 %	Australia 59.9 %	Australia 69.8 %
	England 6.6 %	England 4.7 %	England 3.5 %	England 4.2 %
	New Zealand 3.0 %	New Zealand 4.2 %	China 3.4 %	New Zealand 2.2 %
	India 2.5 %	China 2.5 %	India 2.0 %	China 1.5 %
	China 2.4 %	Ireland 1.4 %	New Zealand 1.9 %	India 1.4 %
	Japan 1.6 %	Indonesia 1.4 %	Vietnam 1.6 %	Italy 0.9 %

**Table 4.1 | Characteristics of Suburbs 1 and 2 in comparison with Greater Sydney and Australia (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b)**

### 4.2.1 Organisation

The two centres were also organised slightly differently. Fritzkidz 1 had a capacity of 48 and operated three rooms: the Nursery (six weeks to two-year-olds), the Toddler room (two- to three-year-olds) and the Preschool (three- to five-year-olds). Fritzkidz 2 had a

capacity of 44 places and operated two rooms, the Nursery (six weeks to three-year-olds) and the Kinder room (for three- to five-year-olds). In December 2011, after two-and-a-half years of operation, both centres started to work at almost 100 per cent capacity (65 active families at Fritzkidz 1 and 62 active families at Fritzkidz 2) with waiting lists for some rooms of up to two months, as both directors pointed out. However, capacity utilisation was subject to regular changes. Both centres also cared for children with special needs, which included children with a diagnosed speech delay. For some part of the day, one additional childcare worker was employed to care for such children at Fritzkidz 1.

#### **4.2.1.1 Fritzkidz 1**

##### **4.2.1.1.1 Structure**

Fritzkidz 1 was located centrally on a main road in the suburb's commercial centre with large company buildings, public transport options and community facilities such as parks and a library, as well as several private and public schools within walking distance. The non-purpose-built centre was divided into two parts: the main building and the Preschool. The main building encompassed the Nursery, the Toddler room, the kitchen, the staff room, a bathroom and the centre director's office. There were two outdoor areas: one in front of the main building (near the main road), used by the Nursery and the under-two-year-olds from the Toddler room. The other was located between the main building and the Preschool and used by the Preschool and the over-two-year-old children from the Toddler room. Both were renovated in early 2012, changing the grounds, equipment and the atmosphere dramatically. By July 2012 the outdoor area for the Preschool featured a sandpit, flower beds and a vegetable patch, as well as play, seating and open space areas in natural colours. The outdoor area for the Nursery also used natural colours and featured climbing and balancing equipment as well as seating.

##### **4.2.1.1.2 Organisation**

The Nursery at Fritzkidz 1 had a capacity of eight children per day and was usually working at full capacity. Four educators worked in the Nursery, none of whom was German-speaking. All four of them had neither a German-speaking nor an English-speaking background (LOTEoG), speaking Mandarin, Korean and Tagalog as their first languages (for more about educators, see Section 4.3 below). These staff members were designated speakers of English. Two of the Nursery's educators were working full-time, whereas the other two worked on a part-time basis.

The Toddler room had a capacity of 16 and was also fully booked. Six educators worked in this room. Their linguistic backgrounds changed over the course of my fieldwork. Initially, there were three English-speaking and three German-speaking educators. By the end of my first observation period, only one part-time German-speaking educator remained, as the six-month contract of one had expired and the other had resigned. By July 2012, the numbers had been restored to their initial level and the new educators implemented the programme in a similar way to the previous staff members. The three English-speaking educators worked on a permanent full-time basis. Two of the three designated speakers of English spoke Malayalam and Nepalese as their first language. In addition, during my field work in early 2012, two German university students worked in this room for a period of six months in order to gain practical experience.

The Preschool had a capacity of 24 children per day and was working at 75 per cent of its capacity during my fieldwork. Five educators, four of whom were German-speaking, and a special needs childcare worker worked in this room. A German university student also worked in this room for six months during the 2011 observation period. By July 2012, a new student had taken her place. Both of the English-speaking educators had an English-speaking background and were employed on a permanent full-time basis. All four German speakers were employed on a part-time basis only, one of them on a fixed-term contract. The special needs worker had left by July 2012 and was not replaced. This worker was a designated English speaker for the child in her care. Thus, there was no decline in the amount of German spoken in this room. While the special needs worker had been able to understand German directions and was theoretically capable of assisting educators in their implementation, she was for the main part not directly involved with the other educators or children since her part-time shifts were spent caring for one particular child. Consequently, despite the staff turnover amongst the German-speaking staff, the implementation of the bilingual programme did not change noticeably in any of the rooms.

In accordance with the centre philosophy, the children were given a lot of free play time, both inside and outside. The groups were separated when indoors and mingled when playing outdoors. Extracurricular activities were offered for Preschool children. Once a week, an external yoga teacher gave a 45-minute “yoga for kids” class in the Preschool. The first yoga instructor, who started in 2011, spoke German as her first language. However, the sessions were held entirely in English (with the exception of the Namaste).

Additionally, Preschool children went on a monthly excursion to the local library for approximately 1.5 hours. Children returned borrowed books and selected new ones, a librarian read to and sang with the children, and they watched a short film – all in English. Knowing that the preschool group was from a bilingual German-English centre, during such an excursion in 2011 the responsible librarian approached an educator asking whether the assistant from Germany currently doing her work experience at the library should be singing and reading books to the children in German. This idea received strong support, and since that time all interns from Germany were advised by librarians to conduct their sessions in both English and German, as I also observed repeatedly. A typical visit started with the children returning borrowed books and choosing new ones, after which they came together on a mat. One or two librarians sat in front of the group and read two or three stories. If one of the librarians was German-speaking, she picked a German story to read. The German-speaking librarian read the entire story in German, whereas the English-speaking librarian read her story in English. After reading the stories, the librarians initiated singing, which was always in English. This was followed by two short children's movies that were also in English.

#### **4.2.1.1.3 Linguistic landscape**

A banner on the fence visible from the main road labelled the centre as “bilingual childcare”. The language was not specified. In the entrance area and corridor, there were various information posters and pin boards outlining the centre structure, introducing the educators and so forth. No information about the bilingual programme or bilingualism was visible at this point, with the exception of a visitor's folder which was labelled in German and English. In 2011, several brochures about the bilingual programme at Fritzkidz were on display for visitors to take away, some of which were in both German and English. In 2012, however, no such material was on offer, although some brochures were available in the centre director's or MD's office. These newer brochures were entirely in English, with the bilingual ones remaining as downloads on the Fritzkidz website only. Later in 2012, these too disappeared from the website and since then have been available on the German Fritzkidz website only. Wall decorations were subject to regular change, but at no point was the bilingual programme reflected in pictures or other work by the children in any of the rooms.

In December 2011 as well as in July 2012, the children's cubby holes in the Toddler room were labelled bilingually, for example, “Crocodile/Krokodil” accompanied by a picture of

a crocodile. The rest of the information (menu, programme, observations, learning outcomes, etc.), labels, children's work, or daily information folders for parents (signing in and out, the day book, sleep times and eating habits) were in English only. The Preschool's cubby holes were also labelled bilingually throughout the entire fieldwork period. Additionally, there were a few small, old and faded labels on cupboards indicating their contents in both languages, such as "Paper/Papier", and a small chart on a post at the entrance explaining the daily routine to children, such as "Morning Tea/Frühstück". These bilingual labels were, however, very small and scattered around the room, and so were not easily visible to parents or visitors. The remainder of the material was in English only.

In the Preschool and Toddler room, the day book sometimes briefly mentioned if a new German song had been introduced. The remainder of the daily report focused on the general activities and learning outcomes with a monolingual focus and in monolingual terms. In both the Toddler room and Preschool, the programme goals were on display for the current week. These contained learning outcomes based on the EYLF and planned activities to achieve these. However, no bilingual programme goals were in evidence. The Nursery did not feature any German or bilingual programme. All the information, labels and folders were in English only. As no German-speaking staff were employed in this room, this was a reflection of the room's monolingual routine throughout the period of my fieldwork.

#### **4.2.1.2 Fritzkidz 2**

##### **4.2.1.2.1 Structure**

Fritzkidz 2 was located off a main road in a residential part of the suburb with various schools and a large park within walking distance. The centre was set in an apartment complex, which was not visible from the main road. A small sign on the centre's entrance labelled it as a "childcare centre". Apart from this relatively inconspicuous entrance, the centre's outdoor area was visible from a side street, where the same sign identified the facility. The apartment complex had an internal parking area, from which the childcare centre could be accessed. The centre was purpose built and of modern appearance. It was divided into different rooms: the centre director's office, a staff room, a laundry room/bathroom, the Nursery (including a kitchenette), a kitchen and the Kinder room. The outdoor area at the back of the centre was also divided into two: one for the Nursery and one for the Kinder room. Similarly to Fritzkidz 1, both were renovated in late 2012 to

incorporate a fenced garden, garden beds, various naturally coloured balancing and climbing equipment, seating, a slide and a chicken, which changed the appearance and atmosphere considerably.

#### **4.2.1.2.2 Organisation**

The Nursery could accommodate 20 children and was working to full capacity. Five educators worked in the Nursery, one of whom was German-speaking (full-time permanent). All apart from one of them worked on a full-time basis. Two of them were of English-speaking background and the other two spoke Mandarin and Hindi as their first languages. By July 2012, one of the English-speaking educators had been replaced by another English-speaking educator. Additionally, a second German-speaking educator had been employed, and the Hindi-speaking educator had left. However, I hardly ever observed the new designated German-speaker speaking any German. She was *de facto* an English-speaking educator and as such did not change the bilingual programme. The Kinder room had a capacity of 24 children. This room too was fully booked. Three educators worked in the Kinder room on a permanent full-time basis: one of them was of English-speaking background, one of them was German-speaking and one designated English speaker spoke Russian as her first language. The German-speaking educator, however, resigned during my first observation period. Whereas a high proportion of her utterances had been German, her replacement spoke much more English. The replacement resigned during my second observation period and was replaced within approximately six weeks. This constant staff turnover amongst the German-speaking staff in this room resulted in varying language practises, ranging from a high amount of German, to a much lower amount and to a higher amount again. One educator who spoke Urdu as her first language changed rooms based on the required ratio, as did two trainees and a student in her practical training. The latter four had all left by July 2012.

Sharing the same centre philosophy as Fritzkidz 1, the children had a lot of free play time, both inside and outside. The groups were separated indoors and outdoors between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm. Before and after these times, both groups mingled during “family grouping”/breakfast. Free play time as well as “intentional teaching” (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace, 2009) time were organised in the same way as at Fritzkidz 1. Extracurricular activities were offered for children in the Kinder room: once a week an educator took some children and accompanying parents (however many the ratio allowed) to the nearby park and gave

tennis lessons for an hour. As this was led by a designated English speaker, the extracurricular activity was entirely monolingual. In late 2012, the new English-speaking staff member from the Nursery started offering yoga classes once a week in the Kinder room, which was also held entirely in English.

#### **4.2.1.2.3 Linguistic landscape**

A small sign on the entrance labelled Fritzkidz 2 as a “childcare centre”, without any visual information indicating that it was a bilingual childcare centre – neither on the outside nor on the inside. Although walls in the entrance area and corridor were covered with information posters and children’s work, all information on walls was entirely in English and no information about the bilingual programme at Fritzkidz or information about bilingualism, German or other institutional opportunities for language learning in Sydney could be found on display. In a rack filled with various brochures to take away, only one Fritzkidz brochure was available, in which the bilingual programme was briefly mentioned in the form of “qualified bilingual education projects” (Conception of Scopes booklet). The booklet was entirely in English. Similar to Fritzkidz 1, more brochures were available from the centre director or the head office. Wall decorations in all rooms changed periodically, but with the exception of some pictures about weekdays accompanied by German words in the Kinder room, there was no visible sign of a German language influence. Unlike at Fritzkidz 1, neither the Kinder room nor the Nursery at Fritzkidz 2 featured any bilingual labelling on cubby holes or elsewhere. Similar to Fritzkidz 1, all labels, posters, letters, parent information such as the weekly menu, educational programme including learning outcomes, children’s observations or the daily information folders for parents that included the signing in and out sheet, the daily report, children’s sleep times and eating habits, were in English only. Whereas the learning outcomes from the EYLF were on display in the Kinder room, no bilingual programme goals were formulated. During my fieldwork, the bilingual programme was never mentioned in the daily report book. Entries were written entirely in English and only focused on non-German activities and children’s pictures with appropriate captions.

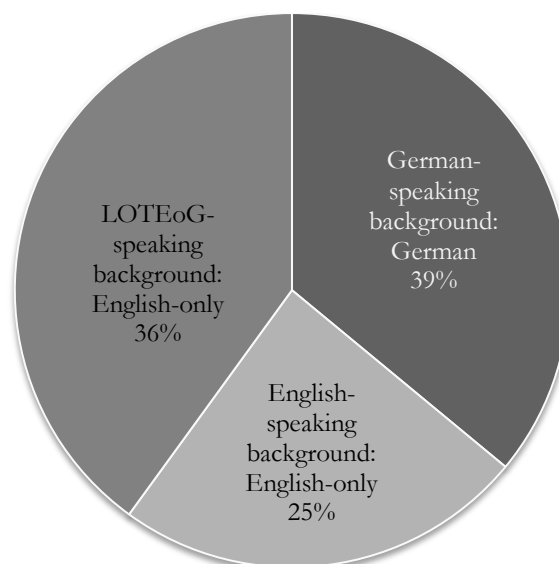
As is evident from the description above, both centres shared many features, but were also organised differently in some respects. One of these was the recruitment and retention of German-speaking staff and their practices, which is outlined below.

### **4.3 The educators**

In the following section the staffing situation at Fritzkidz is examined more closely. It begins with a short overview regarding the importance of educators' training and the value of their work.

#### **4.3.1 Demographic characteristics**

In total, more than 2,000 employees worked for Fritzkidz during the period of my fieldwork, the vast majority of them in Germany. Fritzkidz Australia employed approximately 31 individuals: two centre directors, one MD and 25 educators working directly with children (this also includes one special needs worker at Fritzkidz 1), two cleaners and a chef. In accordance with the Children's Services Regulation (Community Services, 2012), Fritzkidz ensured a staff to children ratio of one carer for every four children under the age of two, for every eight children under the age of three and for every ten children under the age of six, and at least two educators on the premises during the time of operation. On this basis, references to "staff" that follow signify either directors or early childhood practitioners who work directly with children (hence 28 in total). The terms "educator", "carer" or "early childhood teacher" are used interchangeably and refer to those working directly with children. Parents in this study also often referred to these members of staff as "teachers". Seventeen staff members worked for Fritzkidz 1, 16 of which were educators caring for the children on-floor. Ten staff members worked at Fritzkidz 2, nine of which were educators working on-floor. The MD of Fritzkidz Australia was male, and the centre directors and educators were all female. Their ages ranged from 22 to 58 years, with a majority of educators younger than 35 years of age.



**Figure 4.1 | Educators' and directors' linguistic backgrounds**

In total, six educators plus the centre director at Fritzkidz 2 were of English-speaking background (25 per cent) (see Figure 4.1) and interacted in English only. Ten educators (36 per cent) had a LOTEoG-speaking background. In their work at Fritzkidz, these carers were designated to speak only English to the children and to other staff or parents. This was despite the fact that Fritzkidz' Mission Statement of July 2012 stated, "We value the diversity of children, parents and employees and live out this diversity in the framework of our facilities". The centres' mission was supported by the MD in an informal interview, where he advocated the idea of LOTEoG educators conversing with parents of similar language background in their first languages. Accordingly, a LOTEoG-speaking staff member, Jess (all names of participating individuals, their children, partners or suburbs are pseudonyms) explained in her interview that she supported a third language by practising her first language with parents of similar background (see Excerpt 1). By doing so, she considered her own work as non-supportive of the German-English programme.

**Excerpt 1**

I've done nothing @@@@. Not like @@ support German.  
 @@ Maybe other language. If parents coming speak the  
 same language as me, I will speak to them in that  
 language. (Jess, LOTEoG)

In the aforementioned informal interview, the MD stated that educators of LOTEoG-speaking background may also use their first languages by singing nursery rhymes, so the children could experience cultural diversity. However, these languages were supposed to

remain subordinate at this stage of development, in order to privilege the implementation of German and English. During my fieldwork, efforts were focused on successfully implementing a bilingual rather than a multilingual programme; this did not, however, mean that the non-German bilingualism of educators went completely unacknowledged.

In addition to the MD and the centre director at Fritzkidz 1, there were nine German-speaking educators, all of whom were of German-speaking background (39 per cent, see Figure 4.1). Except for the Preschool, all rooms were run by a “room leader”, none of whom was German-speaking. As described above, the allocation of German-speaking educators is also outlined in Table 4.2.

	Nursery	Toddler room	Preschool
German-speaking educators at Fritzkidz 1	0	3	4
	Nursery	Kinder room	
German-speaking educators at Fritzkidz 2	1	1	

Table 4.2 | Distribution of German-speaking educators at Fritzkidz 1 and 2

At the time of my fieldwork in 2012, all German-speaking educators were native German speakers, a fact that was also stated and marketed in *all* Fritzkidz brochures and publicly available documents. This was mostly described in the following way: “At Fritzkidz 1 we follow the Immersion Concept and employ native German-speaking early childhood teachers who work alongside their English-speaking colleagues” (Parent Handbook); or, “The new language is introduced by native-speaking educators who use their language consistently in everyday situations, make [sic] the new language an integral and natural element of the children’s environment” (Fritzkidz 1, Fritzkidz 2, Fritzkidz Australia). Thus, Fritzkidz emphasised the employment of native speakers for the German language. But native speakers for the English language were also sought. While the latter was not equally emphasised, Fritzkidz stipulated in its job advertisement the requirement to “be fluent in English, ideally native English-speaking” (Fritzkidz job advertisement). In total, German speakers represented 39 per cent of Fritzkidz’ staff. However, only approximately one third of them worked on a full-time basis; the remainder worked on a part-time basis and

some of them on a fixed-term contract. Although it seems that the proportion of German speakers differed between the two centres, Fritzkidz 2's German speakers were all permanent full-time staff members, whereas Fritzkidz 1's German speakers were not. Therefore, the proportion of German speakers working with children concurrently did not exceed 25 per cent in any room. Whereas German-speaking staff members spoke German and English, designated English speakers (61 per cent) had no knowledge of the German language. Although all of them (except for those from Fritzkidz 1's Nursery) claimed that over time, they began to understand routine directions such as "Hände waschen" (*wash your hands*) or "Schuhe ausziehen" (*take your shoes off*), spontaneous conversations or directions, stories and utterances relating to all non-routine tasks were not understood. Knowing that their colleagues did not understand what they wished to convey, German-speaking staff faced difficulties in speaking German only (see Chapter 5.3.2.1). Thus, according to the MD, the aim was to ensure two German-speaking staff members per room, but due to staff recruitment and retention difficulties, this had not been comprehensively realised.

### 4.3.2 Qualifications and training

Educators had a variety of backgrounds and qualifications in early childhood education. Out of the 25 educators, five (20 per cent) were unqualified according to Australian standards, which also included two staff members with a German primary school teaching degree (see Figure 4.2). All five unqualified educators were German speakers. This was due to the difficulty in recruiting qualified German-speaking staff. If needed, they were employed without a recognised qualification, with some undergoing training once they had been recruited. However, the lack of training in early childhood and bilingual education and the lack of experience contributed to the challenge of implementing the bilingual concept consistently (see Section 4.3.3 below). But even without a teaching qualification, the presence of German-speakers is indispensable both to the realisation of a bilingual programme and to the impact on parents' attitudes. Seven educators (28 per cent) held a certificate III, which is the lowest qualification for childcare workers in Australia. Another eight (32 per cent) held the next qualification up, a diploma. Interestingly, but rather unsurprisingly, bilingual education was neither a core unit for the certificate III nor for the diploma (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012a, 2012b). A bachelor's and a master's degree were held by one educator each (four per cent each). The remainder (three educators, 12 per cent) held a German degree in early childhood education, which was not recognised by Australian authorities. Other than these three educators and the five unqualified ones, only one German speaker held an Australian

qualification (certificate III) and was working towards the diploma. In total, six FritzkiDz educators (24 per cent) were working towards the next higher qualification. None of the educators and none of the directors had a qualification in bilingual education.

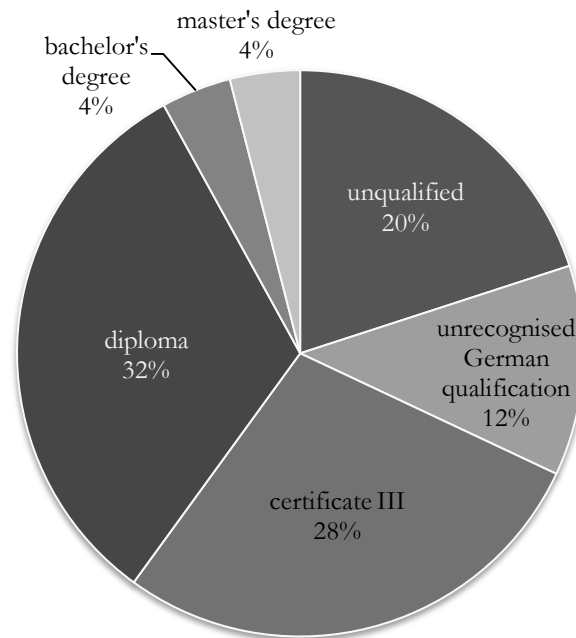


Figure 4.2 | Educators' qualifications

### 4.3.3 “There is no set goal yet”: Staff and policy development

Some on-going staff training was conducted, for example musical, anaphylaxis or asthma training, and all educators were required to possess or to be working towards the minimum qualification of a certificate III. But due to the lack of availability locally, there was no external staff training in bilingual education. During three years of operation there had been one workshop for German-speaking staff members offering a platform to discuss problems and strategies of bilingual education at FritzkiDz. Four staff members also visited a bilingualism conference at the University of Sydney in June 2012, with the involvement of Children's Services Central and Ethnic Child Care, Family and Community Services Co-Operative Ltd. Apart from this, no internal training had been organised. When first establishing the centres, the majority of the work entailed a wide range of administrative and organisational tasks (including staff training and development), which relegated the bilingual programme in general and bilingual education training in particular to a subordinate role. Although the centres formulated a wide range of policies (72 centre and 56 staff policies during my fieldwork in 2011), no language policy existed. A short

statement about the language concept could be found within the centre philosophy, but there was no theoretical or conceptual framework or written model plan on how much time should be allocated for bilingual activities, strategies, priorities, programme goals and the like. The only statement regarding the language concept that could be found in the centre philosophy, most brochures and the website was that educators were working according to the one-person-one-language model in an immersion setting (see above in Section 4.1). This information was very brief and not intended or suited for staff training purposes, but for parents as an audience. This was evident in the only additional pedagogical information in the Fritzkidz 1 and Fritzkidz 2 brochures and in the Fritzkidz Australia brochures, which stated, “Your child experiences the language in a playful way, through children’s songs, games, media, as well as specific design of the interiors in both languages”. Clearly this information was given to parents, whereas staff members were not informed about these or other methods. The outcome of neglecting to do so showed in educators’ incomplete knowledge about the centres’ model and goals regarding the bilingual programme. Their knowledge about their work at Fritzkidz in regards to the bilingual programme was limited by the shortage of information accessible to them. Thus, when asked about the bilingual programme, educators’ knowledge was restricted to the theoretical distribution of languages, as exemplified in Charlotte’s statement (see Excerpt 2), and the immersion principle, as exemplified in the statements of Isabelle and Bernadette (see Excerpts 3 and 4).

**Excerpt 2**

According to our model, our German girls aren't really supposed to speak English. They are supposed to speak German all the time. (Charlotte, English-only)

**Excerpt 3**

I think it's mainly just to expose the children to the language rather than sitting them down um and saying, “This is an apple” and how you would say apple. It's more just um I don't know the word for it, but you just kind of expose them to it through conversations. (Isabelle, English-only)

**Excerpt 4**

Na ja, ich würde sagen, dass durch den Einsatz von Muttersprachlern, also von uns jetzt in dem Falle, die Kinder auf möglichst natürliche Weise in ihrem normalen Alltag die deutsche Sprache erlernen oder erhalten. Also quasi wie eine Muttersprache erlernen und nicht gelehrt wird. (Bernadette, German)

*Well, I would say that by employing native speakers, so us in this case, children learn and maintain the German language in a way that is as natural as possible in their everyday lives. So they are learning it virtually like a mother tongue without being taught.*

Regarding the goals of the bilingual programme specifically, it became apparent that the lack of written documents resulted in goals of a highly individualized nature. When asked about the goals of the bilingual programme, some reported their personal goals with the addition that they hoped that these were in accordance with what Fritzkidz expects, as in Birgit's case (see Excerpt 7). The majority of educators openly admitted to not being aware of them, as exemplified in the case of Gwyneth or Ronda (Excerpts 5 and 6).

**Excerpt 5**

I'm not sure we have any [goals]. I would have my own goals for example for the programme, but we all have different goals and there is no set goal yet. (Ronda, English-only)

**Excerpt 6**

Like um to, I don't know, it's in our philosophy @@@. (Gwyneth, LOTEoG)

**Excerpt 7**

[...] Also so leg ich das aus, aber ob das nun wirklich so geplant ist, weiß ich nicht. Das hab ich noch nirgendwo gelesen. Das ist jetzt einfach mal meine Vermutung. (Birgit, German)

*Well, that's how I interpret it, but I don't know if it's really planned that way. I haven't read it anywhere. That's just my assumption.*

Without a sound understanding of the bilingual programme and its goals, a successful programme is immensely difficult to implement. Apart from a limited knowledge regarding the bilingual programme at their workplace, fewer than half of the interviewed staff members (42.9 per cent) were aware of other German language learning opportunities in Sydney (i.e. where children could continue their bilingual post-Fritzkidz education), indicating that it was very rare for them to engage with this subject apart from in the context of their actual workplace setting.

Additionally, centre directors' attitudes towards the need for training and sound information differed considerably. Elli, centre director at Fritzkidz 1, considered the bilingual programme as a given concept with unspecified and individual implementation strategies, naturally deriving from educators' own style of involvement and experience (see

Excerpt 8). She did not seem to see the need to familiarise educators with the programme goals.

**Excerpt 8**

Ja, die wissen schon grundsätzlich, dass hier zweisprachig gearbeitet wird, ähm also das muss ich nicht mehr erklären, sondern das ist einfach gang und gäbe und ähm dann im Raum individuell, klar, das erläutert sich dann. Also ich mein, ich kann ihnen natürlich viel erzählen, aber wie es im Endeffekt funktioniert und was idealerweise wie zweisprachig begleitet wird, entwickelt sich dann im Raum. (Elli, German)

*Yes, they generally know that we work bilingually here, um well I don't have to explain that anymore, it's simply common practice and um in the room individually, obviously it explains itself. Well I mean, I can talk a lot, of course, but how it works at the end of the day and what can ideally be accompanied bilingually and in what fashion, will develop in the room.*

Without set goals, educators implemented the next obvious tactic of creating their own individual goals. This did not contribute to a structured learning environment, since different educators were present on different days or at different times of the day. Elli's approach as a centre director contributed to the individualised and problematic implementation strategies as outlined below in Chapter 5 rather than to a structured approach following given guidelines, rules and methods. Faye, centre director at Fritzkidz 2, on the other hand, saw a need for specifically trained staff (see Excerpt 9).

**Excerpt 9**

Just because they are German doesn't mean they can teach it. [...] We're teachers or diplomas or even just certificate llls, but no language teachers. (Faye, English-only)

She herself was neither trained nor informed and as such could not offer training opportunities to her staff members. Thus, although perceiving the need for such training, she could not ensure knowledge about and commitment to the programme on the part of educators, which would be crucial for the implementation of a successful bilingual programme.

#### **4.3.4 “Once it gets on board, it’s a good thing, but something else might lack”: Educators’ attitudes to early language learning**

All educators indicated that languages should first be introduced in the early childhood sector and most of them expressed positive attitudes towards early language learning. Career opportunities were only mentioned once, whereas brain development, building a foundation for later learning and opening children’s horizons were the predominant positive attitudes (very similar to parents, see also Chapter 8). At the same time, educators expressed concern in respect of the critical age before which language learning causes confusion and delay in general language development and the acquisition of other skills unrelated to language. This delay was a highly dominant factor in the negative attitude expressed by educators towards early language learning. According to educators, it negatively affects children’s general language development, their English grammar as well as skills unrelated to language. Such beliefs about early language learning are clearly exemplified in Excerpts 11 and 12.

##### **Excerpt 10**

If we say, like, “This is cat” and suddenly we say, “This is something else”, like they might get, “Oh, this is cat, why they thinking it’s a totally different word?” And they don’t have the idea about the different languages at that younger age. That might cause confusion at that age. (Gwyneth, LOTEoG)

##### **Excerpt 11**

I think that could cause problems for them. Real problems. Like set their learning back, set the development of their prime language back. (Charlotte, English-only)

##### **Excerpt 12**

Well, I think that if they’re trying to learn two languages at once, something else, their social skills, might drag, because they might be able to understand most languages, but not speak both languages. So, it is a hindrance to start with, but when they’re five and six, they’re miles ahead. So, they might be behind before they catch up, you know what I mean? So I think it’s good in the long run, in the early stages of teaching it’s very frustrating, it’s very difficult. Once it gets on board, it’s a good thing, but something else might lack. Um their skills of drawing or writing, something else might disappear. I don’t know what, you know. It could be a physical movement, I don’t know what it is, but if you’re trying to

enhance one skill, then one skill slips. But I don't know what skill it could be. (Zenja, English-only)

Again, the aforementioned features that are critical for educators to possess such as showing a positive attitude towards other languages and language learning (see also Chapter 2.1.1), could not be found in educators' attitudes presented here. Formal training could accomplish this. Four educators were able to attend the conference on bilingualism, mentioned above in Section 4.3.3), and indicated that it was a helpful experience (Excerpts 13 and 14).

**Excerpt 13**

Lena:

Ich fand es halt auch interessant die Konferenz, auf der wir da waren. Ich war halt auch mit auf dieser Konferenz. Das war halt echt auch augenöffnend für mich hier in Australien. Ich war mir da gar nicht so bewusst, dass die Australier da so auf: „Wir sind Englisch und wir sprechen Englisch, wir brauchen keine andere Sprache zu lernen, weil Englisch ist die Weltsprache“ [sind]. War ich mir nicht bewusst, dass die hier so faul sind eine zweite Sprache zu lernen, ja. Und dass dann auch die Muttersprache von Einwanderern nicht gefördert wird. Dass da halt einfach so: „Ihr seid jetzt in Australien, ihr sprecht jetzt Englisch, ansonsten habt ihr hier halt keine Chance zu überleben“. Das find ich halt echt voll traurig, ja.

Victoria:

Und hatte das dann einen Einfluss auf deine Arbeit im Nachhinein?

Lena:

Also einen Einfluss auf die Arbeit nicht, aber ich finde jetzt meine Rolle in dem Sinne dann doch wichtig, ja. (Lena, German)

Lena:

*I really found the conference, which we attended, interesting. I was also at the conference. It really opened my eyes here in Australia. I really wasn't aware that Australians are all about, "We are English and we speak English, we don't need to learn another language, because English is a world language". I wasn't aware that they are so lazy here about learning a second language, you know. And that immigrants' mother tongue isn't supported. That it's just, "You are in Australia now, you have to speak English or you won't have a chance to survive". I just find that really sad, you know.*

Victoria:  
*And did that influence your work afterwards?*

Lena:  
*Well, it didn't influence my work as such, but I now consider my role important in that sense, yes.*

**Excerpt 14**

Isabelle:  
I think it should be introduced as early as possible, because I've recently gone on a bilingual course [conference] and you know it's talked about all the positive outcomes of it. So, yeah, like ASAP, like as soon as they're born pretty much. Expose them to different languages, expose them to two or three languages. They'll pick it up and yeah.

Victoria:  
And has the talk influenced your thinking about it?

Isabelle:  
Um, I think yeah. After taking the course, I agreed more to it. But before I didn't really realise that it is such a positive thing and stuff, so yeah. (Isabelle, English-only)

As evident in the reports of Isabelle and Lena report (Excerpts 13 and 14), even a single conference can make a difference, at least in the attitude of educators towards their work, including their understanding of the sociolinguistic context in which they operate. However, it is not sufficient. However, except for this one conference, no formal training was available.

## **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the vision for starting a German-English bilingual programme in Sydney and its development in the first four years. It has focused on the physical environment of the programme, such as the interiors, organisational structures and staff members. As the latter are the primary characters in the implementation of the envisioned bilingual programme, their educational and linguistic backgrounds as well as their attitudes towards early language learning have been elicited.

In the early stages of Fritzkidz' development, the organisational structure of the centres showed a lack of visibility of and commitment to the bilingual programme. The design of

the interiors displayed hardly any signs of bilingual activity, there was no language policy and at no point had educators been externally trained or received internal professional development through workshops, induction training or similar. It is of paramount importance for such programmes that training in bilingualism, bilingual education opportunities, and limitations and strategies, as well as a sound understanding of internal goals and the centre philosophy are provided before and throughout a programme's implementation (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Sugarman & Howard, 2001). As described in Chapter 2, various studies found that instructors with a professional training in bilingual education are crucial for effective bilingual education and that all educators in bilingual programmes need to be well informed about and committed to the model, its goals and strategies. Ideally they would be trained both in early childhood education as well as language acquisition and teaching in order to interact successfully with skill and competence. In the present context, recruitment, certification and assessment policies turn this into an arduous task, as the recognition of overseas qualifications is highly problematic (see Section 5.3.2.1). Thus, while attempts to realise these aims establish high quality standards in early childhood education in Australia, at the same time they further complicate the situation for bilingual providers, as these requirements seem impossible to realise under the current conditions. In the case under investigation, German speakers are needed, but due to high language shift rates amongst German speakers in the past as well as deficient language policies and language curricula (see Chapters 1 and 2), the availability of German-speaking early childhood teachers, or Australian-trained early childhood teachers who institutionally learnt or maintained a LOTE, is low, which is evident in Fritzkidz' staff recruitment efforts (see also Chapter 5).

In addition, the lack of a written framework and programme goals or strategies only serves to compound the lack of bilingual education training. The resulting limited knowledge can lead to misunderstanding, difficulties and frustration amongst educators as well as parents. Consequently, as evident from educators' statements, Fritzkidz and its programme would greatly benefit from internal education and training. Language policies, attitudes and curricula as well as teacher education programmes need to be developed in order to create qualified bilingual educators and teachers and to support early childhood immersion education. Otherwise, bilingual programmes will remain under threat, as is described in the following sections.

Apart from the formal training and backgrounds of educators, other factors influencing educators' attitudes are "demographic characteristics of the school, program effectiveness, and perceptions of support by administration, other staff and parents" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, p. 96). As described in the following chapter, none of these factors supported positive educator attitudes either. It is therefore not surprising that educator attitudes at Fritzkidz were not entirely positive. The organisational shortage described and certain negative attitudes towards early bilingualism established weak grounds for the structured and successful implementation of the bilingual programme. This poor foundation could not be regarded exclusively as the failure of Fritzkidz as a provider. Rather, it has its roots in broader socio-political conditions, as I further demonstrate in Chapter 5.

## **5 Implementing a bilingual programme in the early childhood sector in Australia**

This chapter examines both internal and external forces to the early childhood education centre. First, it examines the educational routine as well as the nature of the bilingual programme and its implementation by focusing on the actions and attitudes of the educators in the bilingual early childhood institution Fritzkidz. Educators' practices show a deep conflict between their language expectations and actual use. Then, it shows how some of these issues are based on the centres' development and the bilingual programme's recency (within the centres and in Australia more generally). The chapter goes on to explore the challenges faced by a pioneering not-for-profit organisation offering bilingual education, such as an ideologically unfriendly environment and the lack of funding, and shows how these hurdles are mediated by larger linguistic ideologies and socio-political conditions, which are intrinsically tied to power and capital relations. The chapter analyses the ways in which the ideological environment of Australia's monolingual mindset and the global hegemony of English influence and shape the construction and presentation of the bilingual childcare centres. The closing section discusses the implication of forces acting upon bilingual early childhood education in Sydney.

### **5.1 The bilingual programme**

#### **5.1.1 The daily routine**

The educational routine at Fritzkidz was shaped around free play and intentional teaching time, rest and mealtimes, as well as indoor and outdoor activities. Every room in both centres varied with regards to how much time they dedicated for each of these phases, when they initiated a phase and in what way it was carried out. As observed repeatedly, in the Kinder room, the Toddler room and the Preschool, free play time was characterised by children choosing their activity and form of socialisation. Educators observed, supervised and assisted children, read stories, talked to different children, and participated in or withdrew from an activity, depending on the children's wishes and needs. Intentional teaching times focused on a different outcome every day and were based on the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) (see Chapter 2.3.2). The intentional teaching content was developed on the basis of the EYLF outcomes and was aimed to encourage self-determined, holistic learning, creativity, risk-taking and social competencies. To

achieve the outcomes, the groups in both centres ran weekly or fortnightly themes. These periods of intentional teaching under different themes such as the observed topics “Christmas”, “animals and pets” or “healthy nutrition”, which functioned as an umbrella for the daily activities, usually occurred at so-called “group times”. In the Preschool and in the Kinder room group times were predominantly held with the entire group or two subgroups with a ratio of one educator per eight or ten children, depending on the composition of the day and time and the planned activity. In the majority of observed cases, the Toddler room children were divided into smaller groups with different educators, with a ratio of one educator per four or eight children, depending on the factors mentioned above. Subgroups changed daily based on the attempted learning outcome of the day. In the Nurseries, composition, ratio and group times largely depended on the children who were awake at the time. As these groups cared for babies from the age of six months onwards during my fieldwork in 2011 (and generally starting at the age of six weeks, see Chapter 4.2), children slept and ate much more frequently and for a longer period of time. However, in both Nurseries group times were mostly held in one large group with all children awake and not being fed at the time, with a ratio of one educator to four children.

	Nurseries	Toddler	Preschool/ Kinder room
7:30	Open and Communal Breakfast at Fritzkidz 2		
	Free Play (indoor and/or outdoor)		
9:15		Group Time	
9:30	(in German at Fritzkidz 2)		
9:45	Morning Tea		
10:15	Group Time: observation-based planned activities followed by Free Play outdoors		
11:30	Lunch	Group Time	
11:45		Lunch	Group Time
12:00	Sleep and Rest Time		Lunch
		Sleep and Rest Time	Sleep and Rest Time / Quiet Activities
2:30			
2:45		Group Time	
3:00	Afternoon Tea		
	Free Play (indoor and/or outdoor)		
5:00	Late Snack		
6:00	Close		

Table 5.1 | Outline of a flexible daily routine at Fritzkidz in July 2012

As observed repeatedly, on a typical day at Fritzkidz 1's Preschool, for example, most parents and children arrived between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Until approximately 9:15 a.m., children engaged in free play. Afterwards, a short group time focused on reading stories, playing a guided game, singing or some short numeracy or literacy activities (see also Table 5.1). Then came the first mealtime, followed by the main focus activity of the day, which was conducted inside or outside depending on the goals of the activity, the needs of the children and the weather conditions. A longer and individually programmed group time (based on observations and guided by the EYLF) was dedicated to this activity, which followed the theme of the week. Children engaged in dramatic play (theatre or puppets), worked on their fine motor skills by cutting and pasting a collage, expressed themselves creatively using paint, embarked on the development of numeracy capabilities by putting differently sized objects in order, and so forth. The play activity depended on what the different staff members considered to be an important area of development for a particular child or group of children. Extracurricular activities complementing the educational approach, such as tennis or yoga classes, and excursions were also integrated around this intentional teaching phase. Afterwards children engaged in free play activities outside. Following outdoor play time, children took part in a short group time, followed by lunch, rest or sleep time and some quiet free play until all children were awake again. These phases were followed by another short group time, which routinely involved a show-and-tell-presentation, where approximately two to five children were selected to present something to the group. While these children presented their object, the remainder of the group sat on a mat (which was replaced by a wooden stage in July 2012) and listened. During my fieldwork all show-and-tell presentations were in English only. The day concluded with a third mealtime and some outdoor free play time before a late snack and the closing of the centre. Most parents arrived between 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. As observed on a daily basis, hygiene activities such as nappy changes, hand washing and toilet training as well as transitional phases such as the application of sunscreen and "pack-up" times were also a time-consuming part of the day at Fritzkidz. These occurred throughout the day based on the needs at the time.

While following the EYLF, the educational programme was supplemented by a bilingual German-English programme. Within the EYLF outcomes second language learning plays a subordinate role, but several learning outcomes are in accordance with partial immersion principles and as such legitimate a bilingual approach (see Chapter 2.3.3.2).

However, although language learning plays only a subordinate role in the EYLF, it was supposed to be an integral part of the daily educational programme at Fritzkidz. Both educational outcomes according to the EYLF and Fritzkidz' language learning aims were supposed to be realised without additional language teaching classes (see also Chapter 4.1). Instead, the daily routine was carried out by employing English-speaking and German-speaking educators. In order to realise partial immersion with a ratio of 75/25 as intended, all German-speaking educators were to use German only throughout the day and in all situations. The Parent Handbook for example stated, "Our German staff members speak with the children in their mother tongue only, all day long". Without written language policies, exact programme goals, explicit priorities in educational outcomes and clear guidelines as to which intentional teaching times should be conducted in German (see Chapter 4.3.3), educators were left to make their own decisions regarding implementation considerations. Thus, the concept of a "bilingual programme" was realised differently at Fritzkidz 1 and Fritzkidz 2, in every room and even by every educator. Generally, the Toddler room and Preschool at Fritzkidz 1 did not allocate a particular intentional teaching time to German. Educators programmed the daily routine as if it were a monolingual English centre, with the underlying idea that parts of it would ideally be realised in German. However, the afternoon group times were altered so that a stronger focus on the German language was possible. Repeatedly, I observed that either one or two educators read a German or bilingual book in the afternoon. However, this storytime was not entirely in German. Questions about the text or directions to children were predominantly in English and pages were mostly translated, if it was a monolingual German book (see also Section 5.3.2.2). At Fritzkidz 2, both rooms allocated one group time per day specifically for German activities such as singing, reading or discussions, or work with flashcards, numbers and so forth. These activities were much less complex in terms of the assignment of tasks and the children's involvement, so that not much elaboration was necessary. In this case, the focus at any one particular time was on German language learning. These group times were held by all German-speaking staff members in Fritzkidz 2's Kinder room and their structure remained unaffected by the educator turnover. It was the amount of German spoken throughout the day that differed amongst different staff members. In Fritzkidz 2's Nursery, I repeatedly observed the morning group time starting

with singing and/or dancing to a German song. However, the instructions were predominantly given in English and some of the songs were in English as well.

## **5.1.2 Bilingual practices**

### **5.1.2.1 General communication practices**

With the exception of LOTEoG educators who may have occasionally spoken their first language to parents (see Chapter 4.3.1), dedicated English-speaking educators spoke English only with parents, children and colleagues. Whereas some family language practices differed (see Chapter 6), the sole language used amongst children was English. Whenever children, particularly children without a German background, used German phrases, sang German songs or seemed to understand educators' non-routine directions in German, they were lavishly praised. As observed and confirmed through informal interviews with centre directors, correspondence with English-speaking educators as well as bureaucratic and administrative processes, written communication and information about staff, pedagogical ideas, philosophy, events, updates and so forth (on the walls or information boards, Facebook and Twitter, or in newsletters, emails and brochures) were also in English only. Languages for direct face-to-face communication or phone calls, emails or letters were negotiated individually. When addressing a parent who spoke German, a German staff member usually used German to communicate. German-speaking educators communicated in German with other German-speaking educators and in English with non-German-speaking educators. They spoke both languages to the children, predominantly German with German-speaking children and predominantly English with the remainder. In mixed groups, the dominant language used by educators was English. Some individual educators were more committed and used more German than others, but there was no pre-determined structure. Consequently, as observed and confirmed by several educators multiple times during formal and informal interviews, most spontaneous directions, questions or answers were in English, which was due to various reasons that I present below in Sections 5.2 and 5.3. In theory, German-speaking educators were supposed to converse in German only. In practice, they included German phases in their educational routine, but the language relating to the particular activity, such as questions, explanations or instructions, was English. For example, when reading a German book, a German educator would read a sentence or entire page in German and then translate the page afterwards, or she would read a bilingual edition with an English-speaking colleague. In order to engage the children, she would comment on something in English, such as

“Wow, look at all those mice!”, or would ask questions such as “Who can count the rocks on this page?” In this way, the core idea of a planned activity might be German, but it was framed by English communication patterns. Interestingly, permanent staff used German less than fixed-term employees. This can be explained by their different roles in the rooms: only permanent educators were responsible for intentional teaching times, and they had more responsibility. An analysis of how this results in English being used rather than German is provided below in Section 5.3.3.

Additionally, as observed repeatedly, one striking practice was that all disciplinary measures, warnings and conflict management messages were communicated entirely in English by all staff members (see also Section 5.3.3.2). For example in one instance, a boy at preschool ran around the table with a cardboard book in his hands. The nearby German-speaking educator immediately intervened by saying loudly, “Stop! No running inside the classroom!”. She then continued in English, explaining why this was dangerous behaviour, what the consequences could be and why children should not repeat such behaviour. This incident was very typical for safety instructions given by educators, with similar occurrences observed throughout the day in all rooms.

#### **5.1.2.2 A typical day**

This section shows how the bilingual programme was implemented within the educational routine of the day. As previous examples were from Fritzkidz 1’s Preschool, this section uses the same group of children, parents and educators. On a typical day, no German was used at Fritzkidz 1’s Nursery (see also Chapter 4.3.1). Children at Fritzkidz 1’s Preschool engaged in free play until 9:15 a.m., when everyone joined the first group time. If an English-speaking educator led the group time, the language of communication, story or song was almost entirely English. A German staff member, if present, may have commented on something in German, such as “Psst, leise” (*shhh, quiet*) or “Oh ja, Ohren auf! Das ist ganz wichtig” (*oh yes, listen! That’s very important*). If a German staff member led the group time, children usually sang a German song. However, even when a German educator took over the role as the main speaker, a large part of the conversation between educator and children was in English. If she spoke to the children, she translated, switched or communicated entirely in English. Regardless of whether English or German speakers led group times, the greater part of it was in English, which was supplemented by German fragments if a German speaker was present. These fragments were predominantly, but not exclusively, routine phrases. After approximately five to ten minutes, children were

directed to wash their hands. Depending on which German-speaking educator gave these directions, they were either in English or German, but predominantly in German. At the table children routinely sang a German song before having their meal. Conversation about the food and questions whether individual children liked the food offered or what spread they wanted on their toast was oftentimes partly in German, if a German educator was present. Most of the conversation revolved around simplified questions, such as “Möchtest du ein Stück Apfel?” (*would you like some apple?*) or “Vegemite oder Marmelade?” (*vegemite or jam?*). However, German speakers were oftentimes not present during meal times as they organised upcoming activities, cleaned up, took care of hygienic needs and so forth. On such occasions, they could not provide any language input to the group. Additionally, I repeatedly observed German speakers asking the same questions in English only or asking other related questions in English such as, “Finished?”, when they thought a child had finished their meal.

At about 10:15 a.m., children and educators met for the main focus activity based on one of the EYLF outcomes. Mostly, these were held entirely in English by all educators, with only a few marginal German phrases such as “Ja, genau” (*yes, exactly*) or “Gut gemacht” (*well done*), as described above. Directions to transition from one phase to the next were often in German, if a German speaker was present. During the free play time outside that followed, educators communicated in the way described above. A short group time was used to prepare for lunch time. Often, some German routine phrases were used at this time such as, “Leise Schuhe aus, Hut an den Haken, Hände waschen und auf die Matte” (*quietly take your shoes off, put your hat on your hook, wash your hands and sit on the mat*). However, some German-speaking educators in both centres regularly spoke even these recurring conversational patterns in English. Before having lunch, children sang the same routine song as before at morning tea time. After lunch, children rested while English music CDs were played. The remaining free play and group times followed the same communicative patterns.

### 5.1.3 Summary

As is evident from the bilingual practices described above, particularly between educators and children the implementation of the bilingual programme was not consistent with the theoretical model and English clearly served as the dominant language at the two childcare centres. Excepting the common practice that conflict management, warnings and disciplinary measures were entirely in English, there was no rule or structure regarding

their linguistic practices, which can be attributed to the lack of a language policy or guidelines for staff members, a lack of knowledge and training in bilingual education (see Chapter 4), as well as a lack of commitment towards the bilingual programme. Although educators regarded language and bilingualism as a resource and not a problem, in actual fact language practice and instruction turned out to be the latter. Consequently, the one-person-one-language concept was hardly realised. In practice, German-speaking staff – some more than others – switched languages, often conveyed meaning entirely in English or translated what had been said in German. Some German-speaking educators' use of German was highly sporadic, almost non-existent, and the utterances they did produce in German were mostly songs and everyday routine directions. The most committed followed the bilingual concept by using German more widely and consistently, but none of the educators spoke German only.

Studies indicate that if second languages are used as a medium of instruction, instructional phrases are more likely to be understood and acted upon if delivered monolingually. If two languages are being mixed during one instructional period and/or parts are translated simultaneously, children ignore the second language phrases and exclusively focus on the version in their first language (Baker, 2011). A more successful concept could be realised if all educators spoke their native language at all times, separating languages by speakers, not according to content or other arbitrary factors. If only routine phrases, everyday directions and songs are realised in German and the rest is in English, the result is a contextual separation. Although based on a plan of language separation by speakers, languages were separated contextually, and the implementation of bilingual education more generally was weak to the point of symbolic bilingualism through routine phrases and songs. Not only is English the dominant language in most institutions in Australia, it was also strikingly dominant in the bilingual childcare centres under investigation. There were some German books, and children heard German being used by staff for a variety of purposes including instructions, organisation, play, stories and songs, albeit inconsistently. But in the absence of a policy or explicit programme goals (long-term or short-term), language practices and consequently the bilingual programme as a whole were unstructured and arbitrary. The bilingual programme was, however, in its early stages and practices may have still been evolving and changing. At the time of my fieldwork, the programme's development relied upon the quickly changing conditions such as centre structure, children, foci, educators'

disposition, perceived parental interest, and internal and external support, as is outlined in the following section.

## **5.2 Constraints and effects of work in the early stages**

Although there are discontinuities between theory and practice as outlined above, which may not lead to the full spectrum of desired benefits, Fritzkidz' positive achievements have to be acknowledged as well. At the time of my fieldwork in 2012, the centres were still in its early stages, with some educators not yet experienced in their profession. It is not unrealistic to expect language attitudes and language policies, as well as knowledge about these policies and their implementation, to improve over time. When establishing a new centre with a new programme – new to the district and the entire respective institutional environment – many factors require the attention of executives and educators alike. In this case, it was the administrative organisation of the childcare provider's first facility abroad (MD interview, July 2012). The bilingual programme ranked low because the centres were able to operate without it. Certainly, the subordination of educator training and information as well as a failure to establish and communicate clear language goals and a language policy (to both educators and parents) were detrimental to the implementation of the language programme and educator attitudes. However, being a pioneer in this sector in Australia, Fritzkidz planners were in an experimental phase with no model or framework they could refer to. Nor did they receive any community or administrative support (see also 5.3 below). The MD stated that it was planned to work towards drawing up a written framework, but the formulation of these ideas and documents without a guiding model requires qualified personnel and time.

Additionally, when first establishing a centre, there are other non-bilingual programme-related requirements to be met. Considering that Fritzkidz is a not-for-profit provider receiving no support on one hand and facing high requirements for a successful bilingual programme on the other, the centres came a long way in being able to sustain a bilingual programme, albeit highly individualised and implemented to a low degree. However, the fledgling provider is operating in an ideological and socio-political environment which does not support and even hampers a stronger compliance with theoretical frameworks (see Section 5.3 below), but with the experiences gained and milestones achieved to this point, a more structured and potentially more successful model may evolve over time.

### **5.3 External constraints**

So far, this chapter revealed that problems in the implementation of the programme are based on the lack of a conceptual framework and educators' training in bilingual education, both of which are a result of the programme's recency. But shortcomings in language practices cannot be regarded as the failure or inexperience of the provider alone, because they are "bound up in relations of authority and power and larger socioeconomic and sociopolitical processes" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 246). If hurdles are based on issues on a larger socio-political scale, they cannot be improved by internal remedies alone. It is therefore not enough to examine the recently developed language programme and bilingual practices in isolation; it is crucial to explore them in the context in which they occur. These results are presented in the following section.

#### **5.3.1 Funding**

Fritzkidz Australia received funds from the German mother company in the early stages of the centres' development as well as for major construction work in 2011 (MD interview, December 2011). Other than this and a parent subsidy scheme funded by the Australian government for all accredited childcare providers, no public funding was available, either from Germany or from Australia. Whereas German international schools are incorporated both as Australian private schools and as German state schools, early childhood education does not receive such status and support. Accredited German international schools receive school fees, as well as funding from the Federal Republic of Germany, the Commonwealth of Australia, the NSW Department of Education and sponsors. According to the German Federal Foreign Office, more than 270 Million Euro are spent on supporting the German language abroad, particularly on German international schools (Federal Foreign Office, 2011). Apart from enrolment fees, early childhood education providers do not receive any of the above funding. German government support for the German language on a public level starts at the school level only. At the same time, Australian authorities treat and support Fritzkidz like any other Australian childcare provider, without specific recognition of the bilingual programme. This may be assumed to stem from inexperience on either side. As pioneers in the bilingual childcare market in a society with historically low esteem and little support for bilingual education, Fritzkidz found no advocates or financial supporters in Australia, whether on the district, state or federal level, or from local or international companies on the business level. The lack of backing from the business sector is due to the fact that, unlike international schools, Fritzkidz Australia is not

registered for tax deductible status (MD interview, December 2011). Consequently, it had no supporting company sponsor either. In summary, external funding, sponsors and public funding were unavailable to support the provision of a bilingual programme. Funding sources consisted solely of enrolment fees and some minor fundraising activities.

### 5.3.2 Asymmetries

As described in Chapter 2.1.1, Amrein and Peña (2000) found three forces favouring English over the minority language in a bilingual programme: instructional asymmetry, resource asymmetry and student asymmetry. These asymmetries can be found in the present case as well and are described below.

#### 5.3.2.1 “It’s too easy to slip into English”: Instructional asymmetry

Instructional asymmetry refers to the imbalance in educators’ language repertoire (Amrein & Peña, 2000). German educators practise bilingualism, whereas dedicated English speakers practise monolingualism (with the rare exception of languages other than English being used with parents by some LOTEoG-educators), which results in a strong emphasis on English. Whereas the German-speaking educators can understand and translate into English, the English-speaking educators have no understanding of the German language. If children cannot understand the German speakers, educators cannot be assisted by their English-speaking colleagues and oftentimes translate their utterances. Children quickly become aware of the German speakers’ bilingualism, relying on them to translate. Birgit (Excerpt 15), a German-speaking educator, reported on her language practices, implying that due to the lack of language support, a “German” component is inevitably bilingual.

#### Excerpt 15

Danach alles andere in der Gruppenzeit läuft aber dann auf Deutsch. Also zum Beispiel wenn ich jetzt ein Buch lese und keiner da ist um mich zu unterstützen, dann lese ich das auf Deutsch und übersetze die Seite dann auf Englisch. Das mache ich dann zweisprachig. [...] Und dann hast du natürlich die englischsprachige Unterstützung nicht und weil die ja dann kein Deutsch sprechen, verstehen sie ja die deutsche Ansage nicht. Und wenn sie die deutsche Ansage nicht verstehen und nicht übersetzen können, kann ich ja auch gleich selbst übersetzen, ne? (Birgit, German)

*And everything else at group time is in German. So, for example if I read a book and no one is there to support me, then I'd read it in German and translate the page into English. I do that bilingually.[...] And then you don't have the English support, of course, and because*

*they don't speak German, they don't understand the instruction. And if they don't understand the instruction and can't translate it, I can also just translate it myself instead, you know.*

The instructional asymmetry is regarded as a problem in implementing the one-person-one-language model, whether the issue be organisational or communicative, as Marie (Excerpt 16), another German educator, describes.

**Excerpt 16**

Das war am Anfang mehr, weil ich halt echt so dachte ich muss vierundzwanzig Stunden am Tag Deutsch reden, ja. Aber jetzt, da ich da drüben alles leiten muss, geht's einfach nicht. Und es ist auch wirklich schwierig alleine in einem Raum da Deutsch zu reden. (Marie, German)

*It was more in the beginning, because I really thought I have to speak German twenty-four hours a day. But now it's simply impossible, because I have to lead everything over there. And it's really difficult too, if it's only you speaking German in the room.*

Communicative issues are particularly significant as German speakers have to switch codes when they want to communicate with English-speaking colleagues, posing a challenge for them to switch back into German when finishing the conversation, as Lena describes (see Excerpt 17). This also results in a shift to increased emphasis on English.

**Excerpt 17**

Wenn ich jetzt mich umdrehe und mit jemandem Englisch spreche, dann denken die [Kinder] sich auch: „Hm, wieso jetzt das und zu mir das?. Macht ja dann keinen Sinn“. Wenn du dich aber untereinander unterhalten kannst, ist das viel viel besser, ja. Vor allen Dingen macht es das auch einfacher für dich. Du drehst dich halt um und redest auf Deutsch weiter, ja. Und das ist nicht einfach so: „Upp, und jetzt muss ich wieder Englisch [sprechen], weil es versteht mich ja keiner“, ja. (Lena, German)

*If I turn around and speak English with someone, [the children] think, “Hm, why this and with me that? Doesn't make sense”. But if you can communicate with each other, it's much much better, you know. Particularly, it makes it much easier for you. You turn around and continue speaking German, you know. And it's not just, “Oops, and now I have to speak English again, because no one understands me”, you know*

**Excerpt 18**

I think it's hard work for the Germans if they have to speak English with us and then speak German with the kids. And so I think it would make it easier and flow more if I knew a

little bit more than my one, two, threes. I don't even know my ABC in German, see? (Zenja, English-only)

**Excerpt 19**

So we need an intern or someone, because it's too easy to slip into English, when she has to speak English to the staff. (Faye, English-only)

As both German and English speakers acknowledge the convenience and necessity of switching languages, any additional speaker would be viewed as support for the programme, which Faye, a centre director, points out (see Excerpt 19).

Although research has found that immersion programmes work most successfully if the target language is used as a medium of instruction for at least 50 per cent of teaching content (Baker, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2002), the aims of the provider in the present study were not as ambitious. However, this strong asymmetry may be redressed in the course of further centre developments, resulting as it does from the fact that the programme is still in its early stages (Amrein & Peña, 2000) on one hand, and the lack of German-speaking educators qualified in bilingual education as well as the lack of English-speaking educators with a basic understanding of German on the other. Thus, the supply and retention of qualified early childhood teachers is an exceedingly weak point and a major threat to the bilingual programme. This is not only an issue for early childhood education in particular, but has been a central issue in the implementation of language policies and curricula in the compulsory years of Australian schooling for decades (see Liddicoat, 2010). Teacher training has already been addressed from the 1980s onwards (e.g. in the NPL and the ALLP), but never successfully resolved (see Chapter 2.2). As outlined above, the recruitment of qualified German-speaking staff is challenging, partly due to their scarcity. Educators from overseas have to be allocated, but visa restrictions and recognition of qualifications by Australian authorities complicate the matter. The majority arrive on a Working Holiday Visa, which restricts their employment with Fritzkidz to six months. According to the MD (interview, July 2012), this negatively affects the implementation of quality management systems, as their identification with and commitment to the centres and their programme as well as relationships between educators and children are limited. Hence, due to administrative constraints Fritzkidz suffers not only from educator recruitment but also retention problems and faces high turnover rates of German speakers. That way, organisational issues contribute to or even enforce instructional asymmetry.

The major burdens are childcare regulations and qualification assessment. The new Education and Care Services National Regulations (Ministerial Council for Education Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2011, p. 137) require that every employee “must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved certificate III level education and care qualification” and 50 per cent of educators “must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma level education and care qualification”. At the time of writing, assessment and recognition of overseas educators’ qualifications have to go through two processes: The first provides advice regarding the equivalence of a German and an Australian Bachelor degree; this process takes between four and six weeks. The second determines whether a qualification is equivalent to an approved Australian qualification, that is, if a German Bachelor of Early Childhood Education is equivalent to the Australian Early Childhood Education degree – a process which takes another four to six weeks. As most common German-speaking educators’ qualifications (staatlich anerkannte/r Erzieher/in) are a profession gained by a trade school rather than a university, degrees from German-speaking countries are not approved by responsible authorities, unless the much less common and only recently introduced bachelor’s degree in early childhood education has been completed. Consequently all German-speaking educators at Fritzkidz are officially unqualified, unless they are working towards a recognised qualification, which is particularly hard to realise with educators employed on a six-month basis. Furthermore, every applicant who has not completed at least one year of education study in an English-dominant country (Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom or the United States) has to undergo an IELTS procedure and achieve a score of seven or more in each component of the test, which is an additional challenge for applicants and Fritzkidz, as many potential candidates do not have this level of English language proficiency (MD, interview in July 2012). Thus, the whole process is not only extremely costly and time consuming, but also aggravated by the language requirements.

It is ironic that language requirements for qualified early childhood teachers actively work against the provision of bilingual educators and against attempts at providing bilingual education more generally. Rather than hampering such attempts, administrative regulations should work in favour of such innovative programmes. At the time of writing, however, each German-speaking employee’s short-notice termination of employment results in a

lengthy and costly problem for Fritzkidz, and weakens the programme for several weeks at best if no replacement can be found locally. Additionally, these visa requirements and regulatory criteria impede the engagement of casual or fixed term contracted staff from German-speaking countries (Working Holiday Visa holders) that could provide the vitally needed additional input and support in the target language. Thus, due to the complex, costly and time consuming regulations, the continuous presence of qualified German-speaking staff is under threat. In several interviews, the MD emphasised how the small company is struggling to comply both with the regulations required by Australian authorities on one hand and the provisions required to establish and maintain a bilingual programme on the other. A consultation meeting with the authorities was planned in order to at least negotiate the approval of German qualifications as a diploma that meets the minimum requirements, thereby ensuring that the centres are staffed with trained educators from Germany.

In summary, these regulatory staffing conditions immensely impair the provision of the bilingual programme and further amplify instructional language asymmetry. Due to visa conditions and qualification assessment, even as a transnational company it is not feasible to recruit staff through employer transfer or exchange. As a result, staff have to be found locally. Language education and teacher training need urgent improvement in order to create a pool of suitably qualified personnel and to realise attempts at bilingual early childhood education in Australia.

#### **5.3.2.2 Resource asymmetry**

Another asymmetry still existing in these early stages is resource asymmetry, which refers to the strong dominance of English in educational material and books. At Fritzkidz, there were no language specific teaching aides to support educators in their efforts to conduct group times in German. The interiors supported the bilingual approach to a minor degree by labelling a few objects bilingually (see Chapter 4). However, labelling changed periodically and was only marginally present at Fritzkidz 1. The vast majority of posters, audio material, information, flashcards and books were in English and in English only, a shortcoming that educators such as Gerda (Excerpt 20) acknowledged as well.

##### **Excerpt 20**

Wir haben ja auch nicht so halt viele deutsche Sachen so, ja. Nicht mal so deutsche Bücher und deutsche Spielzeuge. (Gerda, German)

*We don't have German things, you know. Not even German books or German toys.*

While a small amount of German resources were available, these were oftentimes bilingual, which still put an overall emphasis on English in terms of written material. However, because educators did not feel at ease reading stories entirely in German, fearing that children would not understand, storytime was never a purely German phase anyway (see Section 5.1). For this reason, bilingual books in particular, although contributing to resource asymmetry, were seen as a great support for and by educators (see Excerpt 21), as these facilitate German speakers' attempts to stay in one language with an English speaker at their side who can read the English part.

**Excerpt 21**

Ich hab das letzte Mal hier in der Bücherei jetzt Bücher entdeckt, die Deutsch und Englisch sind, und so Sachen finde ich halt perfekt. Weil das unterstützt dich so. Das hilft dir einfach, ja. Weil ich kann halt endlich mal auf Deutsch zu erst vorlesen und die Isabelle kann zum Beispiel dann den englischen Teil noch vorlesen. Und ich muss überhaupt nicht übersetzen, wenn irgendwas kommt oder so und das ist halt perfekt, ja. (Bernadette, German)  
*The last time in the library I discovered German and English books. And I find them just perfect, because it supports you. It just helps, you know. Because then I can finally read in German first and Isabelle can read the English part afterwards, for example. And I don't have to translate at all, if something comes up or so and that's just perfect.*

Bilingual material contributes to resource asymmetry by increasing the amount of written English, but it does not result in a shift to more spoken English because the German educators would otherwise translate it themselves, as Bernadette also outlines in Excerpt 21. In this context, therefore, bilingual material can be considered as a support for more consistent language practices if used cooperatively by a German-speaking and an English-speaking educator.

Nevertheless, Fritzkidz is characterised by a significant resource asymmetry, with the vast majority of educational, organisational or structural material being in English and only a small amount of material being bilingual or German monolingual.

**5.3.2.3 “It's like they just slide off one another”: Student asymmetry**

A third asymmetry, student asymmetry, refers to the dominance of English-speaking children and English as the social language. Whereas the minimum group size of target

language-speaking children should not be smaller than 30 per cent, the ideal is no less than 50/50 (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). However, as is described in more detail in Chapter 6, only a minority spoke or fully understood German and communication amongst children was entirely in English. This was seen as a problem for successful programme implementation efforts by educators (see Excerpt 22).

**Excerpt 22**

Das Problem ist auch, dass ich nicht genügend Kinder hab wirklich, die das auch verstehen. Ich hab wirklich gedacht hier, ich hab fünfzig Prozent deutsche Kinder in meinem Raum. So hab ich mir das dann vorgestellt. Die Kinder, die dann deutsch sprechen, können dann ihren Freunden erzählen: „Ja, sie hat jetzt das gesagt“. Ich hab aber wirklich nur ein Mädchen, das fünf Tage die Woche kommt und dann hab ich zwei Jungs, der eine kommt einen Tag und der andere kommt zwei Tage. (Marie, German)

*It's also a problem that I don't have enough children who understand that. I really thought I'd have fifty per cent German kids in my room. That's how I pictured it. The German-speaking children could tell their friends, "Yup, that's what she said". But I really only have one girl, who comes five days a week and two boys, one of whom comes one and the other two days.*

This large number of children without a German background, as well as a perceived lack of interest, not only contributes to an emphasis on English as the social language between children, but also between educators and children, as Bernadette and Birgit outline in Excerpts 23 and 24.

**Excerpt 23**

Weil man's halt probiert und du probierst es halt auf Deutsch und dann gucken sie dich an und dann sagen die dir sogar ins Gesicht: „Bernadette, ich versteh' dich nicht. @Ich weiß nicht, was du mir sagst@“, ja. [...] Wir haben halt ein paar Kinder, die können noch nicht mal Englisch. [...] Und die kommen gerade hier in das ganz neue Land und sind in Australien, und sollen jetzt gerade mal Englisch lernen und da komm' ich noch mit Deutsch. Ja, da denke ich auch manchmal: „O weh“. (Bernadette, German)

*Because you try and you try in German and then they look at you and tell you to your face, "Bernadette, I don't understand you. @I don't know what you're telling me@", you know. [...] We also have children, who can't even speak English. [...] And they're coming to this new country and are in Australia and now have to learn English*

*and I'm coming along with German. Well, that's when I sometimes think, "Oh boy".*

**Excerpt 24**

Also in der Großgruppe weiterhin also ist es eher so ein bisschen fünfzig Prozent Überflieger eigentlich, [...] da haben die keinen Bock sich das anzuhören oder so damit irgendwas zu machen, und die anderen so: „Ja, okay, das nehmen wir mit“ und einige sind wirklich mit dabei. (Birgit, German)

*Well, in the big group it's still like fifty per cent who don't care really, [...] they're not really up for listening to it or doing anything with it. And the others are like, "Okay, we'll play along" and a few are really up for it.*

The level of German amongst the children is highly diverse. This results in a stronger emphasis on English to facilitate processes as the educators lack support, material or training to deal with such a wide range of language proficiency levels. In contrast to school classes, where children move up as a set group, groups at Fritzkidz are much more permeable and heterogeneous, as enrolment periods and weekly attendances vary drastically between children: Some children attend the centres only one day a week for a few hours, whereas others attend five days a week for almost the entire hours of operation. Some children have been in a particular group for two years, while others have just started. Thus, the experience with and exposure to German vary within individual groups, which is further amplified by the large age range of the children in a group, resulting in different needs of care and educational goals (see Excerpt 27). Additionally, the child-educator ratio may not always allow English- and German-speaking educators to be present at the same time. As a consequence, asymmetry between children favours English (either as the first, only or translated language) as a perceived remedy to ensure a successful learning and care environment (Excerpts 25 and 26).

**Excerpt 25**

Okay it's like when they read stories, they can't engage the children. The children will not engage with them. So you can start with a book that they're familiar with in English and they can put it in front of them in German. Within a minute you've lost your audience. Except for the ones who come from German homes, everyone else is gone. And I think they have found that if they speak all German, they just can't interface with the kids at all. It's like they just slide off one another. (Charlotte, English-only)

**Excerpt 26**

I try to read them German stories always, but the kids who are not German don't understand and they get bored and walk away. So I always try to translate it to English again, because I don't want to get them bored. (Gerda, German)

**Excerpt 27**

Und was aber noch was ist: Hab mal vierundzwanzig Kinder auf dem Podest und davon sind irgendwie zehn Stück gerade drei geworden. Die machen Halligalli. Du hast selten Zeit, dass zwei [Erzieher] vorne sitzen können und keiner ist hinten in der Gruppe. (Bernadette, German)  
*And one more thing: You have twenty-four kids on the platform and ten of them have just turned three. They hustle and bustle. You rarely have time to have two [educators] sitting in the front with no one sitting with the children.*

These asymmetries challenge the bilingual programme as they constitute problems as well as a source of further influences on language practices and educational decisions. Charlotte's description (Excerpt 25) of the feeling of "sliding off one another" is dominant in this context. And as Gerda then describes in Excerpt 26, educators resolve this issue by speaking English. Thus, speaking German in a group of children who do not come from German-speaking homes is seen as a hindrance in implementing other education goals, leading to a conflict of interests and the use of English, which is further elaborated in the following section.

### **5.3.3 "Okay, wo ist jetzt dein Schwerpunkt?": Conflicts of interests**

For years, low levels of support for LOTEs at Australian schools have been justified by a crowded curriculum as well as by the perceived value of different languages in mostly economic terms, particularly from the 1990s onwards (Department of Employment Education and Training, 1991; Lo Bianco, 2008b). Languages in Australian education have found themselves occupying a subordinate position. Paradoxically, the LOTE in this study faces a similar struggle even in bilingual childcare centres, where it is subordinated and perceived as a hindrance in achieving other goals, with educators regarding the use of spoken German as competing against educational foci, social goals and work duties. Educators consider speaking German on one hand, and communicating with children, warning, praising and disciplining them, structuring the day, implementing an activity or transmitting teaching content on the other, as mutually exclusive. In this context, therefore, German is competing on two levels: 1) as an educational goal (competing

against literacy, mathematical concepts, fine motor skills, and so forth); and 2) as a medium of instruction and communication (competing against English) – reinforced by the reciprocal influence of these two levels. The three major points of conflict, i.e. content of teaching, safety issues and work load, are described in the following section.

### **5.3.3.1 “After all we are in Australia”: Content of teaching**

In their educational aspirations, educators consider academic, social and language outcomes separately, with the latter least valued under the prevailing circumstances of perceived internal and external pressure such as parental attitudes, school readiness (which is measured in monolingual terms and ignores LOTEs), and EYLF compliance, leading to a prioritisation of other goals. Although both German- and English-speaking educators are working towards these goals, since English-speaking educators are in the majority, German educators feel hampered by this conflict of interests even in regards to their own role (see Excerpts 28 and 29).

#### **Excerpt 28**

Ja, ich glaube machmal hast du so ein bisschen so einen Interessenskonflikt. Weißt du, so ein bisschen: „Okay wo ist jetzt dein Schwerpunkt?“ (Bernadette, German)

*Well, I think sometimes you have a bit of a conflict of interest. You know, a little bit like, “Okay, where is your focus?”*

#### **Excerpt 29**

Ne, also ich denke, du kannst nicht nur sagen: „Okay, ich bin jetzt ein Sprachenlehrer und ich bring jetzt nur Sprachen bei und fertig. (Birgit, German)

*Well, I think you can't just say, “Okay, I'm a language teacher and I teach languages only and that's it”.*

Without pedagogical equity, educators prioritise content learning over language learning (perceived as mutually exclusive). Hence, fearing that children would not understand what is being taught, educators hold group time sessions entirely in English, even if they are German speakers (see Excerpts 30 and 31).

#### **Excerpt 30**

Na ja, es geht ja auch darum, dass man gewisse Lerninhalte vermitteln möchte, ja? Also ein gewisser Inhalt sollte schon rüberkommen. Und du musst dich auch an den Early Learning Framework halten und ähm auch an unser Programme Planning und ähm dann verluscht das komplett. [...] Also wenn wir jetzt zum Beispiel über Literatur reden, also Literacy ja, also wirklich das Alphabet

und schreiben, dann ist der Fokus, das wird dann auf English gemacht. Alles andere, also wenn wir jetzt zum Beispiel Mathekonzpte machen, dann ist das also wieder zweisprachig. (Birgit, German)

*Well, but it's also about wanting to transmit some content, you know. So, some content should really come across. And you have to stick to the Early Years Learning Framework and um to our programme planning and then it just turns wishy-washy. [...] For example when we talk about literature, um literacy, so the alphabet and writing really, then this is the focus and it'll be done in English. Everything else, when we discuss mathematical concepts, then it's bilingual.*

#### **Excerpt 31**

Um morning group time is, today Birgit just did letters with them, so it was all in English and I think that was really important that it was done in English, because after all we are in Australia and when they go to school, they will be learning the Australian alphabet and how it sounds. So that's really important. (Isabelle, English-only)

Perceived external pressure in terms of social and academic forces in regards to the children's future lead to a higher status of English at the childcare centres, which threatens the use of German in the bilingual programme. Although this pressure derives from larger socio-political forces, the primacy of other foci and thus the predominant use of English could be slightly remedied with more training, as research findings show that teachers without professional bilingual training consider the majority language as the first priority in language education, whereas trained bilingual and ESL teachers consider both languages as important and crucial to maintain (see Chapter 2.1.1). In addition to training, structural changes would improve the situation – something which might be targeted once the centres are more established. For example, if the focus is specifically on English literacy and group times are to be held in English, an English-speaking educator needs to be in charge of them at all times. At the time of this study, staff shifts were not managed in a way that at least one qualified English-speaking educator was present at group times. It is particularly important that once a language policy has been written, roster planning is adjusted to reflect these issues, so that staffing arrangements support the bilingual programme instead of constituting a hindrance. Then, all educators need to be well informed about the goals and re-define their roles accordingly, so that German speakers feel encouraged to speak in German only, even if it means that there might be gaps in the children's understanding.

### 5.3.3.2 Safety issues

As has been described above, student and educator asymmetry as well as social, pedagogical and academic foci lead German speakers to use English in order to get their message across, which they feel is not possible in German. This perceived lack of understanding is also very strong in regards to safety instructions given by educators. The children's safety is the educators' foremost priority, so it comes as no surprise that they feel they have to communicate safety instructions in English to be understood by all children and educators (see Excerpts 32–35).

#### Excerpt 32

Außer natürlich Sicherheitsanweisungen. Die kommen erstmal auf Englisch immer, weil Gefahr im Verzug ist. [...] Sicherheitsanweisungen erst auf Englisch, dann auf Deutsch aber. Sie kommen also schon Übersetzt ran, erst mal geht die Sicherheit vor und das müssen alle kapieren. Das müssen auch die Mitarbeiter kapieren. (Birgit, German)

*Except for safety instructions. They always come in English first, when a child is in danger. [...] Safety instructions in English first, but then in German. They will be translated, but safety comes first and everyone has to get that. Colleagues have to get that, too.*

#### Excerpt 33

Jetzt zum Beispiel wenn ein Kind in eine Situation gerät, wo es gefährlich wird, so was wie klettert auf einen Stuhl, wenn ich da jetzt sage: „Geh vom Stuhl runter“, ist einfach nicht. Ich mein mit der Zeit würde das mit Sicherheit dann hinkommen, aber dafür sag ich halt: „Geh jetzt vom Stuhl runter“ und dann: „Get down from the chair“. So, beides, ja. (Lena, German)

*For example, if a child gets into a dangerous situation, like climbing on a chair, if I then say, "Geh vom Stuhl runter", it doesn't work. I guess we'd get there after a while, but I'd rather say, "Geh vom Stuhl runter" and then, "Get down from the chair". So, both, you know.*

#### Excerpt 34

I understand the difficulty [of speaking German-only] in a hundred per cent, because if it's an emergency, especially with these babies, you know, you really need to have a visual with them, you need to have a contact, you need to go low, you need to say stop, because an accident could happen. And you can't just prattle along in German, because they won't understand and they've fallen on the ground and hurt their head. And we don't want that. (Zenia, English-only)

**Excerpt 35**

And the other thing is if it's a situation where the child is you know hurting himself or others, I think it's more easier for the Germans to speak out in English, because it will just stop them straight away, so yeah, that's sad, but that's the reality. (Isabelle, English-only)

German-speaking educators explain that they use both languages in situations of safety instructions (Excerpts 32 and 33), either German first or English first. English-speaking educators express understanding of and support for this practice (Excerpts 34 and 35). Zenia's choice of words ("prattle along in German;") (Excerpt 34), confines the status of German to that of background noise; German is clearly not conceived as a language that can get things done. As observed repeatedly, such safety instructions are very common in the childcare centres, which again results in English having more prominence.

**5.3.3.3 "Ich bin halt hier part of ratio": Workload**

In addition to conflicting with pedagogical and social goals, speaking German in this context is also regarded as conflicting with other educators' job tasks and as creating an additional workload. Compelled to complete other work tasks, educators often use English instead of or in addition to German (Excerpts 36 and 37).

**Excerpt 36**

Es sind halt viele Verantwortlichkeiten und viele Aufgaben, dass man das Deutsche aus den Augen verliert. (Bernadette, German)

*We have many responsibilities and many tasks, so that we lose sight of the German sometimes.*

**Excerpt 37**

Weil ich halt auch nicht nur als Deutschlehrer eingestellt bin. Ich bin halt hier part of ratio und muss halt hier meine täglichen Aufgaben machen, die dann teilweise nicht zu hh. ja fertiggemacht werden können, wenn ich nicht Englisch verwende, ja. [...] Wir haben halt auch andere Aufgaben. Wir können nicht überall und dann auch noch Deutsch und das ist alles was wir machen. Wenn ich hier nur da wäre um Deutsch zu sprechen, super. Dann könnte ich mich den ganzen Tag hier hinsetzen und es wär doch ein Traum! Aber mit der Ratio und dann muss ich halt raus [um diese Aufgaben zu machen]. (Lena, German)

*Because I'm not just employed as a language teacher. I am part of ratio here and have to complete my daily tasks, which cannot hh. well, be completed, if I don't use English. [...] We also have other tasks. We can't be everywhere, plus German and that's all we do. If I*

*was here to speak German only, awesome. Then I could sit down all day, which would be a dream! But because of the ratio, I have to withdraw myself [in order to complete these tasks].*

The educators' workload also includes off-floor tasks such as preparing beds for rest time, putting children to sleep, preparing mealtimes, washing sheets, bibs and blankets, changing nappies, setting the table, planning the programme, writing observations and completing evaluations. These tasks result in educators being withdrawn from the group (Excerpt 37). Hence, in addition to German speakers often switching to English in order to complete tasks, the group is often left with either a German or an English speaker only. Educators regard this separation as an obstacle to the successful implementation of the bilingual programme (see Excerpt 38). Also aware of these issues, a centre director, Faye (Excerpt 39), argues for a change in the current staffing and roster management practices.

**Excerpt 38**

Das sind einfach zu viele Kinder pro Person, dass man das einfach so effektiv.. intensiv umsetzen kann, weil wenn du mit zwei Leuten auf zwanzig Kinder aufpasst und einer ist da und zieht grad ein Kind um, das sich eingestrullert hat, dann hast du die anderen neunzehn Kinder allein. Und dann kannst du nicht erwarten, dass dir jemand, der im Badezimmer das eingestrullerte Kind umzieht, jetzt auch mit aufpasst. (Birgit, German)

*There are simply too many children per person to implement it effectively.. intensively, because if two people take care of twenty children and one is there to change a child, who has wet themselves, then you have the remaining nineteen children by yourself. And then you can't expect that someone can help taking care, when she's in the bathroom dealing with a child who has wet themselves.*

**Excerpt 39**

What I would love for the future is that the German teachers weren't part of ratio. So they were just here, because when they're ratioed, they're taken away from the room. They're making beds, they're doing lunches and then so the German isn't there, if you added all the time, when they're doing things. But if you just had someone extra that was just speaking German all day, and then you'd had an untrained person as the ratio, then that would, I think, have more benefits. (Faye, English-only)

It is unclear whether the staffing changes advocated in Excerpt 39 would in fact result in a more supportive environment for the bilingual programme. Even so, the claim shows that staff are aware of the current challenges, but unable to do anything to change the situation.

As described above, more advanced structural measures once Fritzkidz is more established, including the distribution of shifts, have the potential to improve the success of the bilingual programme. This, however, requires sufficient numbers of qualified bilingual personnel, which again relies on changes in other sectors (see above).

#### **5.3.4 Perceived involvement and interest**

As I have shown in the previous sections, educators weigh up language skills against other academic, social and work-related goals, which lead to a prioritisation of English. When evaluating these different goals, educators are discouraged by external forces as described above, as well as by the lack of parental support. Educators describe how they struggle to use German with children without a German background, because they feel parents do not value it (Excerpts 41 and 42). Zenia's description (Excerpt 40) shows the gap between institutional efforts and private indifference, which also leads to discouragement on the part of the educators.

##### **Excerpt 40**

The other thing I want to add is we have a fantastic-Harvey, do you remember Harvey? He is fantastic in German, he is the best. I am so, everybody is so proud of him. He sits in front of the class and he sings the whole song in German and he knows what he's singing. He knows it. And the downside of that is: mum doesn't care. So we're saying, oh he's so brilliant, he's so fantastic, he's got two languages on board. We can say he's got two languages on board, because he understands. The German teachers talk to him and he just goes, yeah yeah, and off he goes. It's just amazing. It's simply amazing. He should get an award or something, but then his parents don't recognise it. You know we say, he did show-and-tell all in German, you know lalalala and she just, you know, it's sad. He's got such an absorbent mind. You know whatever they teach him, it goes in, the German goes in. [...] He's like a sponge at the moment and he's like absorbing anything, but he's not getting any recognition for it. Ah, he is! Birgit is like, "Wow wow". Bernadette is like, "Fantastic, you're the best German speaker I know", you know. So everyone is giving him positive positive stuff, but outside of Preschool, nothing. So, yeah, so that's where it's sad. I think also it's like trying to get the parents who are non-bilingual, trying to see that it's an educational benefit, you know. (Zenia, English-only)

**Excerpt 41**

Wenn man dann nicht das richtige Feedback von zu Hause auch bekommt. Das sieht man ja auch, weil die Eltern sich gar nicht darum kümmern. „Schön, er kann bis zehn in Deutsch zählen. Das freut mich“. Das ist schwer. (Marie, German)

*If you don't get the right feedback from their homes, too. You can see that, because parents don't care at all. "Nice, he can count to ten in German. I'm happy". That's difficult.*

**Excerpt 42**

I try to speak German with the English ones, but that's very difficult. And the kids whose parents are English, English-English, they don't give much importance to German, I think. They're just, it's fine bilingual, okay. They don't give much importance, I think. [...] The parents could be more involved, I think. Especially in the German concept. If they were more involved, we could get their children more involved. I mean the English ones, so yeah, I think that's important. (Gerda, German)

A closer analysis of the parents' expectations and attitudes is provided in Chapter 8. But as these educators' statements from Excerpts 40–42 indicate, parents' involvement and interest visible to educators, such as everyday encounters, shape educators' perceptions of parental interest. An analysis compiled after on-site observations showed that most parents dropped their children off in the morning without spending much time in the group. The time they spent at the centres slightly differed across rooms. The average time parents spent in the morning was between two and three minutes in the Nurseries, the Kinder room and the preschool and between four and five minutes in the Toddler room. Most parents arrived between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. in the Nurseries and between 8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. in the Kinder room, Toddler room and Preschool. The general morning routine for parents in the Kinder room, Toddler room and Preschool included assisting children in taking off their shoes and in storing their bag, clothing and toys in appropriate cubby holes, signing the drop-off time sheet and saying goodbye to their children. The Nursery children did not prepare for their stay independently, so parents undertook these tasks, resulting in less time to complete the morning routine. Communication between educators and parents was predominantly restricted to greetings and to the time waiting for children to finish the routine tasks. If there was something important to communicate such as medication requirements or special occurrences, parents approached an educator and/or wrote it into a communication book (all in English). Although there was an

information board indicating food provided at mealtimes and what activities were offered in the course of the day, the vast majority of parents did not read it.

In the afternoon, educators in every room wrote in a “daybook” with a description of the day, the activities carried out, selected photos, special occurrences and so forth. This was largely based on the educational and social outcomes and sometimes contained a note about a new German song. It was written in English only. Additionally, every room had a chart recording how long and at what time children slept and what and how much they ate at mealtimes. During observation time, no parent read the entire daybook entry. Most parents thumbed through the book or looked at the photos and checked the record chart. In the afternoon more parents talked briefly to an educator about how the day had been or if there were any mentionable occurrences. The language programme of the day generally was not a topic that parents enquired about, which was further indication of a lack of interest in this aspect. The majority of parents picked up their children between five and six o’clock. Thus, the average time spent in the centre in the afternoon was five minutes in the Toddler room and Preschool and between two and three minutes in the Nursery. During the average time of a few minutes per day, they were able to observe some German speakers at work. When questioned about their own time in the centre, the daybook or their perception of how the bilingual programme works, the following excerpts (43 and 44) exemplify why parents are perceived as indifferent:

**Excerpt 43**

Um yeah, I guess that I knew that um they had like a certain number of German-speaking teachers and then some non-German-speaking teachers. So, I mean, because they were so young starting, I guess, I just didn’t ask too much about it. I just assumed the German ones would speak German, the English ones would speak English, you know, whenever it was appropriate they speak German to them and the kids will hopefully pick it up, you know. (Audrey, English-only)

**Excerpt 44**

I’m afraid I don’t [read the daybook]. @I’m quite bad@. I tend to rush in and out and I’m generally pleased if I can remember the code to get in the front door and haven’t forgotten something and have managed to remember one of the staff members’ names to say hello or to remember more than one of the staff members’ names. (Arthur, German)

Arthur (Excerpt 44) admits to not spending time at the centre and to not reading the educators' daily report. Audrey (Excerpt 43) explains how she expects a one-person-one-language model, but "didn't ask too much about it". Thus, although she supports the bilingual programme in theory, her commitment to it is limited, which can surely be interpreted as an indifferent attitude. It should also be noted that she used the word "teacher" to refer to Fritzkidz staff. Most other parents also do so. Similarly, they refer to the childcare centres as "school".

Another interesting perception of parents' motives for their children to learn a second language, or the lack thereof, is exemplified by Birgit's statement (Excerpt 45). She also perceived the bilingual programme to be of secondary interest to parents, whereas general pre-primary school education was assumed to be the principal reason.

**Excerpt 45**

Ne, und wenn ich mir jetzt die achtunddreißig Kinder unten angucke, denke ich, dass viele das gerne as add-on Bonus sehen, aber ob das nun wirklich deren Hauptteil nun ist, das glaube ich nicht. Da geht es denen wirklich um rein generelle Vorschulerziehung [...] Es geht ihnen um das Schreiben, es geht ihnen um das Rechnen, es geht ihnen um das Lesen, es geht ihnen um um viele andere Dinge, ja? Einfach der Konkurrenzkampf, der erwartet wird in der Schule. (Birgit, German)

*Right, and if I consider the thirty-eight children down there, I think that many like to see it as an add-on bonus, but I don't think that it's really their main goal. It's really about essential preschool education [...] It's about writing, it's about numeracy, it's about reading, it's about many other things, you know. It's simply the competition of school education.*

Based on these findings, language education can be seen as both an advantage in terms of competing in the job market and a disadvantage in terms of competing at school, where it is of no value. What seem to be of primary value are the classical academic skills of literacy and numeracy (which transpires also in Chapters 7 and 8). On one hand, when thinking about post-educational careers in which languages are considered an asset, competition seems to support bilingual education choices and attempts. In this case, parents like to equip their children with the necessary skills to succeed economically (see Chapter 8.1.2). Prior to that, however, at school, as long as English remains the only medium of academic excellence and competition, language education gets disregarded again – even to the point

of seeing it as a hindrance to children's (English) education. Thus, in the Australian school sector, where languages are vastly underrepresented, the educational ideology of competition in only English terms in fact militates against bilingual education, ensuring "a continuous privileging of English (along with a few other tested subjects)" (Piller & Cho, 2013, p. 29). This ideology as perceived by Fritzkidz staff influences their language practices and the implementation of the bilingual programme on one hand, as seen above, as well as their public presentation on the other, which is outlined below.

### **5.3.5 The bilingual programme in the public eye**

Parents constitute the market for the childcare centres, and by constructing ideologies of language hierarchization and linguistic capital within the prevailing power relations, they (re-)create economic and social conditions by imposing these ideologies, consequently reinforcing existing power relations. The domination of the market, or the lack thereof, can also be determined on the basis of the change in structure and public image of Fritzkidz, which can be understood as a re-construction of identity, assuming identity to be the product of negotiation between what Fritzkidz intended to be and what choices are available to them under these power relations (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). Fritzkidz initially targeted the German-speaking community in Sydney (see Chapter 4.1) and expected to have found a niche. The idea was to become a member of the Chamber of Foreign Trade and to offer early childhood education to 90 per cent German (German-English bilingual) and ten per cent non-German-dominant families (Interview with the CEO). However, the response of the German-speaking community to this proposition was poor. The majority of enrolled families were English-speaking and the first parent survey conducted by Fritzkidz showed that for the vast majority of them the bilingual programme was not a decisive factor (see also Chapter 6.2.3). Through enrolment patterns, Fritzkidz came to realise indirectly the low demand for and value of a German-English programme. As Faye (Excerpt 46) explains, the centres are also directly confronted with openly negative attitudes, leaving personnel in the position of defending the bilingual German-English programme.

#### **Excerpt 46**

And then some families, I think, they're still like, "Why German? Why not French or Italian and why German?" And then so we just have to encourage them and, you know, let them know that it doesn't matter what language it is, it's just to teach the brain that they can do it and then so when they do go to school and do Italian

or whatever, the brain goes, "Right, I've done this before"  
and then they just learn. (Faye, English-only)

Little valorisation of the German language in particular leads to an emphasis on the bilingual programme as a catalyst for later language learning as well as more general brain development (see also Chapter 8).

Fritzkidz also perceived that parents with no prior knowledge about the centres were sceptical as to whether a centre they regarded as being tailored to and accessed by German families was suitable for their non-German-speaking children. In the first interview (December 2011), the MD explained that parents may fear that the educational concept followed German curricula, that their children "wouldn't fit in" and that the centres were a learning institution for Germans. Under this presumption, Fritzkidz was concerned about appearing foreign and alien, giving parents the impression that they would be provided with much less information about the pedagogical principles and how education is delivered; this would be a source of worry for parents and may lead to them ignoring Fritzkidz altogether (MD, interviews in December 2011 and July 2012). However, as the MD also emphasised in both formal interviews, Fritzkidz followed all standards governing Australian childcare and education services and the EYLF, and consequently aimed to appeal to this imagined monolingual Australian mainstream community. This has been realised by changing its public profile in such a way that appears less as a learning institution for Germans, and more as an Australian education facility with a bilingual component. The review of brochures, flyers and booklets showed that the word "German" as a key word on most brochures had been removed in many cases and particularly on covers. Initially brochures and suchlike denoted the centres as "German-English bilingual centres". Since the change, they only referred to "bilingual education" in order to highlight learning *a* foreign language as opposed to exclusively focusing on the German language and German families (also emphasised in MD interviews). Brochures were initially printed in both languages, an undertaking soon abandoned alongside these changes, after which printing continued in English only.

De-emphasising German is used to disperse scepticism and to highlight the Australian component, such as working with the EYLF, so that the centres appear Australian, familiar and mainstream instead of alien and a source of concern as described above. The bilingual programme description is focused on bilingualism, language learning, linguistic and

multicultural awareness in general. Care is taken explicitly not to appear as a minority institution, but rather as an Australian community institution complemented by a bilingual programme as an integral, but non-dominant part. This is also a form of “differential bilingualism”, according to which bilingualism is either seen as beneficial or detrimental, depending on the status of the speaker and the status of the language. If majority language groups speak a high status second language, they are usually well-regarded, whereas minority groups speaking their native language in addition to the majority language are evaluated negatively (Cashman, 1999, p. 139). Based on the data presented above, an ideology of differential bilingualism is also apparent at the bilingual German-English early education centres that are the focus of this study.

Whereas some forms of bilingualism are highly valued, others are deemed to be undesirable. Although German is usually not regarded as a low-value minority language (see also Chapter 1.3), in the case of Fritzkidz minority bilingualism appears worrying to parents. As a consequence of this undesirable association, it is explicitly transformed into a programme of mainstream bilingualism, where the English-speaking majority can take up the opportunity to learn a second language. This ideology impairs original bilingual education attempts. While representation in German institutions such as the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce or the Goethe Institute has remained focussed on German-English bilingualism, wider representation, labelling and advertising strategies have been adapted to the demographics of the clientele and the neighbourhood community more generally. Thus, in different social contexts Fritzkidz uses changing and co-existing identities.

Linguistic capital and its production is dependent on a market (Bourdieu, 1977) and because Fritzkidz interprets the market as absent (perceived parental indifference, little value placed on linguistic capital and scepticism towards a German centre), its production is minimised and kept invisible. This led to identity negotiations and a change in Fritzkidz’ public positioning, because symbolic power is to be found in striving for English monolingualism and excludes those who do not conform (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). In the case of Fritzkidz, this means either assimilation to a mainstream, predominantly English language, centre or low enrolment rates (because bilingual education appears worrying) and as a result, potentially the end of the programme. However, by seeking to sustain enrolments and hence accepting to be dominated, symbolic power is transformed

into legitimate power and contributes towards the reproduction of those power relations (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Bourdieu, 1991).

As a result of the new identity, the composition of the centres with German-speaking families in the minority (see Chapter 6) is seen as positive, since it does not portray a picture of a German community institution. Programmes with a small number of minority students are referred to as elite programmes (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). In these socioeconomically well-established neighbourhoods, a marginal bilingual programme is then marketed as an enriching, higher quality education model. Accordingly, for future planning such as the possible establishment of more centres, the MD explained that Fritzkidz was explicitly targeting suburbs with a more educated and socioeconomically well-established community. Symbolic domination hence led to a reduction of a language-specific focus in publicly available information as well as to the exclusion of socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. When educational institutions are regarded as a source of capital distribution, such measures contribute to the unequal production and reproduction of that capital. However, at this stage, German or bilingual early childhood education is not regarded as capital. The political and social conditions as well as the market would have to be different in order to change this state of affairs (Bourdieu, 1991).

#### **5.4 Conclusion: Attitudinal change or reproduction?**

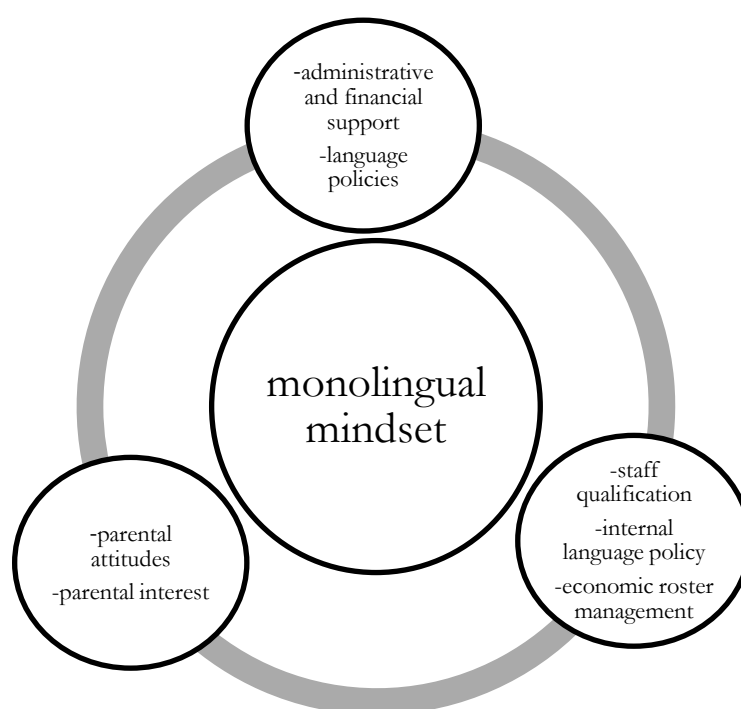
The realities under which the centres operate do not support the implementation of the programme planned, so that attempts to realise it entail strenuous effort. Whereas many bilingual programmes respond to the demands and needs of parents or communities, that of Fritzkidz is of a proactive nature. There was little or no demand from the community, but rather a lack of support for or even of interest in the programme. A closer look into parents' expectations is provided in Chapter 8, but previous research has shown that the German community in Australia has been rather unsuccessful with language maintenance and the English-dominant majority has been found to be indifferent towards learning LOTEs – two rather unfortunate factors in regards to establishing a German-English programme. As is further elaborated in Chapter 6, the majority of parents at Fritzkidz were born in a monolingually-oriented Australia, where there is a general lack of interest in LOTEs. Even those who migrated to Australia experienced the monolingual mindset and strong social forces favouring English (see Chapter 2.2). Within this ideological environment, the centres as a bilingual site are, in Bourdieu's terms, of low value, low

capital and have no power. In this context, the bilingual programme exists as a marginalised add-on to otherwise monolingual education. Without parental interest and involvement, any bilingual programme would be challenged. Fritzkidz' attempts are additionally hampered by further issues on the micro and macro-level, also mediated by the dominance of English and the existing hierarchization of languages in the education sector and beyond. Not only do these power relations play out negatively in parents' involvement, but the whole programme has to subordinate to them in the form of operative and administrative constraints such as early education and care regulations, the recognition of overseas trained educators as well as the lack of funding.

A bilingual programme, particularly in the early stages, requires financial resources to ensure qualified bilingual staff, staff development and training, as well as the resources and time to develop policies and programming. Policy writing and programme planning, in turn, require qualified personnel as well as concerted effort, time and support. These are resources that the centres cannot rely on at this stage due to a lack of governmental, community, financial and administrative support. As a consequence, after three years of operation, neither of the two Australian centres had developed a fully defined language policy, specified language goals or explanations of how their bilingual programme was being carried out (time allocation, material used, etc.) – except for the statement about the attempted one-person-one-language model. In the same period, appropriate educator qualification and retention could not be met, which is also detrimental to its success. Consequently, children at Fritzkidz are exposed to 25 per cent of German-speaking staff at best. The potential benefit to be conferred by this 25 per cent is minimised if educators do not follow the one-educator-one-language principle, which is overwhelmingly the case. This again is based on the fact that the imposed hegemonic structure values languages unequally, resulting in German competing against other foci and duties and, thus, English. “It is for this reason that those who seek to defend a threatened linguistic capital [...] are obliged to wage a total struggle” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 57). Consequently, exposure to German at Fritzkidz cannot offer more than a rudimentary insight into and experience of the German language for non-German speakers.

As a small not-for-profit organisation without any support in this ideological environment, it is very difficult to establish and sustain a quality and well-functioning bilingual programme that is compliant with Australian quality assurance and care service standards,

which are based on a monolingual and monocultural mainstream institution model. Rather than support diversity, education and care standards or larger socio-political schemes further challenge attempts to diversify the childcare sector and change the monolingual mindset. Similar conditions have been found in Germany's childcare and school sector. Gogolin (2008; first published in 1994) has for a long time drawn attention to “the monolingual habitus of the multilingual school” (my translation). At the same time, the socio-political environment has been changing. Meng (2007), for instance, describes how the political framework in Berlin is moving towards attitudes and structures that are more favourable of multilingualism in early childhood education. Without a change in the monolingual habitus and the political framework in multilingual Australia and within a bilingual early childhood education centre, establishing a successful German-English bilingual childcare programme is like trying to undo a triple-tied Gordian knot, as it is challenged in three ways, with some factors being a consequence of or a trigger for another (see Figure 5.1):



**Figure 5.1 | Challenges to the bilingual programme**

Firstly, the concept is being challenged by the external circumstances in which it is embedded, namely language policies, childcare regulations and the lack of administrative and financial support. Secondly, these external circumstances directly impact internal issues, as they make it difficult to employ staff and manage their shifts according to the

needs of the programme. Finally, the concept is being challenged by its own clientele and the community, with parental attitudes towards language learning and interest in the language programme being perceived as extremely weak. The lack of parental interest in addition to the structural shortcomings of the organisation (lack of qualified staff, internal policies and the funding to remedy these aspects) challenge the programme from the inside. However, they have deep roots in the external environment as well, as they are socially constructed in the existing power relations.

A hybrid provider like Fritzkidz with neighbourhood centres having a majority of English-dominant families and a bilingual programme as a minor component facilitates language contact for all parties, as none of them need fear the exposure to German being at the expense of English language learning, nor need they have concerns that it is an alien environment. Once the language programme is experienced, interest may be evoked and attitudes may become more favourable. Although under the circumstances described neither high-level language skills nor particular cognitive advantages can be expected, for families seeking support in language maintenance Fritzkidz provides an opportunity for children to experience another environment where other adults and children speak or understand German as well as the home, which is a crucial criterion in language maintenance attempts. Since children are given praise for using any form of German in the centres, all their personal experience of using German is positive. Thus, on one hand, through their own practice children learn that language and language use is a valued resource in this particular context, with Fritzkidz modelling a positive attitude towards the language. On the other hand, the language practices of educators at Fritzkidz convey to children that they rank educational goals such as literacy, numeracy and fine motor skills first and the LOTE second (at best). This gives rise to the question of whether the bilingual language programme positively influences children's motivation and attitudes or if language choice, English dominance and the status of language in a bilingual programme contribute to a reproduction of the value of languages (Jaffe, 2009). In the case of the latter, no attitudinal change occurs; instead, what we see is ideological reproduction, even in bilingual centres.

Following Heller (2006), the question that arises is how to make the language, in this case German, relevant under these conditions? Due to numerous organisational and financial constraints Fritzkidz does not promote German in particular. Instead, it adapts internal

programme planning, goals, brochures and its public image more generally to accommodate itself to the low level of interest and the ideologies of the community, rather than formulating strategies to achieve its initial goals. In the beginning, families interested in German were targeted. However, the language attitudes and ideologies prevalent in Australia, as well as the lack of interest from the German-speaking minority (interview with MD and CEO; see also Chapters 6 and 8), the English-dominant majority and other language groups, forced Fritzkidz to transform itself into an increasingly Australian mainstream institution. Although Fritzkidz might have succeeded in influencing and changing attitudes so that German eventually became relevant for children and their parents, it was obliged to take the path of assimilation. Fritzkidz is not alone in doing so, with Australian language policies also succumbing to mainstream perceptions on a larger scale. Instead of trying to evoke more positive attitudes, language policies accommodate to negative ideologies, which consider community languages as a problem rather than an opportunity (Lo Bianco, 2001). How can a change ever be achieved under these conditions?

## **6 The clientele: Demographics and childcare selection criteria**

In order to understand who the Fritzkidz clientele is, this chapter analyses the demographic characteristics of parents and their reasons for selecting this particular childcare programme. The first part of this chapter describes results from the questionnaire using social categorizations such as gender, age, income and education, as well as language practices and birthplace. These results show the clientele's high economic and educational standing. These parents are above the Australian average not only in regards to income and education, but also in regards to the number of bilingual families among them. However, although German-English bilingualism is the most common form of bilingualism amongst the Fritzkidz families, their number is surprisingly low. The second part of the chapter describes the parents' reasons for selecting Fritzkidz. The most striking finding here is parents' initial indifference towards the bilingual programme, which was shared by almost half the clientele when first selecting Fritzkidz. The language programme was only a decisive factor for the German-speaking clientele, which constitutes, as shown in the first part of this chapter, only a minority. Since parents come to develop highly positive attitudes towards the bilingual programme while enrolled at Fritzkidz, the conclusion highlights this as a reference point for policy makers and childcare providers to intervene and make bilingual education an integral part of all early childhood education.

### **6.1 Who are the Fritzkidz parents?**

To analyse the make-up of the Fritzkidz clientele, different language categories were compared and contrasted, with a focus on language background and practices. However, with language policies influencing people's language behaviours, beliefs, practices and ideologies (Spolsky & Shohamy, 2000), age and place of birth are important when discussing attitudes as well. It is fair to suggest that those who grew up in Australia, for example, have been exposed to language ideologies circulating in Australia, while those raised elsewhere would have been exposed to different language ideologies.

The following first section describes linguistic practices in the nuclear and extended families.

6.1.1 Linguistic practices

In the following, languages spoken with the children are used for categorisation in order to understand everyday-life language practices between parents and their children. These categories are then linked to reasons for enrolment, attitudes and ideologies. Information gained is grouped in either nuclear family’s practices or extended family’s practices. As set out in Chapter 3.3.1.2, the nuclear family comprises parents and children. The extended family also includes grandparents.

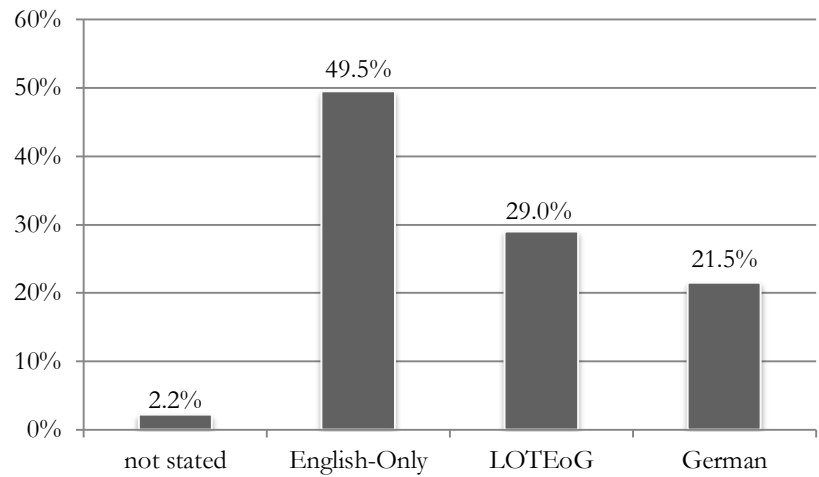


Figure 6.1 | Parents’ linguistic practices with their children<sup>1</sup>

Figure 6.1 shows parents’ self-reported language use with their children in their nuclear family. In almost half of the nuclear families whose children were enrolled in one of the bilingual childcare centres (49.5 per cent, N=46), English was the sole language used. Apart from these monolingual families, 29 per cent (N=27) used a LOTE other than German (LOTEoG) with their children and another 21.5 per cent (N=20) used German. Thus, the Fritzkidz clientele is more bi- or multilingual than the Australian or even Sydney average. In the Australian census 2011, 76.8 per cent, about one quarter more than the Fritzkidz clientele, indicated that they lived in a monolingual English household (62.2 per cent in Sydney), whereas only 20.4 per cent, about one third less than the Fritzkidz clientele, lived in bi- or multilingual households (35.5 per cent in Sydney) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b).

<sup>1</sup> As multiple items could be indicated, the total exceeds 100 per cent (93 families) as a result of two families being grouped in two categories: German and other language (see below).

### English-only

Fritzkidz families practising English-only constituted the clientele's majority (49.5 per cent, N=46). However, that number shrinks when one also considers the language practices of extended families including grandparents, of whom 39.8 per cent (N=37) reported speaking English-only to the children. Thus, at least 9.7 per cent (N=9) of the monolingual English parents had themselves been raised by a NESB parent.

### Language other than English or German (LOTEoG)

The LOTEoG category constitutes 20 different languages other than German or English. These languages are Russian, Romanian, Arabic, Danish, Maori, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Slovene, Vietnamese, Nepali, Hungarian, Tagalog, Slovak, Mandarin, Cantonese, Urdu, Japanese and Serbian, which 29 per cent (N=27) reported using between at least one parent and their children. Out of these 27 families:

- Eleven had one parent speaking a LOTEoG, whereas the other spoke English-only.
- 14 couples spoke the same LOTEoG with their children. This included one family with both parents speaking two LOTEoGs (Portuguese and French; each a parent's mother tongue) to the children, and four families which used the LOTEoG (Mandarin, Danish and Spanish twice) as the sole language in the nuclear family.
- Two used English, a LOTEoG and German. They were grouped in this and in the German category, as they used three languages at home: English by both, a LOTE (Hungarian) by one partner and German by the other.

Even more indicated that a LOTE other than German was used in the extended family (32.3 per cent, N=30). All parents using a LOTE other than German had a background in the respective language.

### German

Approximately one fifth of families (21.5 per cent, N=20) reported at least one parent speaking German to their children. In contrast to the other two categories, none of the families reported using German as the sole language in the nuclear or extended family. Although in three nuclear families both parents used German with their children at times, it was never the sole language. In each of these three cases, one parent specifically reported using German to a limited degree only, with English being their dominant language. These

three families were of English speaking background married to a German- or Swiss-born partner. Overall, out of these 20 families:

- 17 had a German or Swiss ancestry with German or Swiss grandparents and/or the parents were born in a German-speaking country. In two of these German-heritage families, the children's parents were born in Australia, but the children's grandparents were born in Germany. Both of them reported a limited use of German at home and/or in the extended family, because the children's grandparents were already deceased and they did not transfer their heritage language to their children.
- Three families indicated that both parents spoke a language other than German as their mother tongue, but in each case one parent spoke German to the child. In two cases English was both the parents' and grandparents' mother tongue. In the third case the parents spoke other languages as their first language (each a different one), but because their child was born in Germany, they continued speaking German to the child, while also using their respective first languages.
- In the third case, the child of a linguistically intermarried non-German couple was born in Germany. These parents reported using German as a foreign language with their child.

In the extended family, 21.5 per cent (N=20) reported that at least one parent or grandparent spoke German to their children. This indicates that while three families (3.2 per cent) used German as a foreign language without a German background, three other families (3.2 per cent) had a German background without having transmitted it themselves.

In total, the centres' clientele reported 22 different languages (including English and German) spoken to the children in their nuclear families. Although German families constituted a visible proportion, they only comprised one fifth of the entire clientele, which made them a minority in the centres. Furthermore, even those families where German was spoken in the home were English-dominant. Apart from the considerable numbers of English and German-speakers, other languages accounted for only very small numbers, resulting in rather low "ethnic density" (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Based on the language practices of the 93 surveyed families, half the group was monolingual, whereas the other half was fairly diverse. And yet, all of them decided to enrol their children in a childcare centre with a bilingual German-English programme. The question to be asked is whether their decision to do so was directly related to the bilingual programme or to other

factors. This is analysed in the second part of the chapter following the examination of more demographic features, starting with place of birth in the next section.

### **6.1.2 Place of birth**

In accordance with the languages spoken in the previous section, parents' place of birth was categorised into "Australian-born", "ESB migrant", "Germany- or Switzerland-born migrant" and "NESB migrant". Based on the answers given, ESB migrants were parents born in countries with English as the majority language (de-facto or official) such as the British Isles, North America and New Zealand. Parents born in countries with English as one official language (e.g. India) have been categorised as "NESB migrants", because they reported using a LOTEoG with their children. NESB migrants do not include German-speaking countries. These have been coded "Germany- or Switzerland-born", as these were the only two German-speaking countries indicated.

Analysing all 186 parents individually, 47.3 per cent (N=88) were Australian-born, 19.9 per cent (N=37) were ESB migrants, 8.1 per cent (N=15) were Germany- or Switzerland-born migrants and 22.6 per cent (N=42) were NESB migrants. Four individuals (2.2 per cent) did not complete this item<sup>2</sup>. When analysing families instead of individuals, 53.7 per cent of the Australian average reported that both parents were Australian-born (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b). This differs from the clientele at Fritzkidz, where only 29 (31.2 per cent) out of the 93 nuclear families reported that both parents were born in Australia, with another ten (10.8 per cent) families reporting that both parents were ESB migrants. Additionally, in ten families (10.8 per cent) one parent was Australia-born whereas the other was an ESB migrant (see Table 6.1). Thus, about one third of the families were Australian-born and half the clientele was either Australian-born or from another English-speaking country. Hence, slightly less than half of the families at Fritzkidz were NESB, German or Swiss migrants. A percentage of 30.1 (N=28) at Fritzkidz indicated that one or both parents were NESB migrants and 16.1 per cent (N=15) indicated that one or both parents were born in Germany or Switzerland. In the latter two categories, one family was counted twice, with one parent being Germany-born and the other a NESB migrant (see Table 6.1).

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<sup>2</sup> Here and elsewhere: Figures may not total 100 per cent because of rounding.

		Absolute number	Percentage
<b>Language Practices</b> nuclear family	Nuclear families with English as the sole language	46	49.5
	Nuclear families with at least one parent speaking a LOTEoG with their child	27	29
	Nuclear families with at least one parent speaking German with their child	20	21.5
<b>Birthplace</b> nuclear family	Both parents Australia-born	29	31.2
	Both parents ESB migrants	10	10.8
	One parent ESB migrant, one parent Australia-born	10	10.8
	One or both parents NESB migrants	28	30.1
	One or both parents Germany- or Switzerland-born migrants	15	16.1
<b>Annual household income</b> nuclear family	less than \$104,000	10	10.8
	\$104,000–135,199	14	15.1
	\$135,200–166,399	9	9.7
	\$166,400–207,999	21	22.6
	\$208,000 or more	14	15.1

Table 6.1 | Demographic information on parents I: Language, birthplace and income

		Absolute number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b> participating parent only	Male	26	28
	Female	67	72
<b>Age</b> participating parent only	under 31	5	5.4
	31–35	34	36.6
	36–40	39	41.9
	over 40	15	16.1
<b>Educational Background</b> participating parent only	High School, Certificate or Diploma	13	14.0
	Bachelor	46	49.5
	Master's	24	25.8
	MD or PhD	4	4.3

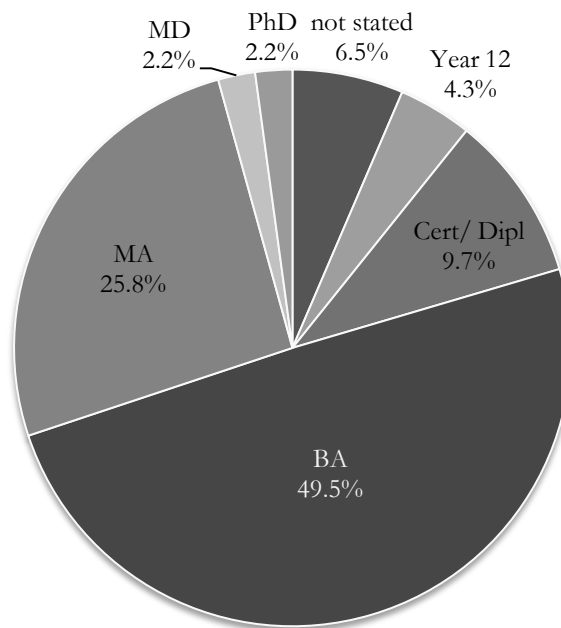
Table 6.2 | Demographic information on parents II: Gender, age and education

### **6.1.3 Age and gender**

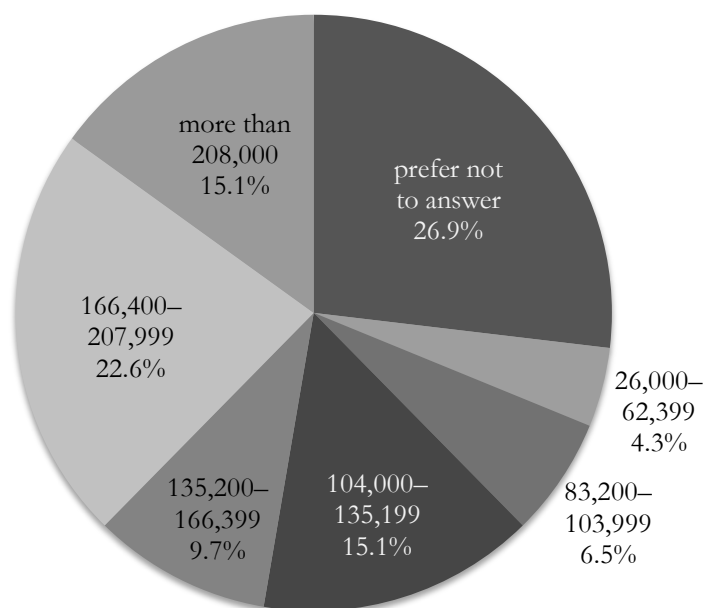
In addition to language practices and places of birth other demographics such as age and gender were also elicited. Out of the 93 participants, 72 per cent (N=67) were female and 28 per cent (N=26) were male (see Table 6.2). Most participants (98.9 per cent, N=92) were in a heterosexual relationship and one participant (1.1 per cent) was in a same-sex relationship. In regards to Fritzkidz parents' age, a large proportion of participants (78.5 per cent, N=73) was between 31 years of age and 40 years of age; 36.6 per cent (N=34) of parents were between 31 and 35 years of age and 41.9 per cent (N=39) were between 36 and 40 years of age. Only a minority were under 31 years of age (5.4 per cent, N=5) or over 40 years of age (16.1 per cent, N=15) (see Table 6.2). In total, the clientele comprises parents from their late twenties to parents over 50 years of age, with only a small proportion in the marginal groups. The majority of parents were in their thirties. Hence, the participants at Fritzkidz were in accordance with the Australian average, as the median age of mothers for births in the last Australian census was 30.7 years and the equivalent age of fathers was 33.1 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

### **6.1.4 Educational and economic demographics**

Turning towards the clientele's educational and economic background, the questionnaire elicited that approximately three quarters of respondents held a university degree, with almost half of the clientele (49.5 per cent, N=46) holding an undergraduate (bachelor's) degree and 30.1 per cent (N=28) a post-graduate (master's or doctorate) degree. Only 14 per cent (N=13) reported no tertiary education (see Figure 6.2). Thus, the Fritzkidz' clientele represents a highly educated community.



**Figure 6.2 | Participants' educational background**



**Figure 6.3 | Family household income in Australian Dollars**

Similarly high was parents' annual household income (see Figure 6.3). While only 10.8 per cent (N=10) reported a household income of less than 104,000 Australian Dollars, the majority of the clientele (62.5 per cent, N=58) reported a higher income. In 15.1 per cent (N=14) of cases, an annual household income of between 104,000 and 135,199 Australian Dollars per annum was reported. Another 9.7 per cent (N=9) of households reported an

annual income of between 135,200 and 166,399 Australian Dollars, 22.5 per cent (N= 21) reported an annual income of between 166,400 and 207,999 Australian Dollars and 15.1 per cent (N=14) reported an annual income of more than 208,000 Australian Dollars. Thus, more than one third of the clientele (37.7 per cent, N=35) stated an annual household income of more than 166,400 Australian Dollars. Approximately one quarter of the participants (26.9 per cent, N=25) preferred not to answer, an option which was offered as a result of parents' reaction to this question in previous in-centre surveys (see Chapter 3.3.1.2). However, due to the average rate of income in the suburbs concerned (see Chapter 4.2), it is unlikely that the majority of these holdouts would have an annual income below the indicated average.

In summary, Fritzkidz parents are highly educated and have above average incomes. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012c), only 21.6 per cent of Australian residents (26.9 per cent in the age range of Fritzkidz' respondents) hold a university degree and the average annual household income in Sydney is 100,272 Australian Dollars (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010c). Thus, parents' educational attainment and income were above average, which makes them a highly educated clientele with high socioeconomic status.

### **6.1.5 Summary**

The demographic overview demonstrates the clientele's particular social background: average age and gender distribution, above average education and income, different birthplace and ethno-linguistic groups with fairly diverse linguistic practices. The circumstances under which languages were used were also diverse, ranging from parents speaking German as their mother tongue to using German without a German family heritage. Only two ESB families and one NESB family practised this approach. The vast majority of the Fritzkidz' clientele were monolingual English families with both parents of ESB, so English was generally the dominant language.

In many studies about parental attitudes toward bilingual education, the minority parents have a low socioeconomic status. Lindholm-Leary (2001) reports complex school communities with high-income majority and low-income minority parents. In view of the fact that German is not a typical community or minority language (see Chapter 1.3), the present study is very different, with all (100 per cent) families using German in their home

having equal access to financial resources as the clientele's majority language users and with the reported income above Australian average and within Sydney average.

This is in accordance with Clyne (1991b), who states that parents using German with their child are socioeconomically well-established and well-integrated. In this respect, the composition was not diverse. With more than three quarters of the clientele having a university degree and more than half of the clientele reporting an above-average household income, the clientele can be considered to be highly educated, middle-class families, which clearly distinguishes them from the Australian average. Adding linguistic demographics and the place of birth into the category, the clientele can be counted among "elite" parents: that is, "middle-class international couples, expatriates, and academics" (Piller, 2001, p. 61). This group, often the focus of research, is interesting

simply because they constitute a major contemporary phenomenon in their own right. They are worthy of attention because they are there. Because there are so many of them: [...] But further they are of particular importance within the sociology of education within education [sic], because their actions produce or contribute to the perpetuation, inscription and reinvention of social inequalities both old and new. (Ball, 2003, p. 5)

Ball explains that besides the middle class being active in influencing policies in their own interest, education policies are anyway "primarily aimed at satisfying the concerns and interests of the middle class. In effect, policy thinking is classed in particular ways and particular policies present the middle class with strategic advantages in education" (Ball, 2003, p. 25). The Fritzkidz clientele is particularly interesting as they are characterised by two aspects of middle class status: income and education.

The chapter now explores why these parents placed their children into childcare, and into the Fritzkidz daycare centres in particular, and what role the bilingual programme played in their decision to do so.

## **6.2 Choosing Fritzkidz**

### **6.2.1 Reason for childcare in general**

Parents were asked why they chose to place their children in childcare. This was done in both the survey and interviews. The top three reasons (in descending order) listed in the

questionnaire were “work related” (69.9 per cent, N=65), “beneficial for child” (62.4 per cent, N=58) and “prepare child for school” (31.2 per cent, N=29). This is largely in accordance with findings on a nationwide level. Firstly, for many years long day care has been the most common type of formal care in Australia (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2010) (see also Chapter 1.1.3). Secondly, a survey in 2008 elicited the reasons for attending formal care for zero- to twelve-year-old children in Australia. “Work related” reasons were the main reasons indicated (75 per cent of children in formal care and 72 per cent of children in LDC) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). The next two main reasons were “beneficial for child” (29 per cent of children in formal care and 40 per cent of children in LDC) and “personal” reasons (18 per cent of children in formal care and 21 per cent of children in LDC). A combination of these reasons was also very common in the interviews conducted for the present study. Patrick (Excerpt 47), for example, indicated work-related and personal reasons as well as benefits for his children as reasons for placing them in daycare:

**Excerpt 47**

Ah well, yeah, work, to be able to get on and do things. My wife works full-time or four days a week now, I'm sort of self-employed, so. But yeah, if you don't have the childcare, it's pretty hard to do much during the day. And it's also, I think, it's better for the kids. I think they get more experience, more growth, um, and development by being in a group and um they have a better time. You get enough time outside of that as a family and, um, I think, otherwise you wear each other out a bit. (Patrick, English-only)

Although the top reason was similar in both the present study and the DEEWR survey, the second most frequently mentioned reason in the present study, namely “beneficial for child”, was chosen much more often than in the DEEWR survey. Quite typically, Nora (Excerpt 48), a mother of two children at Fritzkidz, expressed it thus:

**Excerpt 48**

I wanted him to be immersed in preschool, because he was three and I wanted him to have a little bit more. So yeah, it was really just for his stimulation. That's why one day was good to start with. And then we did two days and then before school, he did three days. (Nora, English-only)

An explanation for the above-average citing of beneficial factors might be the clientele's educational background. Previous studies, such as Whiting and Feinauer (2011), identified parents with a higher level of education as generally more interested in educational experiences and enrichment factors. The work presented here seems to confirm these findings, as 81 per cent (N=47) of those who indicated "beneficial for child" were parents with a tertiary education.

So far, this section has looked at why parents opted to place their children into daycare. The next section looks at why they chose to place their children into Fritzkidz, what reasons predominated and what role the bilingual programme played.

### **6.2.2 Choosing Fritzkidz in particular**

When asked the reasons for choosing Fritzkidz in particular, which was also done in both the questionnaire and the interview, the most frequently cited reason by far in the survey was the centre's "convenient location" (76.3 per cent, N=71), followed by the centre's "vacancies" (43 per cent, N=40). The third most frequently chosen item was "atmosphere/facilities/staff" (36.6 per cent, N=34). These reasons were confirmed by parents' answers in interviews (see Excerpts 49 and 50).

#### **Excerpt 49**

No, it was the only one close by that had @availability [close] to where I worked@. (Sally, English-only)

#### **Excerpt 50**

Only because it's so hard getting four days for two kids, as long as the childcare centre was good, you know, whatever they did with the kids was secondary really. So we're not going halfway across Sydney to take the kids to a preschool with a bilingual programme. What's more important is that we can walk to the childcare. It can fit in with our daily routine. (Steven, English-only)

Sally (Excerpt 49) had three children at Fritzkidz for three days a week, all of whom also attended a different centre for two days a week. Steven (Excerpt 50) had two children at Fritzkidz for four days a week and indicated his plan to send his newly born third child there too. The first child of both parents had just started primary school. Both Sally and Steven explain the need to find a centre in a convenient location (near work or home) with availability for possibly more than one child. Accordingly, Steven states that "whatever they did with the kids was secondary really".

When selecting Fritzkidz, language-related reasons were not represented in the top three reasons and, as evident in Steven's statement, neither the bilingual programme nor other factors were considered. Even parents who expressed themselves in favour of the bilingual programme in the interview indicated that it would not have been a decisive factor had other requirements with higher priority not been fulfilled (see Excerpt 51).

**Excerpt 51**

And the fact that there was a bilingual programme, I thought at the time was fantastic, but if any of my kind of critical factors hadn't been there, that wouldn't have persuaded me. So if it had not been clean or not safe or not caring, then the bilingual programme would have meant nothing. [...] And really the language was really-was an added bonus. It was not a decision-making criteria, because we had so many other things that were urgent and really critical. We didn't have the luxury of dictating whether language was a priority or not. (Alana, English-only)

Alana (Excerpt 51) explains how the bilingual programme was regarded as a valued bonus, but less important than cleanliness, safety or good educators. These requirements constituted a higher priority when first selecting a childcare centre, as well as when deciding to continue with it if other conditions such as moving house or another child starting school changed. Although some parents indicated in their interview that they stayed at one of the centres even after they had moved to a different suburb, most parents reported that they changed or were going to change centres for the sake of convenience.

**Excerpt 52**

Bernard:

Yeah, it's really nice that Emily has learnt a few words. I haven't told you yet, but we're actually gonna move Emily. 'Cause as Harriett is going to school, we're gonna go that way. So there's one at the bottom of our road that Emily is going to. It'll be a bit sad to take her away from Fritzkidz, but you gotta do what you gotta do. But it's nice she learnt a few words.

Victoria:

So it's on the way, so you save time?

Bernard:

Yeah, school finishes at three, so it'll become craziness.

[...] The other centre is ON our road. So the other centre is like five minutes on the way to Harriett, so it'll just be much easier than having to transport them all the way to Suburb 1. It'll be a shame that we're moving away, but Harriett is moving away anyway, so it'll be better to have them both that way. (Bernard, English-only)

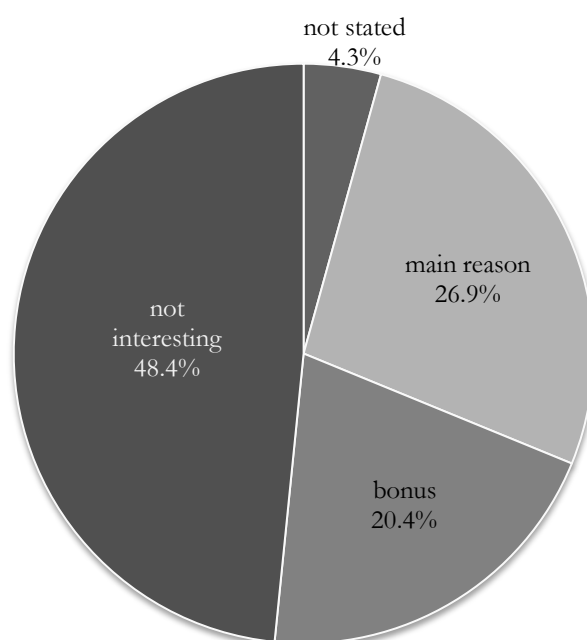
Bernard (Excerpt 52) explains how convenience dictated the choice of a childcare centre, even as a parent who expressed a strong commitment to the bilingual programme (see also Chapter 7.3.1).

Although appreciated, the bilingual programme was generally not enough for parents to select or stay at Fritzkidz. Other reasons, particularly location and convenience, constituted the primary reason for selecting a Fritzkidz centre. The only discrepancy occurred between German and non-German-speaking families. All families speaking German at home indicated a language-related reason for selecting a Fritzkidz centre, namely to increase contact with the German language outside of their home.

The chapter continues with a linguistic profile of families selecting Fritzkidz due to its bilingual programme.

### **6.2.3 Role of the bilingual programme**

In order to elicit for how many and for whom the bilingual programme was a decisive factor when selecting Fritzkidz, its role was examined in an extra survey question. Only approximately one quarter of the clientele (26.9 per cent, N=25) indicated that the bilingual programme was the main reason for choosing Fritzkidz (see Figure 6.4). Approximately one fifth of the parents (20.4 per cent, N=19) indicated that the bilingual programme was a bonus when choosing Fritzkidz and almost half of the clientele (48.4 per cent, N=45) considered the bilingual programme as a negligible factor.



**Figure 6.4 | Role of the bilingual programme**

An analysis of who quoted the bilingual programme as the main reason in the research survey shows that from the three different linguistic groups, the bilingual programme was the main reason for:

- 90 per cent (N=18) of the clientele who used German at home
- 13 per cent (N=6) of the clientele who used English-only at home
- 7.7 per cent (N=2) of the clientele who used a LOTE other than German at home.

An internal parent survey conducted by Fritzkidz in 2012 elicited an even smaller proportion of parents who consider the bilingual programme as their main reason. To the question, “What were [sic] the main reasons for enrolling your child with Fritzkidz?”, 16.9 per cent answered, “Believe in the bilingual concept that Fritzkidz offers”. The MD states that this was an increase compared with the same survey in 2010, in which only 11.6 per cent ticked that response. Another, similar question, “What do you think about bilingual early childhood education?” elicited the response, “Was one of the main reasons for enrolling my child with Fritzkidz” from only 12.8 per cent of parents.

Most parents using German with their children purposefully chose the provider based on the availability of a bilingual German-English programme (see Excerpt 53), whereas other reasons predominated for the other two language groups (Excerpt 54).

**Excerpt 53**

Also es gibt ja noch viele andere Kindergarten Centre und ich hätte mich da auch bewerben können, aber für mich war es dann schon, dass Deutsch da war. Ja, weil ich bin ja die einzige bis jetzt, die Deutsch gesprochen hat und für mich war es sehr wichtig, dass die Kinder wussten, es ist nicht nur die Mami, sondern dass auch andere Leute und vor allem, dass die Lehrer auch Deutsch sprechen, weil die Lehrer finden sie äh ziemlich cool, vor allem die Zoe. Dass die Elli Deutsch gesprochen hat, war für sie schon wichtig. Dass es nicht nur die Mami war, sondern auch Elli, die sie so gern hatte und Bernadette und viele andere. Also einfach, dass sie sahen, dass es nicht nur ich bin. Und deshalb versuche ich auch schweizer Freunde zu haben, sodass die Kinder auch sehen, dass andere Mamis auch Deutsch sprechen und auch, es gibt ein paar Kinder, die sprechen fließendes Deutsch und die Kinder sehen, dass auch kleine Kinder Deutsch sprechen und das finden sie- Aber Fritzkidz hauptsächlich, das war, dass es nicht nur in unserer Familie so isoliert war. (Jennifer, German)

*Well, there are also many other childcare centres and I could have applied there as well, but for me it was that there was German. Yeah, because so far I was the only one who spoke German and for me it was very important that the kids knew that it's not just mummy but that also other people and particularly the teachers speak German as well. Because they find the teachers um cool, particularly Zoe. That Elli spoke German was quite important for her. That it wasn't just mummy, but also Elli, who she liked so much and Bernadette and many others. So simply that they saw that it's not just me. And that's why I also try to make Swiss friends, so that the kids also see that other mummies also speak German and also there are a few kids that speak fluent German, and the kids see that also little kids speak German and they find that- But Fritzkidz was mainly that it wasn't just isolated in our family.*

**Excerpt 54**

Ah, well, it was mostly convenience, like proximity to where we live. Yeah, that was the main reason and the bilingual was a, you know, a bonus. Like we didn't know about that. Fritzkidz had only just taken over the centre, when we were looking for Howie. So, it was just an added bonus really, which we were happy about. (Patrick, English-only)

**Excerpt 55**

I think, there wasn't much else going for it [apart from the bilingual programme], um, but beggars can't be choosers and I think most parents are beggars on the childcare market, 'cause places are so hard to get.

Again, we weren't turning down offers from other places and it's always just a matter of weighing up various considerations. (Arthur, German)

Whereas Jennifer explains the importance of finding institutional support in attempts at language maintenance, Patrick (Excerpt 54) expresses the most commonly emerging notion of the bilingual programme for non-German-speaking parents: a bonus. Arthur (Excerpt 55) explains how the bilingual programme was the only outstanding aspect at Fritzkidz. At the same time he points out that the competition on the childcare market was so great that parents had no choice but to accept any childcare vacancy that came up – with or without a bilingual programme. Similarly, many Fritzkidz parents reported in formal and informal interviews that they had previously been placed on waiting lists for other childcare centres – waiting for up to three years without success.

Another survey result which confirms the finding that the bilingual programme was not important when first selecting Fritzkidz is that the majority of parents did not purposefully seek out a bilingual programme. Only 8.6 per cent (N=8) of the parents were actively looking for a German-English or bilingual centre, 25.8 per cent (N=24) were referred to it and the vast majority of parents (43 per cent, N=40) just happened to notice it when walking past. Thus, for Fritzkidz parents it is less a bilingual education choice than a centre choice. In previous studies, factors such as enhancing bilingual identity and the prospect of enhanced career chances prevailed (see Chapter 2.1.2). For example, in Whiting and Feinauer's study (2011) the vast majority of parents (92 per cent) considered becoming bilingual (and biliterate) the main reason for enrolling their children in a bilingual programme, while in Ramos' study (2007), only 11.6 per cent considered proximity a reason for choosing a bilingual programme. The fact that for the majority of the clientele the bilingual programme was only a minor factor in selecting Fritzkidz as a childcare provider is not only interesting, but against the backdrop of other studies about bilingual education it is also surprising. The reason for this may be found in the educational status of early childhood education centres; some parents have different sets of priorities for childcare than for school. Whereas the educational aspect may carry more weight for school choices, when it comes to selecting childcare centres, opening hours, caring and trustworthy educators, or a clean and safe environment are higher up on the priority list. On the other hand, Hickey and de Mejía (2014) remark that the early years may be seen as a low risk trial phase for bilingual education, because they are considered to be less

academically focused. However, drawing on the finding that many parents sought out childcare because they were working also shows how time, and with it proximity considerations, play a part in the decision-making process as well. In addition, the competitive nature of childcare places is certainly also a factor for choosing the first offered spot, if the centre is generally acceptable to parents.

Furthermore, the results are surprising against the background of the discourse that bilingual education in a LOTE for English-background parents is predominantly associated with elite families. Lindholm-Leary (2001) found that majority language parents in bilingual programmes are of high socioeconomic status and have high educational attainments. Whiting and Feinauer (2011) also found that high-status parents seek out bilingual education programmes due to their educational value or future career opportunities. Thus, for majority language parents such programmes are a form of elite education (see De Mejía, 2002). Due to its clientele's socioeconomic and educational background, Fritzkidz at first seems to be a typical case of a facility chosen by an elite seeking bilingual education. However, although the clientele had an above average income and high educational attainments, almost half of the families did not consider the bilingual programme a reason to choose this particular provider. Nevertheless, parents who did choose the provider because of its bilingual programme were more likely to have higher educational attainments. Out of the few who indicated that the bilingual programme was the main reason (26.9 per cent, N=25), the vast majority (92 per cent, N=23) were tertiary educated. However, this proportion represents only 24.7 per cent of the entire clientele. Hence, despite the clientele's uniformly high socioeconomic status and generally high educational attainment, it seems to combine a wide range of attitudes and expectations: from very favourable attitudes and high expectations to an attitude of absolute indifference.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at the clientele's background in terms of education, income, age and gender, place of birth and language practices. The most striking feature is the parents' high educational and economic status and the fact that German-speaking families, although represented in considerable numbers, constitute only a minority at the German–English childcare provider Fritzkidz. The second part of the chapter has examined the reasons for using childcare and for choosing Fritzkidz in particular. In summary, the data

demonstrates the majority's lack of interest in the bilingual programme when first selecting a day care centre. Only a minority purposefully chose the facility due to the bilingual programme. Another small percentage regarded it as a bonus, whereas almost half the clientele expressed complete indifference towards the programme. Although the clientele of the bilingual childcare centres can be described as elite families, the relationship of high-status families to bilingual education as revealed in previous research (e.g. Lindholm-Leary, 2001) has been challenged in this context. As exemplified above, being enrolled in a bilingual centre is not necessarily a purposeful choice based on the existence of a bilingual programme. The selection of a childcare centre may not always be from numerous options, but rather a decision to take the place or lose out altogether (see Arthur, Excerpt 55 above). Only the German-speaking minority selected the provider based on its bilingual education profile. The majority did not intentionally choose a bilingual childcare centre, but rather a facility that happens to have a bilingual programme.

This may be explained by the role and value of language learning and of the German language itself (see Chapter 8). It may also be due to the competitive childcare market with long waiting lists. But it may stem too from the basic and intrinsic desire of parents for a convenient facility close to home. These criteria are primary and other educational details are secondary. If the childcare provider in the families' neighbourhood offered a bilingual programme, it was happily accepted, but parents did not seek one out. Drawing on Ball's (2003) explanation that policies strategically represent the middle class, this is a point of intervention for policy makers, childcare providers and other stakeholders in that industry. While parents may not purposefully choose a centre based on its bilingual education profile, children would gain the benefits of a bilingual programme if the neighbourhood centre offered it. On a larger scale, the same applies to continuing with German language study at school. Location and hence convenience remain the primary considerations, and language learning is only relevant when these requirements are met. This is examined in the following chapter.

## 7 Value-action gap

This chapter looks at the importance of language learning for parents and the barriers they perceive to continuing with German after graduating from Fritzkidz. The results are based on data from the research questionnaire as well as from interviews with parents. While parents express an interest in language learning, they show limited commitment to continuing with German given the scarce availability of German in primary schools in Sydney. The chapter unravels the dialectical relationship between local institutional learning opportunities and parental attitudes and actions, as well as the way this impacts on children's language education.

Following a description of parents' attitudinal change towards the programme and the value they attach to LOTE learning, the chapter illuminates the barriers perceived by parents to continuing with German language education, such as scarce availability and hierarchization of extra-curricular activities. This is followed by a discussion about the gap that is revealed between their expressed values and planned action, before concluding the chapter.

### 7.1 Attitudinal change: From irrelevance to influencing language desires and family practices

As evident from the previous chapter, the bilingual programme was not an important selection criterion for almost half the Fritzkidz clientele when choosing the facility. However, of all parents who reported that the bilingual programme was not a reason for choosing Fritzkidz (48.4 per cent, N=45), 60.6 per cent (N=28) reported that their attitude towards language learning had changed, either a lot (24.4 per cent, N=11) or a little (36.2 per cent, N=17), while being enrolled at a Fritzkidz centre. Around one third stated that their attitude had not changed (29.8 per cent, N=14) and 8.5 per cent (N=3) did not respond to this question. The experience of Alana (Excerpt 56), an English-speaking mother with two children at Fritzkidz, was a typical example of that attitudinal change.

#### **Excerpt 56**

Um.., my feelings were.. at the time, "Yes, this is great, this may well benefit Linda in the future". At that time, they didn't have a German speaker in the Nursery, so it didn't really affect her then and there. Um, so.. it was a feeling of.. this could potentially be something that could be very

beneficial for her, but right now.. yeah, it didn't have an immediate impact. My feelings NOW are quite different. [...] Um, I've seen Linda benefit from it SO much, to the point where she would come home singing German songs, she asks me what different things are in German, she understands even the concept of there being two different languages, another language other than English. Even that concept was something I didn't have at the age of three. So, the fact that she knows that one language is German and one language is English and she can flip between them and she knows at school certain teachers speak German and certain teachers speak English, some of her friends are German, others are not. It's just really really interesting seeing that. And I get the feeling that her understanding- the way that she's learning a language is so totally different than the way I learnt languages at school being much older. She's absorbing it. She's not translating it from anything. It's just coming in the same- as her native tongue is coming in with mistakes and with, you know, odd words here and sort of hotchpotch almost. Um, but I could image that even if she were to leave Fritzkidz NOW and go and learn German at secondary school the way I did, she would have a MASSIVE advantage over everybody else. That's my feeling of it, yeah. (Alana, English-only)

Alana did not select Fritzkidz based on its bilingual programme (see also Chapter 6.2.2) and started at Fritzkidz 1's Nursery at a time when there was no German-speaking carer (see also Chapter 4.2.1.1.3). At first, the bilingual programme was only a marginal aspect. However, once Alana's child started in a room with German-speaking educators and began bringing German outside of the centre by singing songs or displaying an awareness of two different languages, she started to become very passionate about the bilingual programme, as she was now able to identify its alleged benefits for her child's future: "she would have a MASSIVE advantage over everybody else" (see also Chapter 8.1).

Moreover, the fact that the bilingual programme was not an important selection criterion when choosing Fritzkidz does not mean that parents were indifferent towards its existence. Almost the entire clientele (93.5 per cent, N=87) reported being happy (43 per cent, N=40) or very happy (50.5 per cent, N=47) about the existence of the bilingual programme at Fritzkidz. This indicates that while attitudes towards language learning were initially characterised by indifference and most parents, namely the English-only and

LOTEoG clientele, did not consider it a high priority, once they enrolled their children in a bilingual programme a more positive attitude towards the programme developed. This began to show in practices such as parents incorporating German rituals from the childcare centre into their home life (Sonja, Excerpt 59) or making a point of visiting Germany when travelling in Europe (Steven and Holly, Excerpt 57 and 58).

**Excerpt 57**

So he's [son] immensely fond of Italy and skiing and loves Germany, even though we were there for only a day. We made a point of overnighing there, to give them a chance to look around, eat some German food. And they look back on that very fondly and just seeing the way their brains worked. (Steven, English-only)

**Excerpt 58**

Well, apart from everything else it just is a much more visible part of our lives. Like it would have been a nice dream if Fritzkidz hadn't existed. We wouldn't have done anything about it, because it just wouldn't have been an option. So, the fact that it existed meant that suddenly it's become a bit of a project. Um, and we probably wouldn't have gone to Düsseldorf if we hadn't kind of been thinking about wanting to make trips to Germany part of our family life. (Holly, English-only)

**Excerpt 59**

"Mit Fingerchen, mit Fingerchen" [sic] ((*with the little fingers, with the little fingers*)) [beginning of a nursery rhyme]. Every night at dinner "Mit Fingerchen, mit Fingerchen" [sic] ((*with the little fingers, with the little fingers*)), we sing it. [...] And anyway, if we have visitors, then that's something that we introduce them to. These little songs and rituals and we all have a little fun to start the meal off. [...] and it's a lot of fun and we don't otherwise do anything at the beginning of a meal. We don't say a prayer or, you know, have any other meal starting rituals, @so it's good enough for now@. @@ (Sonja, German)

Steven (Excerpt 57) explains that his family went to Germany (when travelling in Europe) in order to provide his interested child a non-institutional real-life experience of Germany, presumably at some financial expense. In turn, he experienced this as rewarding to see "the way their brains worked". Sonja (Excerpt 59), although part of a German-speaking family, only had limited proficiency in German. She quantifies the amount of German she speaks with her children (a newborn and one child enrolled at Fritzkidz) over the course of a day

in “minutes”. She was born in Australia and German was not transmitted to her by her German father (see Excerpt 60).

**Excerpt 60**

I just know the adult conversation. So all the little sweetie, darling, gorgeous little one, I don't know about in German. [...] all those kind of baby stuff, I don't know. I don't have the vocabulary for it. (Sonja, German)

Her reasons for selecting Fritzkidz were so that she would be able to speak some German to her children, reconnect with the German language and prevent further language loss. Although a self-described member of a German-speaking family, for her singing a German song at mealtime was something unusual and new.

In addition to making German a visible part of the clientele's home life, having their children enrolled at Fritzkidz also triggered thoughts and reflections about parents' own language learning and practices. Some parents started to consider learning German themselves, particularly the English-only clientele such as Crystal, Hamish and Sally (Excerpts 61, 62 and 63). German-speaking parents like Jennifer, who sent a follow-up email after the second interview, indicated that being at Fritzkidz had changed her own language practices, in that she had been speaking more German since enrolling her children at the centre (Excerpt 64):

**Excerpt 61**

Yeah, I like the idea that I could do it with him. And I said that to Fritzkidz earlier on. I mean they should offer German or point out where people, parents can learn German. But the MD just laughed at me. @He obviously didn't think it was a good idea@. (Crystal, English-only)

**Excerpt 62**

Don't know whether it would be possible or not, but given the bilingual nature of the centre, and its running hours and stuff, I don't know if they consider offering rudimentary German classes to parents. Like the kids went home and you do one night a week or something. 'Cause at one point and this is rather sooner than later, he's gonna outpace me with German. Um, he probably already has, but yeah, just to sort of brush up on it or learn a few things or those sorts of things. I certainly entertain the idea of going in there and, you know, spending an hour on a Tuesday night trying to work out what the hell

the kid is talking about and butcher it and those sort of things. (Hamish, English-only)

**Excerpt 63**

@@ I'll be- Gus Gus said that ["Wasser bitte" ((*water please*))] one day and I was like-. And he said it's "water please" and I was like "ah okay". So, there I learnt that. @@@@ And I was like "okay". So, it'll be good if we could do it together. I'd love to learn another language. (Sally, English-only)

**Excerpt 64**

I speak more German since the kids have been going to Fritzkidz. I always speak to their German teachers in German which I really enjoy and see as a great opportunity. (Jennifer, German)

The data shows that parents found the idea of learning German with the children or understanding what their children learn at Fritzkidz intriguing. Hamish imagines how this could be realised at Fritzkidz and Crystal explains how she even suggested it to the MD. An alternative idea expressed was that Fritzkidz could inform parents about German classes and language learning opportunities for parents. However, the MD did not take her idea seriously. In neither of the two centres was any information about German cultural events or learning opportunities on display, whether for children or for parents (see Chapter 4).

Yet even going to a childcare centre for only two or three days a week (Crystal, Hamish, Jennifer, Sonja and Holly, Excerpts 61, 62, 64, 58 and 59) had an effect on parental attitudes and/or practices. Similarly, Craig (1996) also reports considerable attitudinal changes of English monolingual parents in two-way immersion programmes. As Gardner (1985) found, attitudinal changes particularly occur if the language programme "involved novel experiences" (Gardner, 1985, p. 106). In the Australian context, institutional bilingual early childhood education itself continues to be a novel experience for the majority of people and certainly plays a role in attitudinal changes. This constitutes a great source of potential for bilingual education providers and should be supported on a public planning level, so that an attitudinal change can be generated on a larger scale.

The chapter continues by illustrating the value parents attached to language learning after being enrolled at the bilingual programme.

## 7.2 Importance of language learning

Despite the low rate of parents selecting the provider due its bilingual programme initially (see Chapter 6.2.3), a percentage of 60.2 (N=56) indicated in the questionnaire that it was very important to them that their child learn a foreign language (see Figure 7.1).

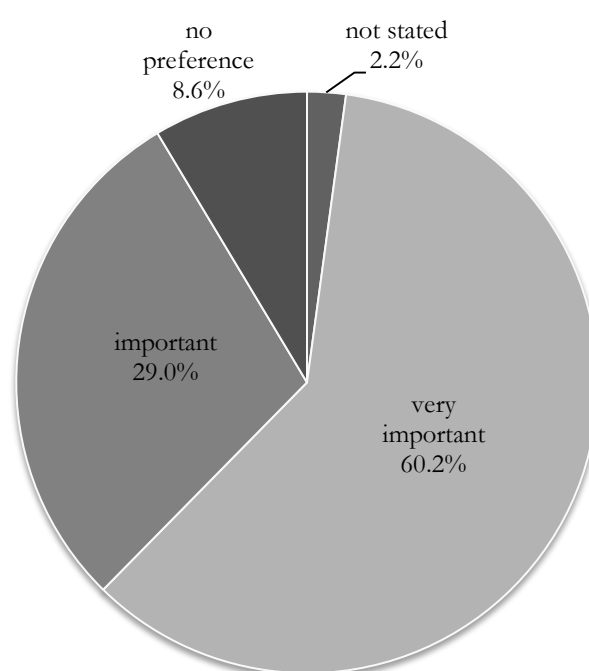


Figure 7.1 | Importance of LOTE learning

Another 29 per cent (N=27) indicated that it was important. Bilingual families maintaining a community language other than German in their home had much more favourable attitudes towards foreign language learning, with 73.1 per cent (N=19) considering it as very important that their child learn a LOTE, which may increase the child's language repertoire even more. Parents with high educational attainments were also more likely to express favourable attitudes. Of those indicating that language learning was very important, 89.3 per cent (N=50) were respondents with a tertiary education. The same was revealed in the interviews.

### Excerpt 65

I think that's critical [teaching languages at primary school]. I think it's a shame that not more emphasis is placed on that. And again, I think, not only because of the language itself, but because it opens up that global awareness. And we live in a global society and while you

could argue that English is spoken everywhere, I think if you're not willing to kind of look at it from the other point of view, then you haven't learnt much anyway. That's a very closed opinion, I think. (Jean, English-only)

**Excerpt 66**

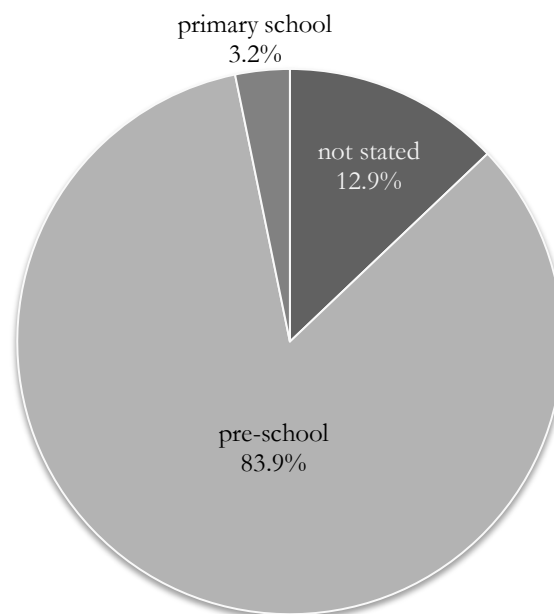
Yes, compulsory [to teach languages at primary school] in a way that, you know, as they learn maths, as they learn English, as they learn science, as they learn, you know, any other subject, they should learn another language. (Monica, LOTEoG)

**Excerpt 67**

I think, actually what I would like to have much more of in Sydney is um language medium education. Nah, there's nothing. So, basically bilingual schools. I wish we had more bilingual schools. English-Vietnamese, English-Greek, fine, like I don't mind, but um yeah, I think that would be really good. (Holly, English-only)

Aware of the scarcity of such institutions in Sydney, Holly (Excerpt 67) favours the establishment of more bilingual schools, where a LOTE is used as a medium of instruction – regardless of which languages they offer. Monica and Jean, who had children at Fritzkidz about to start primary school, voice a wish for a stronger focus on compulsory language education at primary school, calling it “critical” and its absence “a shame” (Excerpt 65), and making the point that it ought to be implemented as a regular subject like Maths or English (Excerpt 66).

In addition to the 89.2 per cent who considered LOTE learning important or very important, 83.9 per cent (N=78) of the entire clientele indicated in the survey that a LOTE should be introduced in the pre-primary curriculum (see Figure 7.2). Around half of these respondents (56 per cent, N=45) were parents of children aged three to five years (Kinder and Preschool room). The fact that the majority did not consider the bilingual programme relevant when selecting the facility, but supported the introduction of a LOTE at the pre-primary stage once they had experienced the programme, could be regarded as stemming from a degree of attitudinal change

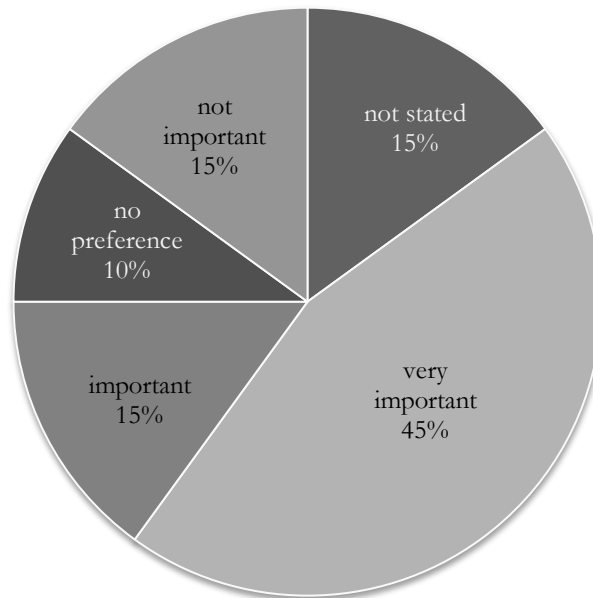


**Figure 7.2 | LOTE introduction in curriculum**

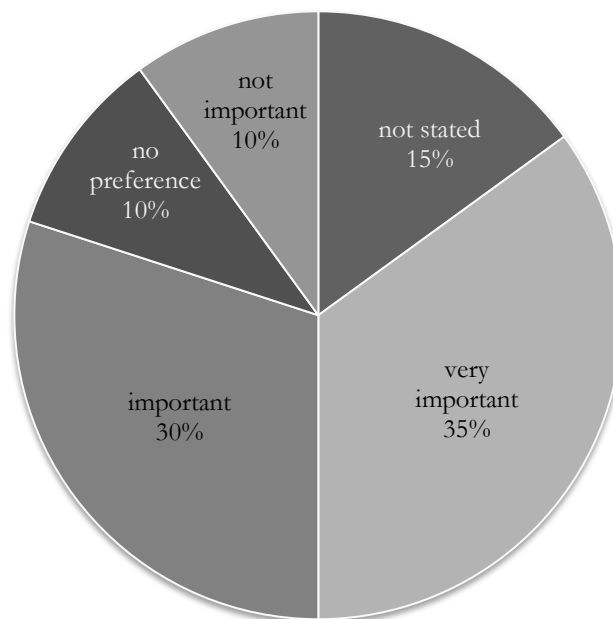
In sum, although the majority of parents did not select Fritzkidz because of its bilingual programme, almost the entire clientele ascribe significant value to LOTE learning in general as well as its introduction in the early childhood sector. Against the background of these findings, the chapter now examines plans for language learning after leaving Fritzkidz.

### **7.3 Plans to continue with German**

When the categories “important and “very important” are combined, it is obvious that the vast majority of respondents had, or had developed, positive attitudes towards language learning. Nonetheless, only 15.6 per cent (N=14) of parents indicated a commitment to continue with German language education, for example by continuing at a school where German is either taught as a subject or used as a medium of instruction, or using private tutoring services. Out of the 15.6 per cent committed to continuing with German language education, 85.7 per cent (N=12) reported using German with their child in the nuclear family, reducing the total number of committed parents in an English-only household to 2.2 per cent (N=2) and to zero amongst the LOTEoG parents. Unsurprisingly, families practising German at home were much more committed to the bilingual programme and German-English bilingual education more generally (see also Chapter 2.1.2).



**Figure 7.3 | Parental expectation: Oral bilingual proficiency**



**Figure 7.4 | Parental expectation: Written bilingual proficiency**

However, parents from German-speaking families had ambivalent language desires regarding their children as well. While 60 per cent (N=12) considered it as important or very important that their child acquires oral bilingual proficiency, ten per cent (N=2) expressed indifference and another 15 per cent (N=3) considered it as not important (see Figure 7.3). Interestingly, more parents expressed a wish for their child to acquire written bilingual proficiency, with 65 per cent (N=13) indicating it as important or very important.

Ten per cent (N=2) expressed their indifference and another ten per cent (N=2) claimed that they had no desire for their child to acquire written bilingual proficiency (Figure 7.4). It is uncertain if this discrepancy is due to the wording in the question. To avoid conflation between the terms bilingual proficiency, bilingualism and biliteracy, the questionnaire specifically first asked about how much importance parents placed on their child speaking German on a native-like level and then how much importance they placed on their child reading and writing in German. The discrepancy could also be due to confused item selection.

Although 60 per cent of the German-speaking families claimed that it was (very) important to them that their child acquires bilingual proficiency and 65 per cent aspired for their child to gain biliteracy skills, only around half of the parents speaking German with their child (60 per cent, N=12) seriously planned to continue with a German programme at school. Thus, German-speaking parents also demonstrated a discrepancy between desires and planned actions. In sum, a large proportion of parents had high aspirations or language desires for their children, but they were unwilling or unable to invest time, money and effort into their children's institutional German language education. However, in some interviews as well as on some questionnaires, parents indicated that they were confident of fulfilling these expectations at home (e.g. Excerpt 68). Considering that neither institutional education nor efforts at home can be successful by themselves, these efforts of parents at language maintenance may be regarded as under threat (see Chapter 1.3). Even more unrealistic is the idea of some parents that they can “keep refreshing” it (Excerpt 69, or also Excerpt 85 in Section 7.3.2) until children may have the opportunity to learn German at the secondary school level.

**Excerpt 68**

Jennifer:

Nein, also weiß du, so einmal pro Woche Nachmittagsschule? Aber ich habe immer gedacht, ich warte bis das Englischlesen okay ist. Abgesehen davon könnte ich das auch alleine zu Hause machen.

Victoria:

Und du hast es also vor zu Hause zu machen, also auch Lesen und Schreiben auf Deutsch, oder?

Jennifer:

Also noch nicht. Ich möchte zuerst, dass das Englisch

hundert Prozent ist, denn das wird ihre Hauptsprache sein. Und dann, wenn sie das wirklich fließend- wenn sie das wirklich gut kann, dann vielleicht ihr zeigen. Weil ist ja nicht so schwierig Deutsch zu lesen. Wirklich nicht schwierig. (Jennifer, German)

*Jennifer:*

No, you know, such an afternoon class once a week? But I always thought I'd wait until her English reading skills are okay. Other than that, I could do that myself at home. [...]

*Victoria:*

*So you plan on doing it yourself at home, including reading and writing in German, don't you?*

*Jennifer:*

Well, not yet. First, I want that her English is up to a hundred per cent, because this is going to be her main language. And then, when that is fluent- when she is really good at it, then maybe showing her. Because it is not difficult to read in German. Really not difficult.

#### **Excerpt 69**

Oh, I'd just do my little bit at home, you know. It would just stay at this level, because I wouldn't be teaching her advanced in it. It would just be keeping going what she has. But I don't know, because I actually have like German- speaking friends, so maybe if I really thought oh okay, I could say, "Okay, you can @now speak German to her@", when we're hanging out or whatever. But as I said I haven't thought that far ahead, but you know. (Audrey, English-only)

Audrey and Monica both studied German at school alongside French. Monica (e.g. Excerpt 71 below) has a LOTEoG background and was born in Europe, where she also studied English. Audrey is an English-background speaker. While both express their ideas on a somewhat hypothetical level, nevertheless they contemplate options to prevent losing the German skills their children have acquired. In this way, parents try to compensate for the lack of German provision at primary school.

The findings show that most parents were positive towards language learning and pronounced themselves in favour of foreign language inclusion in pre-primary curricula or frameworks. However, a large proportion did not plan to (seamlessly) continue with German language education. This discrepancy poses the question of why parents favour language learning in general, but do not continue with German. Partly, this may be due to the low relevance of the German language itself (see Chapter 8.2). Some parents (e.g. Jean,

Excerpt 70) assumed that the enrichment factor would already have taken full effect after the pre-primary years and would not require any further support.

**Excerpt 70**

I don't know, in an ideal world, I would do something with him in German even now that he left school, but I'm just too busy to kind of cope with that at the moment, but maybe when Mira leaves and they're both a little bit older and I don't have like a one year old and a five year old, I'll be able to do that, but I don't think it's a waste. I think the work and the learning he's done, it will in his life pop up again somehow and somewhere. So maybe in his travels or in our travels as a family. Like that's something we'd really like to do sometime soon. So, I think it's good.  
(Jean, English-only)

Parents are positive towards language learning but take a rather negative view of continuing German after Fritzkidz. What other obstacles do parents perceive in terms of continuing with German language education? 22.6 per cent (N=21) of all survey participants indicated that they did not plan to continue with German language education at school. Another 50.5 per cent (N=47) of all families indicated that they were still undecided or would continue with it if a convenient solution could be found. What is meant by this will be examined below.

### **7.3.1 Convenient solution**

Although parents developed an interest in language learning after experiencing Fritzkidz, the initial reason for selecting Fritzkidz was its convenient location and not the fact that it offers a bilingual programme. This was not only an important factor for selecting a childcare centre, but also for continuing German language education. In their interviews, most parents indicated a general interest “if it was available” (e.g. Patrick, Excerpt 73) or offered in the school hours (Monica and Nora, Excerpts 71 and 72). Conversely, they mentioned distance (e.g. Alana, Excerpt 74), time (Monica and Sally, Excerpts 71 and 75) and cost (Monica, Sally, Regina and Bernard, Excerpts 71, 75, 76 and 77) as primary indicators of inconvenience and as reasons why they may not continue with German language education (see Chapter 2.3.3 for an overview of the German language learning opportunities in Sydney).

**Excerpt 71**

No, unless they will introduce another language IN the school hours. That would be fantastic. [...] Ha, it's always

a matter of money and time. Money first, time second, but I will. I definitely will. If Gian will keep on being quite interested in German, we will. (Monica, LOTEoG)

**Excerpt 72**

Um, yeah, it depends on what else- if it fits in the lifestyle, you know. Depends on the time and then money and yeah. I mean if it's something they really wanna do later on, maybe. It's a maybe. I can't say it definite, but yeah, I would encourage it, but it depends on if it'll fit in the schedule, yeah. [...] Ah yeah, if they offered it at school or something that was there, I would have [continued]. [...] That would have been great. And he would have been happy to do it, yeah, because he enjoys it. (Nora, English-only)

**Excerpt 73**

Um, well, if it was available where he was. I guess, I'm not gonna go- There's no reason, no motivation really to go and take Howie to language lessons somewhere else at this stage. [...] Yeah, I think it would be nice if they could [continue]. If that would be available, that would definitely be great. If they had that continuity, they probably WOULD learn a lot more. But the effort involved on an individual level for us to go and seek that might be-like going to the German school in Terrey Hills, I just think we wouldn't do it. And, you know, you could try and petition at school, "Ah, you should be teaching them German" and stuff like that, but you know. If there's only a few of us wanting it, it won't happen. So, the only way is that we would wanna go and take him to a tutor, but then why are we doing this? Like what- Okay, there's obviously some good in it, but is it a priority, you know? And maybe just in terms of being lazy and how much it might cost and everything, you might just go, "Well, it's not important", you know. So, it's yeah, we'll see, we'll see. (Patrick, English-only)

**Excerpt 74**

I would LOVE her to continue learning a language, yes. Um, I am actually fairly- I am actually very sure we won't be sending them to the German school here, @because it's in Terrey Hills and it's miles away and I'm not putting them on a bus on their own at the age of five@ @@@ Um, there is no way. It is such a frustration! (Alana, English-only)

**Excerpt 75**

I don't know what time is available. 'Cause he goes to after-school-care. That would be the time to do it. But I'd

have to find somebody to pick him up from school @@@ or I have to get a German or an au-pair or somebody that um can watch him in the afternoon and give him some sort of lessons at the same time. (Sally, English-only)

**Excerpt 76**

Ah, das [German International School Sydney] kostet. Ja, ich glaub nicht, dass wir uns das leisten können mit drei Kindern. Und dann will man auch immer, dass alle drei die gleichen ähm Chancen haben. So, wir können nicht Michael hinschicken und dann Lisa und dann Amelie nicht. (Regina, German)

*Ah, that [German International School Sydney] costs money. Yes, I don't think that we can afford that with three kids. And then you always want to provide the same opportunities to all three of them. So, we can't send Michael there, but then not send Lisa and Amelie there.*

**Excerpt 77**

Bernard:

Well, we rent anyway, so we can move.

Victoria:

Would that be something you would consider doing?

Bernard:

Yeah yeah. We don't feel tied to this area at all. I mean it's just some- I don't know, I work in Macarthur Valley at the moment, so it's what's most convenient. If I- if we both feel that Harriett should have a second language at primary school, I haven't spoken to my wife about it, but now we're discussing it, it IS important to me. So we'll probably look around and find one that does, you know, and make it happen. (Bernard, English-only)

Bernard (Excerpt 77), an English-speaking father, expresses a very strong commitment to bilingual education in his first interview and even indicates that they would consider moving to a different suburb for the purpose of being in the vicinity of a German-English bilingual school. However, to a subsequent email I sent about German-English bilingual schooling opportunities in Sydney, the following response was received (Excerpt 78):

**Excerpt 78**

School looks great, but unfortunately costs a good 8k/year, for education which I can get free elsewhere. If the costs were a little lower I would consider it, but I think it is too expensive for us. (Bernard, English-only)

The excerpt suggests that although there is a general interest, other factors such as location and cost prevail for parents, even those who were initially strongly committed to continuing with German. They would continue if their local public school offered German. In his second interview (Excerpt 79), Bernard reviewed the situation more realistically and explained the following:

**Excerpt 79**

Yeah, I mean it would be nice if there were more schools- For us if there was a school around here that was an extension of Fritzkidz, then we'd go there straight away. But yeah, obviously if it cost a lot of money, then we probably wouldn't. I don't know. I would pay a bit for having them to learn a language [...]. (Bernard, English-only)

As evident in the quotes above, proximity and cost are absolutely crucial factors for parents considering whether to continue with German. Patrick (Excerpt 73), for example, sees the benefit of continuing with German, but because it was not readily available to them it would have required too much effort to realise it, which led to an attitude of *laissez-faire* and indifference. This exemplifies a common attitude and the forces at work that define it. Another interesting reason mentioned by a German-speaking mother, Jennifer (Excerpt 80), was the value of languages and the prevailing language ideologies in Australia. Based on these factors, she does not wish to make the effort to continue with institutional German education.

**Excerpt 80**

Und wenn die Deutschschule nicht so weit weg wäre und wenn Sprachen in Australien ein bisschen wichtiger wären, dann würde ich die auch dahin schicken, aber so wie Sprachen in Australien sind, ähm- [...] Wenn es hier in Australien wichtig wäre. Aber so möchte ich, dass sie erst einmal richtig Englisch lesen und schreiben lernt, weil das hier zählt und Englisch ihre dominante Sprache sein wird. (Jennifer, German)

*And if the German school wasn't so far away and if languages were a little bit more important in Australia, I would send her there. But as languages in Australia are, um- [...] If it was important here in Australia. But this way I first want her to learn how to read and write well in English, because that's what counts here and English will be her dominant language.*

In sum, given the difficult access to bilingual schools or language classes (expensive, scarce, far away, etc.), the educational sector supports only a small proportion of families

who would choose private schools anyway or who live in an area where a particular language is offered at school. Considering the landscape of schools offering German in Sydney (see Chapter 2.3.3.1), this is a particularly small proportion, with only two public schools offering German at primary level and two schools where German is used as a medium of instruction for some part of the school day. This transfers the responsibility of committing to and continuing with German language education to the individual families. But although a high proportion of parents stated that language learning was indeed important to them, most parents were not willing to go out of their way and walk the path of “linguistic extremism” (see Chapter 2.3.4), which they would have to do considering the situation of German teaching and learning in Sydney. Thus, although their general attitudes are supportive, the educational landscape in Sydney does not allow them to access institutional backing, which results in the termination of German language learning after the early years. In addition to the factors described above, language classes compete against other subjects and activities in and outside of school hours. This is outlined in the following section.

### **7.3.2 Language competing against other subjects and activities**

As shown above, parents would have liked their children to continue with German language education if it was offered within school hours as a regular subject at their children’s school. But in the absence of German language education offered as a subject or medium of instruction at primary school, parents are put into a position where they have to consider language learning as an extra-curricular activity competing against other pursuits such as sports or music (see Excerpts 81-85).

#### **Excerpt 81**

Our days are busy enough and there's plenty of other stuff that kids need to be doing as well. So Frank plays soccer on the weekend and goes swimming during the week and that's probably enough for us. Daphne has ballet and swimming and, you know, once Rocco starts doing stuff- So yeah, having stuff at school really is a good way to go. (Steven, English-only)

#### **Excerpt 82**

Yeah, if, yeah. If it's available, yeah, for sure, yeah. Um, but I guess amongst other things that I would be wanting him to do, he's doing swimming and I want him to do more of that and, um, I was trying to get him started in music. I started a music group there at the school last year, which went for the first term, um, and I'd like him to

get into music, if possible, but it's really down to them.  
(Patrick, English-only)

**Excerpt 83**

So, now that Gus is going to school and they said, he- you gotta find some after school program or something if they don't have it at school. /????/ really disappointed. [...] And the cost of getting a private tutor. I mean, it's like hm, soccer, swimming or language. Well, he needs to know how to swim, he wants to play soccer with his friends, like @it's not exactly as high up on the priority list@ @@. (Sally, English-only)

**Excerpt 84**

But it will be up to him. And based squarely on, if he's like his dad and sports is the true passion in life, then, you know, that will be self-determining. I really don't think the German school will cut the mustard. (Janice, German)

**Excerpt 85**

Monica:

Oh, pf, I would like [to continue], but the thing is that extra after school activities are SO many: swimming, dancing. So, the time is always an issue. But who knows? Probably in high school? Obviously she will lose something in this period, but we can keep refreshing, you know, numbers, colours, things that are easy for us, but no. At the moment, it's not any project.

Victoria:

If they had German at school, would you continue with it?

Monica:

Oh, yes, yes, oh yes! Yes, definitely. (Monica, LOTEoG)

Parents name swimming, dancing, ballet, soccer, sports in general and music as activities which fill their busy afternoons and weekends. These activities are all prioritised over learning German: “it's like hm, soccer, swimming or language. Well, he needs to know how to swim, he wants to play soccer with his friends, like @it's not exactly as high up on the priority list” (Sally, Excerpt 83). Steven (Excerpt 81) concludes that the best way to resolve this clash is for schools to offer German as part of their curriculum: “having stuff at school really is a good way to go”. As long as language education is competing against other (extra-curricular) activities, it will only ever be prioritised by the most committed parents. Under the prevailing circumstances, however, Steven's conclusion is merely

wishful thinking, since children in Sydney's primary schools will only rarely learn German at school.

In addition to parents prioritising other activities and skills over German language learning, they also transfer responsibility of such decisions to their children by claiming that their educational choices are child-centred. This is examined in the following section.

### **7.3.3 It's up to the child**

When contemplating whether to continue with German language education, many parents included their children in the decision-making process (see Excerpts 86–89).

#### **Excerpt 86**

Look, I'd love for them to be able to [speak German], but I think, later in life what they do is entirely up to them and how high a priority it is, becomes entirely up to them. Um, if they have um the skills and the education to be able to do that and the desire to do that, yes I would love to. (Alana, English-only)

#### **Excerpt 87**

Yeah, I would, if he- if he wanted to. I wouldn't force him to. And so, it would be a matter of offering it to him. I'm trying to. [...] I would encourage him, but I wouldn't force him. Because I think there is no point, if you force him. Oh, I don't know! I have to address that, when I get there, yeah. But I would encourage him to do it. (Crystal, English-only)

#### **Excerpt 88**

It will be Spanish and English and then, if he likes it, if he wants to continue with English and German is like some kind of a game thing and he can go up, great. But I'm not gonna push him. If he says, "I hate it", okay, it doesn't matter. That's all. (Jasmine, LOTEoG)

#### **Excerpt 89**

Look, I think that education needs to be based on a child's own interest at a certain point. Now a two year old doesn't necessarily, um, determine that or he can't really know what his aspirations are, but I'm not gonna force it. If he, um, turned around and says, "Mama, you know, we live in Australia. I'm not interested in this German routine. Reading and writing in German, you know, might help me to communicate with the Urgroßmutter und Großmutter und Kusine, um, wer auch immer, aber dann-" ((great-

*grandmother and grandmother and cousin and whoever else, but then-)). You know, if he turns around and says, um, "Stop it Mama, I just want to play football on a Saturday", then that's his prerogative. And so in my perspective it will be influenced by his interests and by his um- If he's not having fun, we're not doing it. [...] I want to give him an opportunity, but if he chooses then to say, you know, "Bloody Swiss, they should speak to me in English", as a lot of Australians will say, when they're travelling in Europe. English is an international and universal language now, or it is an expectation that English is universally spoken. If he then has this expectation contrary to his father's and my view of the world, well that would be his prerogative. (Janice, German)*

These parents share a common belief in the idea of child-centred learning or child-centred learning choices: "[it] is entirely up to them" (Alana, Excerpt 86), "if he wants to" (Jasmine, Excerpt 88) or "that's his prerogative" (Janice, Excerpt 89). As important as it is that children enjoy learning, it is safe to suggest that no parent would give their child a similar choice when it comes to mathematics at school. Hence, the choice itself relegates language – the German language in particular – to a low-status subject.

In sum, the barriers to continuing with German, such as child-centred education choices, scarcity of educational institutions offering the language and, as a consequence, the cost, time and effort required to attend classes as an extra-curricular activity, mean that parents' positive attitudes towards language learning will not be translated into practice. This phenomenon is discussed in the following section.

#### **7.4 Value-action gap as a result of "language ideological hypocrisy" or unfair choice?**

Almost 90 per cent (N=83) of the clientele stated that learning a LOTE is important or very important, and yet only 15.6 per cent (N=14) stated that they are committed to continuing with German language education. To a smaller extent, a gap can also be identified in the expectations of parents speaking German with their children: a larger number expressed a desire to raise balanced bilingual and biliterate children than expressed a desire to continue with institutional language education. In both cases, there is a significant mismatch between expressed attitudes and planned future actions, considering that language maintenance can only be successful if parents and schools contribute to it

together. These asymmetries have been identified in previous studies such as Romaine's (1994). She cites an Irish person who stated, "although we are all *for* Irish as we are for cheaper bus fares, heaven and the good life, nobody of the masses is willing to make the effort" (Romaine, 1994, p. 42). Monzó (2005), who examined Latino parents' choices for bilingual education in California, additionally concludes that the high level of information and commitment to language education required is rather uncommon.

Terms used to describe the discrepancy between what people say and what they actually do include "attitude-action gap", "value-action gap" and "value-behaviour gap". These terms are predominantly used in environmental and social psychology relating to environmental beliefs and behaviours. In a pivotal study concerning the attitude-action gap, LaPiere (1934) described attitudes expressed in questionnaires as mere verbal responses to an entirely symbolic situation, asserting that responses in a questionnaire cannot be used to anticipate appropriate action. An item chosen in a questionnaire "may indicate what the responder would actually do when confronted with the situation symbolized in the question, but there is no assurance that it will" (LaPiere, 1934, p. 236). In a social psychology study on moral motivation, Batson, Thompson, and Chen (2002) call the emerging asymmetries between motivation and action "moral hypocrisy". They argue that people are not motivated to be moral, but are motivated to "appear moral yet, if possible avoid the cost of actually being moral" (Batson et al., 2002, p. 330). Using these theories to explain phenomena in the present study, participating parents either react to these symbolic situations in a way they would like to act or in a way that makes them appear committed (in a discourse about bilingual early childhood education). In the latter case, their indications would reflect "language ideological hypocrisy". In both cases, it is doubtful that their actions would accord with their reported attitudes and ideologies. This same hypocrisy can effectively be found on a larger scale when examining Australian language policies. Despite positive statements and numerous policies, the goals of these language policies have never been met, partly due to the failure to make explicit the means of achieving these goals as well as to the insufficient supply of teachers (Liddicoat, 2010). Languages are theoretically promoted, but still not adequately implemented in practical terms (see Chapter 2.2). Sadly, Australian policy makers exemplify "language ideological hypocrisy" to parents and the wider community through societal actions and inactions. Hence, it is possible that parents demonstrate "language ideological hypocrisy". It is also

possible that the reason for the gap between the desire for language learning and plans for institutional language education can be found elsewhere.

The attitude-action gap is the subject of a large body of research and many theories in the fields of environmental sciences and commerce (consumer choices). For example, many people state that green energy is better than other sources of energy (nuclear, coal, gas, etc.), but still consume non-renewable energy, because it is cheaper, more convenient to obtain and so forth. Beliefs and values simply conflict with pragmatism. Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) differentiate between commonly used “external factors (e.g. institutional, economic, social and cultural) and internal factors (e.g. motivation, pro-environmental knowledge, awareness, values, attitudes, emotion, locus of control, responsibilities and priorities)” (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002, p. 239). Kennedy, Beckley, McFarlane, and Nadeau (2009) differentiate three influential factors accounting for the gap: individual, household and societal factors. Individual factors comprise values and beliefs as well as a lack of information on which to base choices; household factors include time and money; and societal factors include perceived control over decision and action, such as a desire to take action about something but being prevented by perceived barriers from doing so. Translating these factors to the field of linguistics, particularly to the question of why parents expressed favourable values towards language learning from an early age but did not translate their values into decision-making regarding the selection of a childcare centre or future school for their children, supporting variables for each factor identified above can be found.

On the individual level, different values may compete, such as attending a primary school where a LOTE is offered and attending a local school to facilitate socialising and the forming of friendships in the vicinity. At Fritzkiß, eight parents (8.6 per cent) indicated in an open-ended question that discontinuity or lack of support at the primary school level are a threat to early language learning. These parents, despite obviously being aware of the fact that language learning takes several years, indicated that they either do not plan to continue with German language education (1 per cent, N=1) or that they will only do so if a convenient solution can be found (7.5 per cent, N=7). Hence, although parents perceived a drawback in discontinuing language learning, it was not significant enough for them to seek ways of overcoming the barriers that stood in their way. Consequently, the lack of information regarding the value and benefits of language learning may also be a

crucial factor. This lack of information was also a reason asserted in Monzó's (2005) ethnography and as Lee (1999) discovered, many parents did not understand bilingual education objectives, although they believed they did. Obviously, it would not suffice to educate parents or society as a whole about the benefits of bilingual education; parents also need to be well informed about the options that are available to them.

In addition to individual variables, household variables are a powerful factor influencing the attitude-action gap, particularly time and money, which are easily transferable to the issue of bilingual schooling in the Australian (and many other monolingual countries') context. Due to the fact that languages are not widely taught at an early age and bilingual schooling is relatively unavailable, parents have to consider private tutoring or private schools, resulting in high expense. The time and money necessitated by long journeys to and from private schools or private tutoring centres are unsurprisingly a major hurdle to selecting bilingual education.

Finally, on the societal level, availability and freedom of choice are crucial factors. Many parents ideally might want to enrol their children in a bilingual school, but a free or fair choice is denied due to the scarcity of such institutions, parents' lack of knowledge about their existence and the allocation by default to a public primary school in the catchment area without a language programme. Thus, the societal variable is of major concern in regards to translating intentions into action. Whereas it is often claimed that ideologies and values determine people's actions, in fact household and societal constraints have a large influence on people's action choices (Kennedy et al., 2009). It is essential that these factors be taken into account when discussing parents' selection of childcare and school as a consumer choice. The decision is not only an individual one, but rather one that is impacted by societal factors.

In Batson et al.'s (2002) concept of hypocrisy, individuals try to avoid the cost even if it means not walking the talk. Regardless of whether we understand the term "cost" as a financial expense or as time and effort, the findings reaffirm household variables as an important factor when it comes to converting values into action. As exemplified in the findings, half of the respondents considered continuing on the condition that *a convenient solution* could be found. As such, societal factors such as the provision of affordable and widely available bilingual education reduce hindering household factors and may lead to

the translation of intentions into action. Since going to extremes is hardly ever an option for parents (see also Section 7.3.1), without this provision parents are deprived of a fair chance of opting to continue with language education. Under these circumstances, the choice has been made by policy makers, politicians and others responsible for the lack of bilingual education provision.

It is here that these stakeholders need to intervene. Without affordable language education options that are accessible to the majority, there will be no increase in the number of language students in the future. Unavailability thus undermines favourable intentions. This is a point of intervention for policies and schools in order to break this unfortunate feedback mechanism.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated that parents who initially did not seek out Fritzkidz based on its bilingual programme changed their attitudes over the course of the programme and became much more favourably disposed towards language learning. After being enrolled and experiencing this new educational concept, their attitudes towards the programme took a more positive turn. However, though affirmative attitudes towards language learning were elicited, so were perceptions of barriers to continuing with German language learning after Fritzkidz, particularly in respect of local availability. The findings show that although some attitudinal change and generally positive beliefs about language learning were reported, parents are not willing to continue with the language at their own expense. Accordingly, even if a bilingual early childhood education institution succeeds in positively influencing attitudes and ideologies about languages and language learning, it is not so easy to change wider educational structures. In order to facilitate the translation of attitudes into action, public sector intervention is fundamental.

In addition to the discursive space in which attitudes and opportunities operate, other factors also have to be considered. In Section 7.4, I have referred to possible ideological hypocrisy. However, the survey asked about continuance of German in particular, whereas the importance of learning a foreign language at school was elicited by asking more generally about the study of “a language other than English”. As a result, it may be that parents are not exhibiting ideological hypocrisy, but rather indifference towards the

German language. Hence, the role of language learning and the role of German in particular are examined in the following chapter.

## **8 The value of language and language learning**

Chapter 6 revealed that parents did not consider the bilingual programme a selection criterion when first enrolling their children at FritzkiDz. They did, on the other hand, express a positive attitude towards the bilingual programme. In their interviews many parents used expressions such as “an added bonus”, “a nice extra”, “an extra benefit” or “an additional plus” to describe the bilingual programme. The purpose of this chapter is to find out what parents believe this benefit, bonus or extra to be. It emerged from the research interviews that the benefits they expect to receive are not primarily linguistic, instead referring mostly to the secondary value of language learning. As such, language learning, and particularly German language learning, does not have a particular value in itself but is seen as a booster for a range of benefits such as cognitive development, career and travel opportunities, influence on other languages and awareness of diversity. The English-only clientele in particular associate bilingualism or second language learning with people who do not have an English-speaking background.

This chapter is organised as follows: First, it describes how parents regard language learning as an aid to create an advantage for their children, looking at the factors of cognitive development, career and travel opportunities, awareness of diversity and generic language learning benefits. Following this, an analysis of parents’ attitudes towards the primary value of language learning is presented, looking at these from both sides of the spectrum: positively (i.e. identity and communication with family) and negatively (e.g. language learning as an immigrant and Aboriginal phenomenon). In particular, the role of the German language is discussed. The chapter then closes with a discussion of what bilingual early childhood education means to parents at this point in time.

### **8.1 Creating an advantage: Non-language specific values of language learning**

#### **8.1.1 Cognitive development**

Brain development was by far the most frequently identified benefit of the bilingual programme. This point emerged multiple times in every interview and the examples constitute only a small sample of relevant excerpts which demonstrate parents’ attitudinal position (see Excerpts 90–95). However, the fundamental benefit of enhanced cognition is also evident in excerpts documenting other beliefs below (e.g. Excerpts 114 or 117).

**Excerpt 90**

I think it's good. The more, the more she learns at this stage, the more intelligent she'll be when she's older. [...] I think it's a good thing, because it tests her brain, you know. (Bernard, English-only)

**Excerpt 91**

You know all the research about brains and the elasticity of brains and those connections and things, I think adding another language to that is just only ever beneficial. (Jean, English-only)

**Excerpt 92**

It just, um, expands their mind, their abilities, their knowledge, recognition. (Patrick, English-only)

**Excerpt 93**

It is very important. I mean at her age, like, what the brain has to do to cope with another language, like in terms of her mental development. [...] I think that's really good for their brain. (Sonja, German)

**Excerpt 94**

I think it helps their um just general cognitive skills, you know. I think he did well at school for a number of reasons, not just because of that, but I'm sure it helped. It's certainly not gonna hurt @@@. (Sally, English-only)

**Excerpt 95**

I didn't ever expect that he would learn a second language in the time that he would be there. I didn't think, he would come away being fluent or something. But I did think that it would give him.. um, I think I read this on the survey, but I think.. I think it helps with your brain development, your mind development, your cognitive development to know that there are other languages out there. (Crystal, English-only)

Parents believe that bilingual education will make their children “more intelligent” (Excerpt 90), and that it “expands their mind” (Excerpt 92), possibly resulting in success at school (Excerpt 94). When elaborating on their view of bilingual early childhood education, none of the parents above refer to language acquisition, not to mention age-appropriate proficiency. Crystal (Excerpt 95) explains, tellingly, that she does not expect her child to acquire German, but that she still regards the bilingual programme as worthwhile due to the anticipated cognitive growth. Interestingly, she refers to the research questionnaire, on which the benefit of brain development was mentioned, or so she

believes. In fact, the survey did not list cognitive advantages as an option for the participants to tick. It did list academic, cultural and career-related benefits, as well as the option that it increases opportunities and that it is well regarded in Australian society. King and Fogle (2006) discuss parents' references to research findings and how they use these to inform or second their bilingual education choice. As this example shows, some of that research – or at least the source of research dissemination – may well be imagined.

Hence, the data presented here shows how the stimulation of children's brains was held in high regard by parents, without specifically expecting language benefits. The expected benefit of improved brain development through exposure to more than one language is an attitude towards language learning which is detached from any ethnic or linguistic affiliation as it is not considered to provide access to valued linguistic resources, but rather to cognitive resources. As outlined in Chapter 5, this is also what Fritzkidz brochures alluded to. They did not advertise German as a specific language, but as an accompanying "head-start", which exactly captures parental expectations: making sure their children are well-placed in the anticipated competition with other children. It may well be that Crystal had sourced the assumed research linking bilingualism with cognitive benefits from Fritzkidz brochures. It is certainly the case that both parents and Fritzkidz operate in a discursive space that constructs language learning not as intrinsically valuable but as associated with enhanced cognition.

Apart from enhanced cognitive skills, which were both valued by parents and stressed by Fritzkidz, career opportunities were also heavily emphasised in Fritzkidz marketing materials (see Chapter 4.1) as well as highly regarded by parents. Career opportunities as a secondary benefit of language learning are discussed more closely in the following section.

### **8.1.2 Career opportunities**

Parents regarded second language learning as a skill which gives their children an advantage in their future professional lives (see Excerpts 96–100).

#### **Excerpt 96**

Well, I think, I think learning a second language is good. I think learning a second language as an AUSTRALIAN is really good, 'cause we don't do it. Historically we don't do it. Um.. it opens up opportunities for you. It makes travel different for you, when you get older, it makes the

idea of a job different for you, when you get older. Um, you know, if you want to- and I'm not sort of thinking about his employment in any other way than down the track at some point, he's probably gonna have to get a job, because, you know, unless we win the lottery @ @he's gonna have to work and I'm not gonna be around for him@. So, being not more complicated than that, should you wanna pack up tomorrow and go and get a job in South America as an Australian, um there are barriers and, you know, language is a huge barrier, huge barrier. Um, but if you are an Australian, who is good at Spanish and you wanna go and get a job in South America, fine. Fantastic. You know, if you wanna go and get a job in Portugal- Well, Spanish isn't Portuguese, but, you know, there are similarities in there and you're not learning from scratch. You go and do it. (Hamish, English-only)

**Excerpt 97**

As I said, our son's background is partly German. He needs the language to connect with his German family and culture. More generally, more jobs and careers highly value bilingual or multilingual candidates. I feel that it does provide a competitive advantage, and at university level a second language may be needed for postgraduate study. (Iris, German)

**Excerpt 98**

I mean, professionally it will open up, if she wants to, it can open up possibilities for her. I mean it has for me being able to speak another language reasonably fluently. (Sonja, German)

**Excerpt 99**

And while it's good to learn it, and again I think it helps with your grammar, it's nice to be able to speak a little when you go overseas. I just think if you have a job, like a job, you know, in the future and you know Mandarin, it's not gonna do any harm. Because you certainly, you know, who knows, he might be a teacher and he won't need a language. But he might, you know, as well be in business or in whatever. And it would help to be able to deal with people in their native language. (Rachel, English-only)

**Excerpt 100**

Moritz is her stepfather, she has a deutsche Oma ((*German grandma*)), cousins, two more uncles, you know, and to allow Erika- to give Erika that opportunity for

jobs in the future, you know? If she cannot only speak German, but if she can WRITE in German um at a higher level, or a high level, then isn't that wonderful? What kind of opportunities can be open for her? (Kelly, German)

Kelly (Excerpt 100), a mother from a German-speaking family, shows the common motivation of parents: to equip their children with skills for future competitiveness. She even expresses her wish for her child to acquire both German-English bilingualism and biliteracy, which goes far beyond the scope of an early childhood centre. Not only Kelly, but most other parents too expressed several motives for language learning, which are evident in many quotes. As a result, these quotes, although placed in one section, may exhibit motives described in other sections as well. Rachel's quote (Excerpt 99) in this section, for example, also demonstrates parents' attitude towards language learning as a facilitator to improve other languages, such as English or other LOTEs (as discussed in Section 8.1.5). Hamish (Excerpt 96) mentions a whole range of attitudes, including the view of language learning as vital for Australians, presumably English-background speakers, a notion that challenges Australia's monolingual mindset.

In terms of professional advantages, parents use expressions such as “competitive advantage” (Excerpt 97) or “open up possibilities” (Excerpt 98) when referring to language learning to demonstrate what they most desire from the programme. The emergence of an attitude towards language learning that places high value on career advantages is unsurprising seen against the backdrop of previous research (see Chapter 2.1.2). However, in contrast to other studies, parents at the German-English childcare provider Fritzkidz have little expectation or even desire for their children to learn the German language. For instance, Rachel (Excerpt 99) expresses her attitude in a rather unenthusiastic fashion: “it's not gonna do any harm”. A similar lack of motivation is also expressed by Sally (Excerpt 94), for example: “It's certainly not gonna hurt”. Parents' inertia is evident too in other attitudes described below.

The only exceptions to “using” bilingualism to enhance career opportunities were Conny and Regina (see Excerpts 120 and 121 below in Section 8.2.1). On the other hand, Hamish (Excerpt 96) does not exemplify his attitude with the German language, but with Spanish and Portuguese, and Rachel (Excerpt 99) cites Chinese. This suggests that parents may not envision their children actually speaking German in the future (see also below). It also

indicates that German does not have the same value as Spanish, Portuguese or Chinese in terms of career considerations. Sally (Excerpt 101), for example, made this clear:

**Excerpt 101**

Mandarin would be great if they could learn that. That would open up all kinds of possibilities for them in the future. You have to think of the future, you know? What language will be in business or what will be good for them. I would- If they could learn Mandarin and Spanish, I think they would be doing pretty good @@ (Sally, English-only)

Again, Chinese and Spanish emerge as highly valued languages in regards to career opportunities. The results show that parents in a German-English childcare centre do value bilingualism, but they value bilingualism in English and Chinese or English and Spanish more than bilingualism in German and English. German is not regarded as useful for business or commercial exchange.

In sum, while regarding language learning as an aid to prepare their children for their future professional lives, parents differentiate between different bilingualisms. Although German-English bilingualism is typically not of low value in the scope of differential bilingualism (see Chapter 5.3.5), in the present context it is, as German does not confer the professional advantage parents desire. This phenomenon is not limited to career advantages. A similar discrepancy is brought to light in the section below.

### **8.1.3 Travel opportunities**

Travel-related reasons were also emphasised frequently in regards to how language learning might open opportunities in children's lives (see Excerpts 102–105). The fact that 31 per cent of Australian residents travel overseas each year (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010b) helps to understand why parents are interested in facilitating their children's travel opportunities at this stage.

**Excerpt 102**

You know, so it gives them choices in life. Travelling, it's always nice to speak languages. (Rachel, English-only)

**Excerpt 103**

And, I hope he travels when he gets older, so I think it's good to have another language. (Crystal, English-only)

**Excerpt 104**

And that way, you know, you are so curious. You might want to visit the country, you know. And then there's all these traditions and food and art and, you know, the weather. Everything is different everywhere you go. So, it's learning, but it's in a fun way, so hopefully they will be open and, you know, more willing to travel and- It's also sometimes about adapting yourself, when you are used to different food and languages and cultures, you adapt better. (Monica, LOTEoG)

**Excerpt 105**

You know, there are so many reasons why a person might want to travel and learn a language, but I think it's a good thing. And I hope that, yeah, they'll find it easier because of what they've been exposed to. I consider them ahead of a child, who has never really heard another language. (Lara, English-only)

The data demonstrates how parents are interested in fostering an interest in traveling in their children: "I hope he travels when he gets older" (Excerpt 103). Against this background, learning a language is regarded as beneficial: "hopefully they will be open and, you know, more willing to travel" (Excerpt 104). Lara (Excerpt 105) explicitly states that she considers her children to be "ahead" of others, thus emphasising parents' pre-eminent expectation of competitiveness, which is the underlying motive for seeking the benefits associated with bilingualism. Or as Rachel (Excerpt 102) puts it: "it gives them choices in life". Although none of the parents actually refers to travelling to a German-speaking country, they regard bilingual education as beneficial for future travel options. This is encapsulated in the following quote from Lara (Excerpt 106), who explained why she is happy that her child, who recently started primary school, is learning Italian there instead of German. (German was not an option at the school anyway).

**Excerpt 106**

I was quite happy for it to be something different. Um, if it had been German, I would have been happy, too. I myself, if I was to live in either of those countries, I'd probably choose Italy. Not to be rude. I've been to Germany and I loved it there, but I particularly like Italy. So, I think, if learning a language influences them to travel and live somewhere someday, I'd rather visit them in Rome than Berlin. (Lara, English-only)

Lara explains how she would prefer her son to travel to Italy rather than to Germany in the future. Consequently, the excerpt suggests that German is not only less valued than a Chinese language, Spanish or Portuguese in regards to business considerations; it is also less valued in regards to travel opportunities.

In sum, parents value bilingual education for its effect on children's opportunities to travel later in life, whereas travelling to a German-speaking country is not necessarily anticipated. Yet again, this shows parents' focus on non-language-specific goals over learning German in particular. Apart from expecting a boost in their children's cognitive development, opening job and travel opportunities, parents also regard language learning as a medium to facilitate awareness of diversity, different languages and cultures. This is examined in the following section.

#### **8.1.4 Facilitating awareness**

Parents from all three categories (German, LOTeOG, English-only) felt that the exposure to a bilingual environment would also increase children's awareness of diversity in terms of other languages and cultures, as the following excerpts (107–109) demonstrate:

##### **Excerpt 107**

Well, I guess language aside, it's exposure to a different culture and just get for them to see that it's not just, you know, everything is just one way, you know, that life is a mixture, you know. The world is a mixture, which is good, you know. (Audrey, English-only)

##### **Excerpt 108**

Um, already now she has a sense of cultural difference um and, you know, and that certain languages are spoken in other countries. So, although she's never been to Germany, she talks about Germany and speaking German. So, there's a greater awareness of the world that she already has through having been exposed to another language at school. (Sonja, German)

##### **Excerpt 109**

You know, for me it's just so they know that there ARE other languages. You know, they are so young. They have to realise that other people do speak in other ways. Just to get exposure. It's a good start in life to know that there are other languages and to have a bit of a go at them, yeah. (Bernard, English-only)

**Excerpt 110**

Hey, it's good for them to understand at least that there are other languages. That little basic understanding is enough, I guess. I mean, 'cause I just think they're not going to continue. Well, obviously Gus hasn't been @continuing on@, so I think they're not going to. (Sally, English-only)

**Excerpt 111**

Um, so, it's um, I guess, probably the main thing is that there are different ways of speaking, that English isn't the only way of speaking. That's probably the most important thing. [...] So it's more than just the bilingualism, I suppose. It's the exposure to different cultures through the teachers. (Steven, English-only)

**Excerpt 112**

And like I don't have that kind of language experience and I just thought, even if he doesn't carry on with German, like we knew it's unlikely once he goes to school, because there's a gap in that kind of opportunity, I suppose, it will open his world up to other languages, other cultures, other ways of thinking. [...] Egan has picked up words and phrases and things and I think it just opened his mind up to that there are other people on the planet and they do things differently and it's exciting. [...] But I think it just opens their minds to the world and that's very good. It turns the preschool, which could be a very insular kind of inward-looking experience into something that's much larger. And I think that's good. (Jean, English-only)

These excerpts demonstrate parents' highly positive view of the bilingual programme. Jean, who is particularly affirmative, describes the bilingual centre as more open, exciting and life-enriching (Excerpt 112) than mainstream centres. She expresses the benefit of increased awareness of diversity by referring to opening children's minds. Other parents describe their children's gains as "a sense of cultural difference", "greater awareness" (Excerpt 108) or "exposure to different cultures" (Excerpt 111).

As undeniably positive as these attitudes are, they are also strikingly modest in scope. Once again, the fact that parents described their attitudes through the use of expressions like "language aside" or "it's more than just the bilingualism" demonstrates the salience of bilingualism in the abstract over German-English bilingualism in particular. Parents did not strive for age-appropriate bilingual competence, either because it was less desirable or

because they saw no realistic way to achieve it (e.g. Excerpt 112 or also Chapter 7). In addition to disregarding language goals, parents' expectations in regards to the cultural aspect of diversity awareness are equally undiscerning. Parents use expressions such as "it's just so they know" or "that little basic understanding is enough". Another expression underlining parents' non-committal attitudes is the frequently used term "exposure" to another language to raise cultural and linguistic awareness and to gain the benefits they associate with this. This exposure is all that parents aspire to, as in Sally's case (Excerpt 110). And as in Bernard's case (Excerpt 109), their intention behind exposing their children to difference is to provide "a good start in life", which repeatedly brings to light the overarching motive of creating an advantage. Thus, for these parents bilingual education is really only about exposure and awareness, with no expectation of more ambitious outcomes such as intercultural competence for example. On one hand, this attitude is remarkably lacking in aspiration. On the other hand, parents actually consider it important to challenge an ethnocentric upbringing. As non-committal as this attitude sounds, it is a step towards challenging Australia's monolingual mindset (see Chapter 2.2) on a planned basis and as such demonstrates some attitudinal progress. In part, the same applies to another striking parental attitude, namely that bilingual early childhood education has an impact on other language development or language learning in the future, which is outlined in the following section.

### **8.1.5 Proxy for other languages**

Finally, parents also expressed the belief that early language learning enhances children's ability to learn or improve other languages. Some parents favour its influence on their children's English (see Excerpt 114 below and Excerpt 99 in Section 8.1.2 above), while others favour German-English education due to the fact that it may facilitate the acquisition of other languages in the future. Thus, bilingual education is regarded as a linguistic value. And yet, as it is regarded neither as an intrinsic nor as a German-specific value, but rather as a proxy, it represents an attitude towards language learning which is still focussed on its secondary value (see Excerpts 113–117).

#### **Excerpt 113**

That's why I think, if she's down here and they're listening to different languages, the two different languages, I think, even in the future if she decides to pick up a totally different language, Spanish, French, Irish, whatever it is, I think that helps that they've been exposed to it, you know. I think it, you know, just sets something up in the

brain, which makes it easier. I might be wrong, but I don't think I am, yeah. (Audrey, English-only)

**Excerpt 114**

And obviously there is this cognitive development benefit, but also you understand your own language a lot better. I am a lot more sensitive as an English speaker, um, through learning another one, too. So, it's- Your English improves or I find mine gets worse actually, but um @ but I think for @most people, it's actually, you can@, you know, your understanding of language per se and of your own language and so forth also improves, you're not just learning, you know, someone else's. And then the more you learn, the easier it becomes to learn more. (Arthur, German)

**Excerpt 115**

And I do believe that you can then ADD another language later a little bit easier if you need, so- or want to. Because you started getting that- you know, those clocks working in your brain. (Kendall, English-only)

**Excerpt 116**

I mean, already Marco, I can get him to count to ten in Spanish and German and English, it's, you know. And he'll have Italian next year. And then on top of that, it's more about developing those mental pathways of understanding how language works and multiple languages work with the hope that, should he choose to study a language later on or live or work in another country, it will come more naturally to him. (Lara, English-only)

**Excerpt 117**

Well, I think their brains are starting to mould into a state, where they are more receptive to learning additional languages from that early exposure. (Steven, English-only)

The data demonstrates two recurring attitudes towards bilingual early childhood education. One is that parents value language learning, but not specifically learning German: “in the future if she decides to pick up a totally different language” (Audrey, Excerpt 113), “another language later” (Kendall, Excerpt 115), “choose to study a language later” (Lara, Excerpt 116). Again, German is seen as a tool to achieve other goals such as improving children’s English (Arthur, Excerpt 114) or, ironically, to learn another language later on. Parents do not anticipate that their children will continue with German in the future, but they expect their children to learn another language as part of their school education.

Additionally, parents such as Jean, Kendall or Lara refer to the future (“later” or “in the future”), which again emphasises the overarching value that parents ascribe to language learning: facilitating their children’s lives by creating an advantage for them. Most parents also cite enhanced brain development (see Section 8.1.1 above) as a reason to explain this expected benefit, for example: “it’s more about developing those mental pathways” (Lara, Excerpt 116).

In summary, all parental motives stem from a desire to create an advantage for their children. The bonus parents see in language learning is not the learning of German per se; rather, it is a variety of positive outcomes associated with language learning in general, unrelated to the specific language that is being learnt, and focused on the secondary, non-language-related, value of language learning. This was exclusively the case for English-only and LOTEoG parents, and mainly, but not exclusively, the case for German-speaking parents. The latter also considered the primary value of language learning and maintenance, which is outlined in the section below.

## **8.2 The role of German: Language-specific values of language learning**

### **8.2.1 Identity and family communication**

As outlined above, the secondary value of language learning was a strong factor for all parents, including most German-speaking parents (see Excerpts 97, 98 and 100 above). However, in contrast to the non-German-speaking clientele, economic, cognitive or travel-related goals were not the German-speaking parents’ predominant reason for choosing a bilingual German-English upbringing. These parents were chiefly motivated by the primary value of language learning, namely to learn or maintain the German language, which was the reason all German-speaking parents specifically sought out FritzkiDz based on its bilingual programme rather than selecting an English-only centre. A prevalent reason why they wanted their children to learn German was communication with family in Germany as well as for identity-related motives (see Excerpts 118 and 119).

#### **Excerpt 118**

Ähm, ich hab da so noch gar nicht drüber nachgedacht, aber jetzt denke ich, ja, dass sie ihre deutschen Wurzeln vergessen irgendwie. /Ich will, dass sie sich/ mit ihren deutschen Verwandten ganz normal unterhalten können wie sie sich in Englisch unterhalten. (Regina, German)

*Um, I haven't really thought about that, but now I think, yeah, that they forget their German roots somehow. /I want them/ to be able to communicate with their German relatives quite naturally, just as they communicate in English.*

**Excerpt 119**

Ich finde es ist ein Teil- Es ist ein großer Teil von mir und und auch ähm.. Da es ein Teil von mir ist, ist es auch ein Teil von ihnen, weil sie sind von mir und ähm, und ich hoffe auch mal in die Schweiz zu gehen und dann sehen sie ja das Ganze und ähm, ja es wäre schon wichtig, dass dass .. Ja, das die das behalten haben. [...] Warum? .. Weil es ist Teil ihrer Identität, finde ich. Ja, es gehört zu ihnen. Sie sind nicht einfach Aussies. Sie sind halb Schweizer. Also es ist ähm- und und das bringt ja auch Vorteile, wenn sie ähm- Ja, es bringt Vorteile: das ganze Denken ist anders, man hat hoffentlich ein bisschen mehr an Toleranz für verschiedene- Wenn wenn man andere Kulturen versteht, dann ist es das ist nicht nur diese Kultur sondern auch andere Kulturen, andere Länder ähm, andere Art und Weisen und ähm, .. vielleicht HSC Noten, später beruflich, wenn sie mal- Mein Beruf ist ja so was zu unterrichten. Für sie muss nicht Lehrerin sein, könnte ja irgendetwas anderes sein mit Sprachen. Aber es es kann helfen ähm.. mit den mit mit Berufen. (Jennifer, German)

*I think it's a part- It's a part of me and also um- Because it's a part of me, it's also a part of them, because they are mine and um, and I hope to go to Switzerland and then they see the whole thing and um, yeah, it would be important that that that.. Yeah, that they maintain it. [...] Why? .. Because it is part of their identity, I think. Yeah, it's part of them. They are not just Aussies. They are half-Swiss. So, it's um- and there are advantages as well, if they um- Yeah, there are advantages: The whole thinking is different, hopefully one has more tolerance for different- If one understands different cultures, it's not only this culture but different cultures, other countries, um, others ways of being and um, .. maybe HSC marks, later professionally, if they- My job is to teach stuff like that. It doesn't have to be teaching for them, it could be something else with languages. But it can help um.. with jobs.*

Jennifer (Excerpt 119) also refers to future advantages such as career considerations. On the other hand, two German-speaking parents, Conny and Regina (Excerpts 120 and 121), explicitly remove career-related benefits from their considerations and purely focus on German language learning.

**Excerpt 120**

Erstens ähm, Sprache ist für mich ein ganz starker Teil von Identität. Ähm, und sich auch- und nicht nur eine Sprache zu sprechen sondern sich auch PRÄZISE in einer Sprache

ausdrücken zu können und in dieser präzise wirklich auch zu denken. Ähm das ist mein Steckenpferd, @da kann ich auch noch was dazu sagen. @ Also ich hab mich viel mit dem Thema Sprache und Denken und Identitätsentwicklung zusammen- äh auseinandergesetzt. Also als Teil der Identität. [...] Also ich, da ich die Sprache bei ihr nicht fördere für die KARRIERE, relativ EGAL, äh sondern auch vor einer Identitätshintergrund und so weiter und so fort. Ich mache da die Chancenrechnung äh sozusagen, die BENEFITS sagen wir vielleicht eher, äh ich will, dass sie die Sprache gut lernt. (Conny, German)

*Firstly um, language is a very strong part of identity for me. Um, and to- not to only speak a language, but to be able to express oneself CONCISELY in one language and to also think in it concisely. Um, this is my pet issue, @ I can say more about this. @ So, I have grappled with this subject of language and reasoning and development of identity. So, as a part of identity. [...] Well I, as I don't support her language for her career, relatively IRRELEVANT, um but also because of identity and so forth. I make the opportunity calculation so to say, let's rather say the BENEFITS, um, I want that she learns the language well.*

#### **Excerpt 121**

Aber es ist für mich, ja, nicht so wichtig, dass ich denke, dass ich jetzt ihre Berufschancen damit verbessere. (Regina, German)

*But for me it's like, yeah, not that important that I think I can improve their career opportunities with this.*

As evident in Excerpt 118, Regina has not questioned her reasons for why she wants her children to maintain German. It is self-explanatory for her. Equally self-explanatory for her are the limitations of German-English bilingualism. She does not regard German as an asset in terms of providing an advantage for her children in regards to job opportunities. Conny, on the other hand, explains that she specifically looked into the subject of bilingualism and, as a result, came to the same conclusion. However, apart from these two mothers, no other parent excluded professional or other utilitarian benefits from their considerations. Overall, in contrast to non-German-speaking parents, German-speaking parents aimed for bilingualism first and foremost, while most also placed great importance on its secondary value. Likewise, amongst others, Shannon and Milian (2002), who examined parents in a Spanish-English dual language programme in the US (see Chapter 2.1), found that minority parents in a bilingual programme valued bilingualism more than did majority parents. Thus, differing from non-German speakers in this respect is not uncommon and echoes findings from previous studies.

Whereas acquiring German-English bilingualism was German-speaking parents' primary goal, other parents felt very different about the value of learning German. The following section sheds light on English-speaking parents' lack of ambition to achieve German proficiency.

### **8.2.2 Investing in learning German: It wouldn't make any sense**

Learning or maintaining German was important for German-speaking parents only. This coincides with the attitudes of some English-speaking parents, who regarded the acquisition of a second language and the effort required to develop it as relevant for minority language speakers, but not as important for majority language speakers (see Excerpts 122–125).

#### **Excerpt 122**

I think, if it's part of your culture, you know, you have family, then that's [driving to another suburb and paying school fees] worth doing, but yeah, that's not our situation. (Steven, English-only)

#### **Excerpt 123**

I think I mentioned, they only ended up there, just because @they couldn't fit into@ any other one. It wasn't really intentional to send them there. It's not like we have family ties that they need to learn German or something, you know, like some other- I know there are a lot of other families there that really do want them to speak German, because they're from there or whatever and I bet that was important to them, but that wasn't really the reason for sending them. (Sally, English-only)

#### **Excerpt 124**

It's, I think it's probably a stronger component for German speaking families, who come out here and want to keep their child, you know, in touch with that language and, um, you know, in German-speaking people and keep that going. It's probably a stronger motive for them than it is for people like us, who aren't German and don't have a very, you know, we got some German friends, but don't have a strong connection to Germany, so it's not that important to us. [...] When you can go and try to enrol him into the German school up in Terrey Hills, you know, @but why@ would I want to do that, you know? Yeah, it wouldn't make any sense. I mean, if I was gonna live in Germany or something like that, yeah, we'd do it, but it

just doesn't make any sense. It's just no real driver to it.  
(Patrick, English-only)

**Excerpt 125**

Given that none of us speaks another language, and aren't looking to work overseas as such or unlikely to, then for us it's not a priority. [...] Um, I wouldn't say it's so important that they HAVE to learn a second language. Because I think, if you make them learn something in an environment in Australia, where most- a lot of people don't speak a second language and have actually got to go out of their way to learn it. So, it's not in their normal /lives/, then they have to really be interested and want to do it. If it's around you and, you know, people speak all the different languages, then it is partly necessity.  
(Megan, English-only)

In these excerpts parents argue that there is no reason for their children to acquire German, because they do not “have family ties” (Sally, Excerpt 123 or Bernard, Excerpt 129 below). Steven and Patrick reason that investing in sending their children to a German school in one of Sydney's rather remote suburbs “wouldn't make any sense” (Excerpt 124) for them as families without ties to a German-speaking country, whereas it was “worth doing” (Excerpt 122) for German families. By regarding second language learning for English background families as *not important*, but *necessary* for minorities, parents (also Megan, Excerpt 125) express persistent Australian language attitudes: insignificance versus necessity, which perceives bilingual competence as an “immigrant and an Aboriginal phenomenon” (Lo Bianco, 1997, p. 113). Yet again, this reflects Australia's monolingual mindset, and shows that it is also present in bilingual early childhood centres. Non-German-speaking parents value non-language specific outcomes, while the primary value, that of acquiring German-English proficiency, is not desired.

### **8.2.3 Associations of trustworthiness and good organisation**

I have argued in the first section of this chapter that the most prevalent attitudes towards language learning at FritzkiDz were characterised by indifference towards one of the two languages present in the bilingual programme, namely, German. Clyne (1991a) reports that English-speaking parents in South Australia and Victoria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century frequently chose bilingual German-English or French-English schools for their children because they were attracted by the high standard of education offered at these schools. Although German and bilingual education in general had a different status in the 19<sup>th</sup> century,

parents at that time too seem to have focused on non-language-related educational benefits rather than the German language per se. Similarly, in the present study German was not important as a language; rather, the image parents had about a German-English centre sometimes became important for them (see Excerpts 126–128).

**Excerpt 126**

And um, I guess, my impression of Germans in general is of @efficiency and organisation and@, you know, I actually thought, you know, looking at the policy structure and how everything was organised, I was quite happy with that. (Megan, English-only)

**Excerpt 127**

Could be Spanish, could be- I mean, probably because of the German, German people are quite, you know, organised and I like @ I like the fact that, you know, they know what they do, bam bam bam. So, you know, probably more Italian or more Spanish would be like @ over the moon, but yeah, probably. I would have chosen as well. But they are very very organised. (Monica, LOTEoG)

**Excerpt 128**

Na vielleicht auch, weil es von Deutschen organisiert ist, keine Ahnung. So ich hab da ein bisschen mehr Vertrauen zu als mit den „Kangaroos and Koalas“ [mainstream childcare provider]. (Regina, German)

*Well, maybe also because it's organised by Germans, I don't know. That way, I trust it a bit more than the "Kangaroos and Koalas" [mainstream childcare provider].*

Megan and Monica (Excerpts 126 and 127) regard the German-run centres as more organised and Regina (Excerpt 128) considers it to be more trustworthy than other centres. These excerpts do not show an interest in learning the German language offered. Rather, they reveal that parents are attracted by the fact that the centres are run by a German company. In this case, the bilingual programme functioned as a language-specific, yet secondary benefit of language learning, as its appeal was not based on learning the language, but on the cultural stereotype it represents.

Apart from the fact that the idea of a German-run centre had a positive effect on parents and that German-speaking parents desired bilingualism in German and English for their children, the primary value of language learning was strikingly irrelevant for the majority of

the clientele. A final reason and its implications constitute the concluding parts of this chapter.

#### **8.2.4 The German language does not matter**

Although parents appreciated the secondary value of language learning, the primary value of language learning was not of interest for non-German-speaking parents. None of them expressed in their interviews that the offered language, German, was important to them. Bilingual education in general was considered to achieve benefits such as interdependence, cultural and linguistic awareness, and especially cognitive development, and thus, learning *any* language was regarded as beneficial (see Excerpts 129–132).

##### **Excerpt 129**

But I would like to take her- get in a school where they do A [ei] foreign language. Probably German. Probably the easiest one. I'm not too fussed which one it is. /If/ she's got another one, you know, it's a good thing to learn, isn't it? A second language, yeah. [...] For me, you know, we're not German and we don't come from Germany, so for me: any language as long as it's not English. Just anything. It's just LEARNING for me. You know, get the brain going a bit. And also, as you know, as you learn one European language, they have all some root of- they're very similar, right? So if you get some grounding in one language, then it'll just help her in the future. (Bernard, English-only)

##### **Excerpt 130**

I had no clue as to what languages were around. Um, I didn't care. I just wanted him exposed to other languages, 'cause I wasn't when I was a kid and, um, none of us were, like no Australian. So, um, I didn't start learning languages until I was eleven. So, so I thought, "Get him in, get him exposed to different languages". So, I had a look around and there was nothing there and especially not in the area, and I said to them, "I don't mind sending him to Hillside". There was a Chinese bilingual day care centre up there. Doesn't worry me. He'll probably be the only white kid in it, but what does that matter? So, so there was there and this one came up in the search and this was my first choice, because of location. It was just- It was easy. It was bilingual and close, so that was both boxes ticked. [...] But, you know, if I had the choice of twenty different languages, I don't know if German would be my first choice for bilingual education,

um. I don't know what my first choice would be. Probably something that is.. more widely spoken, just because you'd probably have the opportunity to use it more. So, Spanish, um.. maybe Mandarin or I don't know which one. Don't know. (Hamish, English-only)

**Excerpt 131**

I thought one of the things, it's not about the language, it's about to be open to other cultures. I think is important. [...] So, you know, it was more about that than about the German. Because I mean for him, we are not German, we don't need to speak German. It's like, I have a friend who speaks German, but I don't really. So if it was French or anything, it would be the same kind of thing. I mean, I don't really like French, I have to say. So I prefer German over French. But you know what I mean? It's not like it was GERMAN, it HAS to be German. It was just more about the cultural thing, about, um, yeah, the kind of people in Australia that would learn another language. (Jasmine, LOTEoG)

**Excerpt 132**

And it doesn't really bother me which second language they learn, just as long as they are exposed to a second language. So Daphne doesn't do German now, but she does Chinese at school. It would have been nice if she could have continued the German, but yeah, it's the fact that she's learning A [ei] second language that's the important thing for me. (Steven, English-only)

In the data presented here, parents express the sentiment that the German language is nothing more than one of many possible tools by stating that they expect language learning to offer some extra stimulus, but the language does not matter. Steven and Bernard (Excerpts 132 and 129) emphasise that learning “A [ei]” language other than English is important to them, not specifically German. Any language could do the job. Thus, Hamish explains that if he had the choice between German and other languages for bilingual education, he may prefer other languages over German (Excerpt 130) and Jasmine argues that “it's not about the language” (Excerpt 131). What is important to her is to be surrounded by people with similar values, such as people who also think that learning languages is important. The fact that parents are only concerned about the secondary value of language learning, and that German itself is not important to them, also renders the term “target language” an inappropriate term for this study. Whereas it is usual for parents to expect their children to learn the second language offered at a bilingual programme (see

Chapter 2.1.2), for parents at Fritzkidz this is not a goal. The language is merely a catalyst to attain the other benefits that parents seek.

Although German-speaking parents purposefully chose Fritzkidz because of the German language, they are also attracted by the notion of extending their children's language repertoire to other languages. At this stage in their children's bilingual education their focus is on German, but looking forward to the future and subject choices at school, German becomes less of a priority, reflecting the attitude of non-German speakers in the early years. Thus, although parents want their children to learn a LOTE at school, German is not necessarily of prime importance (see also Chapter 7.3). Excerpts 133–135 below are all from German-speaking families.

**Excerpt 133**

But if, for instance, if we took um Hillside Grammar or the, um, environments where some of the teaching is done in French and in English. You know, we're German speakers, but it doesn't- In terms of the benefits of multilingualism for the growing brain, it could, you know, diversify our language. (Janice, German)

**Excerpt 134**

I'd like her to learn another language. Whether she continues with German or, you know, she would learn French or Chinese at school. That would be fantastic as well. (Sonja, German)

**Excerpt 135**

You know, if they continue to grow up bilingually, it would make much more sense for a school language to be a third language. [...] And, you know, it's also a bit of ghettoization, too. I mean, I'm happy for them to, you know, have German friends and so forth, but it's more to life than- I mean, as we said it's a big part of my life, but I think there's really a risk of becoming a bit enclosed in that environment. You know, that was another reason we thought it'll be useful for Austin to pick up Italian two days a week, you know. (Arthur, German)

German-speaking parents share the same ideas as non-German-speaking parents about diversifying children's exposure when they start school. Janice (Excerpt 133) cites cognitive development as a reason for possibly choosing another language over German. Sonja (Excerpt 134) likes the idea of continuing with German, but is equally fond of the idea of her child learning another language at school. And parents like Arthur (Excerpt

135) specifically consider reducing the amount of German around their children to avoid the limitations of a German-speaking environment. Interestingly, this fear of “Germanization” was also expressed by other parents (Excerpt 136).

**Excerpt 136**

The one thing, I also think that is really important to me and I think perhaps a German-speaking intern would also, this would also come out more, is that it's really important to me that the links between language and culture is not made so strong that kids who aren't German feel excluded. Because for us the German is not about being German. And Larissa is in no ways German and that's, she'll @never be German@, you know. And sometimes I get the feeling that Valentina [a German-speaking carer] kind of conflates them a bit and it's very much for her about her Konstanz childhood, you know, and the kind of books she's reading and, you know, I would like it to be quite internationalist, you know. Like it's lovely to celebrate um, you know, St. Martin and the Laterne ((*lantern*)), it's all fine, I mean we do all that Santa crap, but um it's important to me that it kind of retains that internationalist focus as well. And maybe having two German people there might make that more a problem. (Holly, English-only)

Even those who sought out Fritzkidz because of its bilingual programme (like Arthur and Holly) obviously appreciate German, but at the same time fear its cultural or linguistic constraints – either at the childcare centre or later at school. Considering Fritzkidz' bilingual programme planning and the dominance of English in carers' language choice (see Chapter 5), Germanization constitutes an imagined danger only. Considering the high attrition rate of German in Australia (see Chapter 1.3), language loss on the other hand is a real danger

In summary, the data shows that German-speaking parents appreciate the existence of the bilingual programme in the early years, but do not desire a strong or exclusive focus on German. Neither do other parents desire a heavy emphasis on German, since it is less attractive as a LOTE than other languages (see also Section 8.1.5) and their primary goal is to enrich their children in terms of the concomitants of languages. Thus, early childhood language learning and bilingualism is seen as an intellectual, cognitive and cultural resource rather than a linguistic resource in its own right. For the majority of parents, the German

language is completely detached from the value of bilingual education. The linguistic resource seems to be valued by German background speakers only and even they do not place a strong emphasis on German. It is nothing new to discover that parents value utilitarian motives in language learning or even that this is an attitude shared by many parents (Craig, 1996; Shin, 2000, see also Chapter 2). But the question that arises in this study is why it is that parents do not equate bilingual early childhood education with learning a language. If the non-German-speaking clientele do not perceive the value to be found in the language, what does bilingual German-English education mean to them then? This is discussed in the following section.

### **8.3 Conclusion: Competitiveness over German-English bilingualism**

This chapter has looked at parental attitudes towards language learning. In summary, attitudes towards the programme expressed in the interviews presented in this study revealed that Fritzkidz parents consider the bilingual programme as a bonus in terms of providing more opportunities in their children's later life, awareness of diversity, exposure to other languages and enhanced cognitive skills, equipping children with an advantage over others. Thus, the value of bilingual education as revealed in the present study is that it enriches children in a variety of ways, and attitudes to this non-language-specific bilingualism are very positive. Although most parents expressed an interest in bilingual education in general terms for their children, the majority did not expect – or even desire – that their children would actually learn German. At this stage, they were more interested in making use of language learning to achieve other goals which they consider more important. In contrast, German language skills are a strikingly insignificant aspect of parents' expectations. Moreover, in regards to language-specific bilingualism, German plays a vastly subordinate role: other languages such as Chinese languages, Spanish or Portuguese are preferred over German. As such, the data suggests indifference towards the German language in particular rather than towards bilingual education in general. Bilingual education in the abstract is highly valued.

Similarly, albeit to a different degree, such attitudes can be seen in university students studying German. Schmidt (2014), who examined Australian university students' motivation to learn German, found that students did have an affinity for German, but at the same time they considered the study of a LOTE to be beneficial in terms of adding value to their university degree. In that sense, the language is also seen as a secondary

benefit. In their study on urban schooling, Reay, Crozier, and James (2011, p. 28) found that parents regard ethnic diversity as an educative potential, which becomes a source of a new (multicultural) capital to “secure identity and opportunity”. They argue that “parents are *consciously* – or at least partially consciously – setting out to acquire valuable multicultural capital to better equip their children for an increasingly diverse global world” (Reay et al., 2011, p. 88) [emphasis in the original]. To a certain extent the same applies to the FritzkiDz clientele. Although the majority did not consciously seek out bilingual education initially, their attitudes towards language learning have developed to the point of regarding bilingual education as a tool to prepare their children for a competitive future, with the personal growth they experience by being enrolled in a bilingual programme viewed as a worthwhile asset. As Bourdieu argues, language and the symbolic capital it confers can be an instrument of power. However, in Australian society multilingualism is not, by and large, considered as a form of symbolic capital (see Chapter 2). General competitiveness through “brain power”, on the other hand, is highly valued, which is why cognitive development is one of the most prevalent reasons for second language learning for parents. “Ideologies of language are therefore not about language alone (Woolard, 1998), but are always socially situated and tied to questions of identity and power in societies” (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 246). Consequently, a general conclusion that emerges from these findings is that as long as languages are not valued and parents feel restricted to experiencing non-language-specific bilingual education in the early years only, bilingual education in this society is perceived as offering high-quality, intellectually stimulating education that is expected to result in enhanced capital, competitiveness and success.

Consequently, at this point in time bilingual education in the childcare sector in Sydney is not part of a language industry. Rather, it is part of a competitive parenting industry, where parents aim to equip their children with more skills, knowledge and cognitive growth to ensure an advantage in later life. Whether it is brain development, professional goals, expected benefits for later language learning and possibly better marks at school, parents are hoping for a head-start for their children. Similarly, Sydney’s early literacy and numeracy classes and school-readiness programs are booming. Parents aim to foster their preschool aged children’s brain development in order to protect them from “a lifetime of failure” (Marriner, 2014). Piller (2005, p. 614) refers to this hyper-parenting as “the unrelenting management of children’s lives in pursuit of child success as a measure of

parental achievement. Alongside classical music in the womb, swimming for newborns and toddler maths, bilingualism has definitely joined the markers of parental success. Childhood bilingualism is hip, a potential that must be tapped – no questions asked”. Interestingly, speaking another language, or speaking German in particular, is not regarded as conferring this competitive advantage, as foreign language proficiency is not prized in Australian society. Accordingly, the value of bilingual education shifts from the language itself, which could also be commodified in societies valuing multilingualism, to enrichment through cognitive, cultural or educational advantages. Under this new notion, bilingual early childhood education is based on the idea “that bilingual parenting is a way to make children more competitive because bilingualism is supposed to confer a cognitive advantage” (Piller, 2010, p. 116) as an increasingly evolving linguistic and parenting ideology.

The view that German is not important as a language but as a catalyst for brain development more generally sheds further light on the low continuation rates with German after Fritzkidz (see Chapter 7.3). Parents know that children will lose the language if it is not followed up, but they are not aiming for age-appropriate German competence. Curdt-Christiansen (2009), who studied Chinese immigrant parents’ family language policies in Canada, remarks that positive attitudes and high aspirations can be translated into investment in children’s education. By implication, the notoriously low expectations on the part of Fritzkidz parents’ in respect of German-English bilingualism do not translate into any further action. The prioritising of the cognitive benefits of language learning over acquiring fluency in the language also further elucidates the pressure perceived by Fritzkidz to change its identity from a German-English to a bilingual provider (see Chapter 5). The shift removed the focus on the language itself, with Fritzkidz now positioning itself instead as a mainstream institution with certain extra benefits over other centres – indeed just what parents seem to value.

This drags both the centres’ construction of identity and parental attitudes into a downward spiral. On one hand, Fritzkidz perceives parental attitudes to be unambitious and focussed on the secondary value of language learning, which leads them to tone their bilingual programme down in order to appeal to parents’ expectations. This means cutting back on the amount of German spoken at the centres, reducing the opportunities to be immersed in German and leading to a focus on non-language-specific outcomes. On the

other hand, the focus on non-language-specific outcomes influences parents' attitudes and keeps expectations of language proficiency low. They are aware that their children will not leave FritzkiDz as age-appropriate proficient German speakers; they are also aware that there is practically no opportunity to continue with the language at school. At this stage, disregarding language skills is a realistic approach for these parents, who instead use the opportunity to further their children's cognitive development, support their non-ethnocentric upbringing or provide a stepping stone for learning other languages. Thus, their attitudinal boundaries are circumscribed by language learning opportunities. But this is no one-way-street and parental attitudes and their opportunities are dialectically linked. One of these factors will have to be improved in order to break this spiral.

What implications does this have for bilingual early childhood education? At this point in time, there is a mismatch on two levels, which needs to be remedied: the status of language learning in general, and the status of German in particular. While the early childhood sector cannot realise change by itself, it may be able to play a supporting role in bringing about improvement. As I have already shown in Chapters 6 and 7, offering a language does little to attract parents to a childcare centre, but parents' attitudes towards language learning can change once they experience such a programme. The promotion of enrichment values can attract parents, and while the language itself will remain an insignificant element initially, the findings of this study suggest that language learning will develop into an increasingly valued resource. Thus, as long as languages are not valued in their own right, but only in terms of their secondary value, the expected benefits can be utilised to gradually redefine second language learning. To do so, bilingual education has to be offered widely, accessibly and affordably.

## 9 Conclusion

This thesis explored aspects of institutional bilingual education in the early childhood sector. Based on a variety of data sources and methodological triangulation, two different angles of early childhood education were investigated. The processes at work when establishing and implementing a bilingual programme were revealed by looking through both the institutional (Chapters 4 and 5) and private (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) lens. Specifically, Chapter 4 presented the background of the bilingual childcare provider and Chapter 5 analysed bilingual practices, routines, challenges and the centres' public display of identity. Chapter 6 then investigated who the Fritzkidz clientele is, where they are from, what languages they speak, how much they earn, how well they are educated and why they chose Fritzkidz as their children's childcare centre. Chapter 7 explored the importance of language learning for parents and what their expectations are for their children's future German language education. Chapter 8 presented the value parents place on bilingual education and on learning German in particular. This concluding chapter draws together the key findings based on the research questions that were investigated in this study (see Chapters 2 and 3), before discussing implications and possible areas for future research.

### 9.1 Language attitudes, ideologies and practices in bilingual German-English early childhood education

#### 9.1.1 Institutional practices

Chapters 4 and 5 were concerned with the institutional side of the research problem. The examination of the two Fritzkidz centres showed a lack of visibility of and commitment to the bilingual programme, which presented itself in many different facets. Firstly, there was an absence of interior design, decoration and information about the centres' bilingual German-English orientation. Hence, the centres did not make their bilingual background visible. This was also evident in the proportion of German-speaking staff: representing only around 25 per cent per room, German-speaking staff constituted a minority in the centres. Secondly, the noticeable absence of bilingualism was undergirded by organisational structures that also served to inadvertently undermine it. The aspects most obviously lacking were twofold: firstly, a clear language policy, which would have specified language goals and ways to achieve them; and secondly, any form of training in bilingual education for educators and directors: no staff member had been trained in bilingual

education before working at Fritzkidz, nor did they receive any training (internal or external) while being employed there. This lack of training combined with the absence of any language policy to refer to leaves educators unprepared and overstretched. This is true both for the designated English-speakers and, even more so, for the designated German-speakers. Hence, their attitudes towards bilingual education were not entirely positive. Some educators professed themselves to be somewhat in favour of bilingual education, but were also concerned about potential delays in children's general and language development. This is in contrast to key features of successful bilingual programmes that have been identified in the literature (see Chapter 2.1.1), such as positive educator attitudes towards bilingual education, a feasible language policy and training in bilingual education.

Chapter 5 then revealed further shortcomings which aggravate the deficiencies discovered in Chapter 4. Exploring the bilingual practices at Fritzkidz, the analysis shows that problems are not only rooted in the fact that the programme is only in its early stages but are also undergirded by the dominant socio-political context in which they are embedded. Specifically, Chapter 5 showed that Fritzkidz initially intended to implement a much stronger bilingual immersion model than was eventually realised. However, the actual conditions in which the centres operate did not allow them to realise this, causing them to adjust to a whole new spectrum of bilingual education – an approach that eschews an affiliation with the second language offered. To begin with, there are operative and administrative constraints such as early education and care regulations and the recognition of overseas trained educators. These regulations mandate childcare centres to employ staff with a training background that qualified early childhood educators from overseas do not have. In turn, the qualifications they do have are not recognised in Australia. Such regulations have a negative effect on bilingual childcare providers, who are left with almost no (qualified) staff. For providers offering a poorly maintained community language such as German, this hits particularly hard. In addition, there is no funding available for staff recruitment, staff training, policy development and the like. The result is evident in strong asymmetries regarding educators' language background and available resources. Hence, the 25 per cent ratio of German-speaking staff does not translate into a 75/25 partial immersion concept, since the ratio of German staff is further reduced by resource and staff asymmetries and resulting language practices. At the same time, asymmetries and educators' language practices are based on the unequal value of languages in Australian society and its education system. Fritzkidz educators are alive to the fact that early

childhood curriculum and standards subordinate language learning to other academic and developmental skills such as literacy, numeracy and fine motor skills.

The result of this subordination is two-fold. Firstly, it leads educators to focus on non-language-related skills more than on immersing children in the German language. German speakers switch between both languages, translate their utterances or even use English only when communicating with children or when conducting intentional teaching periods. These practices are the result of the non-existence of policies and training opportunities as well as the dominance of English and the existing hierarchization of languages in the education sector and beyond. By modelling the subordination of LOTEs, the bilingual programme at Fritzkidz may contribute to a reproduction of the value of languages rather than changing attitudes and ideologies towards them.

Secondly, due to the above-mentioned constraints and the need to accommodate to influences from the market, which displayed a low level of interest from the Australian and transnational community, including the German community in particular, the centres were forced to assimilate as an Australian mainstream education provider. In order to ensure high enrolment rates, Fritzkidz changed its whole identity from a German-English provider initially targeting a German clientele to a more generic bilingual early childhood education facility positioned as a familiar Australian neighbourhood institution. A de-emphasis on German was also accompanied by a focus on non-language-specific benefits for bilingual education. Such pressures show how strongly parents are influenced by dominant ideologies and how power relations such as these militate against bilingual education. The chapter argued with reference to Bourdieu (1991) that at this stage German-English bilingual education is not regarded as desirable and hence the centres are of low value and carry low symbolic capital.

In summary, analysis of programme planning, language practices, the centres' public face and attitudes expressed by educators brought to light the difficulties faced by a small pioneering organisation such as Fritzkidz. Such challenges were detected on the micro- and the macro level, but all are rooted in an ideological environment of preferred monolingualism and monoculturalism.

### 9.1.2 Parental attitudes

While Chapters 4 and 5 analysed the institutional side of bilingual early childhood education, the subsequent chapters focussed on the centres' clientele and their attitudes. Specifically, Chapter 6 focussed on the demographic backgrounds of parents. It confirmed Fritzkidz' perception of low enrolment rates among the German-speaking community. In fact, only one fifth (21.5 per cent) of families enrolled at Fritzkidz spoke German in their nuclear families. Another 29 per cent spoke a LOTE other than German at home and the majority of 49.5 per cent were in monolingual English households. In total, 22 languages were represented in parents' language practices at home, resulting in a low ethnic density at the centres. The clientele was more linguistically diverse than the Australian or Sydney average.

Furthermore, parents' educational and economic background was well above the Australian or Sydney average. Thus, Fritzkidz parents represented a middle class clientele with high educational attainments and substantial financial resources. This contrasts with previous studies, which were mostly conducted in low socio-economic status schools, where the minority parents in particular are low income earners with only modest educational attainment. In the present study, all German-speaking parents had educational and financial resources on a par with the majority group. In reference to Ball (2003), Chapter 6 argued that the Fritzkidz clientele represents a very powerful group, because the middle class influence policies and contribute to either perpetuating or reinventing social inequalities. However, as parents' attitudes are shaped in the broader socio-political context, their influence on the work of educators is not entirely positive. The following sections then focussed in more detail on parents' attitudes towards the bilingual programme, language learning and the German language in particular.

The second part of Chapter 6 analysed parents' reasons for placing their children in institutional care and in Fritzkidz in particular. The results showed that most parents were working and therefore selected an institution which had a place available and was in close proximity to their home or work. For the vast majority of parents, reasons such as "convenient location" and "vacancies" dominated their decision and the bilingual programme was not a decisive factor for them. Only the German-speaking minority selected the provider based on its German-English orientation. The remainder often regarded the bilingual programme as a bonus; rather, Fritzkidz was selected as a

neighbourhood facility with places available that happened to have a bilingual programme. This seems to confirm the argument presented in Chapter 5 that Fritzkidz' bilingual programme is of low value and carries low symbolic capital. It should be noted that the decision by parents to select a particular childcare centre is partly based on Sydney's scarcity of affordable childcare options. Consequently, many parents are pushed towards accepting a childcare spot as long as they regard the centre as acceptable in respect to their most prioritised criteria. This in turn also illustrates the role of bilingual education in the minds of parents. This is certainly not a decision-making criterion for most parents – except for those with a language background in the offered target language.

Although Chapter 6 revealed that parents were rather indifferent towards the bilingual programme when first selecting a childcare centre, Chapter 7 showed that some attitudinal change could be generated while being enrolled at Fritzkidz. Almost the entire clientele (93.5 per cent) professed to being (very) happy about the existence of the bilingual programme. Additionally, 89.2 per cent indicated that it was (very) important to them that their child learn a foreign language. Moreover, 83.9 per cent of Fritzkidz parents voted for an implementation of language learning in the pre-primary sector.

Apart from revealing parents' positive stance towards bilingual education once they have experienced such a programme, Chapter 7 also uncovered how inadequately such positive attitudes can be translated into praxis under the prevailing circumstances. Only a minority of parents (15.6 per cent) were committed to continue with German at the school level, the majority of which were German-speaking families. Thus, only a miniscule number of non-German-background families (2.2 per cent) planned to continue with German language education. On the other hand, half the clientele expressed the hope of continuing with their child's German education if a convenient pathway could be found. "Convenience" here is primarily defined by location, that is, the availability of German in the local public primary school. The fact that only two public primary schools in Sydney offer German and that bilingual programmes generally are rare, however, militates against such convenient pathways and shows how hard it is for parents to access continued (German) language learning beyond the early childhood years. Furthermore, if (German) language teaching is not an integral part of children's primary school education, it becomes an extracurricular activity competing against other extracurricular activities such as sports and music. Consequently, this identified attitude-action-gap exists partly because the

scarcity of language learning opportunities severely constrains parental choice. Only a small number of parents are willing to go above and beyond what is easily accessible. Hence, despite parents' supportive attitudes, the educational landscape in Sydney does not allow them to continue with German language education and undermines positive intentions.

### **9.1.3 The role of German**

Chapter 7 showed that parents had (developed) positive attitudes towards the bilingual programme and language learning in general. Parents may not seek out a bilingual centre due to its language programme to start with and they may not be willing to go to extremes to enrol their children in a bilingual school in order to continue with a bilingual programme, but they did regard bilingual education as beneficial (see also Chapter 6). Chapter 8 set out to understand what benefits parents' associate with bilingual education. It uncovered that for most parents bilingual education was not primarily of linguistic value, but was considered as a tool to create an advantage for their children. Such advantages were identified in regards to anticipated enhanced cognitive development, better career and travel opportunities, positive influence on other languages and increased awareness of diversity. Parents valued bilingual education for its effect on children's opportunities to travel later in life. Yet travelling to a German-speaking country was not necessarily anticipated. Parents valued bilingual education for its effect on facilitating the learning of another language. Yet parents did not anticipate that their children would gain German-English bilingual competence. Parents valued bilingual education for its positive effect on their children's brain development, but learning *any* language could achieve that outcome. These expected benefits and simultaneous indifference towards the German language show how language learning was regarded as a catalyst to provide children with various advantages, but that the advantages parents desired did not result from German per se. Hence, the expected gains were in fact completely dissociated from cultural or linguistic links to the second language involved.

In order to elicit parents' attitudes towards cultural or linguistic links to German, Chapter 8 also presented an analysis of the primary value of the German language, which exhibited two different aspects. Firstly, the German-speaking clientele expressed positive attitudes towards it. Specifically, they considered German as important to connect and communicate with their families overseas. Additionally, they regarded it as crucial for their children's identity. Secondly, the non-German-speaking parents in particular associated

bilingualism or second language learning with people from a non-English-speaking background. For themselves, they expressed an attitude of indifference and regarded it as optional. Despite the fact that parental expectations of childcare are different from those of school programmes (see also Chapter 6.2.3), it is interesting to see that German language proficiency was not an outcome anticipated by parents in the present study. This is in contrast to previous research for school programmes which has found that parents enrolling their children in a bilingual programme expected their children to gain proficiency in the second language offered. The chapter hence argued with reference to Bourdieu (1991) that bilingualism is not considered as a form of symbolic capital or an instrument of power in Australian society. Competitiveness, on the other hand, for example through increased brain power, is. Consequently, the German language has no direct value, but equipping children with skills and capacities that facilitate learning and later life does, and could be considered a form of hyper-parenting. The chapter finally argued that as long as languages are not valued in their own right, a bilingual childcare centre is not a language learning institution, but rather part of a competitive parenting industry.

#### **9.1.4 Summary**

In the introductory chapter I outlined the potential that exists in regards to bilingual German-English education in Sydney, such as the advantage of starting to learn a second language in the early years, the organisational aspects in Australian childcare centres that supporting bilingual education, the linguistic diversity of Australia and Sydney in particular, as well as the dual role of German in Australia and the world. By analysing the dynamics at a German-English bilingual early education provider, I was able to demonstrate that the ideological conditions in Australia do not allow such potential to flourish. Looking at these points individually, this section briefly summarises how Australia's language ideologies constrict attempts at bilingual education, before re-theorising the current notion of bilingual early childhood education.

As argued in Chapter 1, the early years are certainly an ideal time to introduce a second language to children. However, in order to allow for a successful learning environment, a childcare provider requires qualified bilingual staff, feasible language policies, and structural and financial support. Administrative and regulatory conditions in Australia are based on monolingual education standards and are not supportive towards bilingual programme implementation (at no level of formal or informal education). Hence, as

outlined in Chapter 1.1, some childcare regulations are conducive to bilingual education, but many others militate against it.

Not only are education regulations based on monolingual standards, Australia's monolingual mindset also acts upon a bilingual programme from other directions and on many different levels. For example, it influences parents' attitudes and educators' work, as well as dominating structural conditions in early childhood education and the school sector, which in turn negatively shape attitudes. Although Australia and Sydney are very linguistically diverse, they are dominated by a monolingual mindset and the unquestioned social and economic power of the English language. Following Gogolin (2008) (see Chapter 5), even a bilingual early childhood education institution in a multilingual environment is hence dominated by a monolingual habitus. As I showed in Chapters 4 to 8, this greatly hampers bilingual education in this environment.

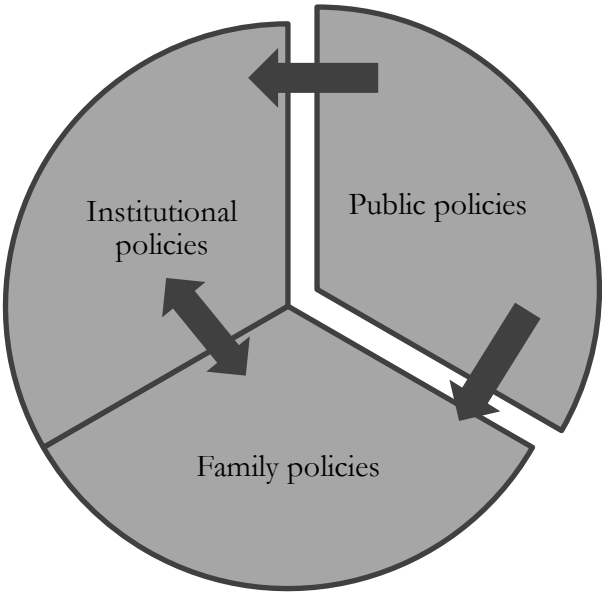
The final potential listed in the Introduction was the dual role German plays in Australia and around the world. The German language may well be a high-status language, but in the context of this study it has no value. By analysing parental attitudes and expectations, I revealed what bilingual education, and more precisely bilingual German-English education, signifies in this context: the enrichment of children in multiple ways, which are mostly dissociated from the German language or an affiliation with it. As such, the language is detached from its primary value and transformed into a tool, which redefines bilingual education as a competitive non-language-related educational enrichment venture. The managers of Fritzkidz became aware of this sentiment after only a short time of operation and adapted the centres' identity accordingly, amending their initial public image and signage to avoid an overly strong association with German. Instead the centres redefined their identity as a bilingual childcare provider with no direct or obvious affiliation to a particular language.

This dialectical relationship also plays out negatively in regards to efforts to successfully implement bilingual education. As long as a bilingual education provider perceives indifferent parental attitudes, fearing low enrolment rates it adjusts to its market rather than attempting to exert an influence on it. The reduction of language-specific goals and the concurrent focus on competitive aspects diminishes the opportunity for children and parents to experience a second language and potentially to change their attitudes.

Consequently, in order to break this negative attitude-opportunity cycle, one of these factors needs to be changed. How this could be realised is described in the following section.

## 9.2 Implications

As this study shows, pertinent ideologies and policies on the macro level prevent bilingual programmes from being successfully implemented. These affect attitudes and policies on the micro level, such as parental attitudes and institutional policies or the lack thereof. However, this is not exclusively a top-down relationship, as micro level factors also influence each other, while both are heavily influenced by public policies (see Figure 9.1). Therefore, findings of this study have implications for language policies at institutional, family and state or federal levels. These aspects and their relationship are outlined in this section.



**Figure 9.1 | Implicational relationship to improving bilingual early childhood education**

### 9.2.1 Institutional policy

In regards to the early childhood education provider Fritzkidz, some highly concrete and fundamental implications can be derived. These implications were formulated in continuous direct conversations with the MD as well as in a written report to the

responsible executives. I met with the MD and the CEO in order to present my report and discuss its findings and implications, which were received with interest not only in regards to Fritzkidz' Australian centres, but also in regards to their bilingual programme in Germany. One major factor that played out negatively in the implementation process was Fritzkidz' lack of a clear language policy. Evidently, this is something that could be changed easily, and was included in the report to Fritzkidz. Other recommendations included the need for the policy to be used as a mandatory component of every educator's work place introduction; and the need for the centres' roster management to be improved in order to facilitate policy compliance. Institutional policies and their implementation would also be improved if more bilingual and specifically trained staff could be recruited and retained. Furthermore, staff need to acquire qualifications and undertake ongoing professional development in bilingual education. Consequently, the report also stated the vital need for workshops and training on bilingual education to be offered.

Educators' attitudes and commitment to the programme were not only influenced by their qualifications and training (which in turn are the result of public policies), but also by a perceived lack of parental interest. My study therefore also has implications for family attitudes as well as policies towards language learning.

### **9.2.2 Family policy**

In regards to family policy, it became apparent that speaking another language or speaking German in particular is not regarded as a valued resource; the value of bilingual education shifts from the language itself to enrichment through cognitive, cultural or educational benefits. So, at this point in time, parental attitudes could be addressed in terms of the status of German as a language in particular as well as the status of language learning more generally in its own right. To do so, parents need to be better educated about the value of languages and language learning to evoke an intrinsic interest in bilingual education. The study showed that there is a difference between German-speaking and non-German-speaking parents in regards to the value they ascribe to the German language and the bilingual programme. Hence, education and support for family policies should address both language maintenance and second language learning.

Additionally, as Chapter 7 revealed, parental attitudes can be changed by making bilingual education accessible. The simple fact that it is offered does not make it attractive to parents, but experiencing a bilingual programme for themselves does. Such novel

experiences have great potential to change attitudes and should be supported on a public planning level. Specifically, this means introducing bilingual education into the early childhood education system and beyond. To do so, regulations on the state and Australian government level must be diversified, in ways which are outlined in the section below.

### **9.2.3 Public policy**

At present, socio-political schemes and education and care regulations promote both a continuing monolingual education system and a monolingually oriented society. Language policies have neither supported language maintenance conditions for the majority of bilingual families, nor have they supported monolingual families to experience education in a LOTE. The result is only a small pool of staff qualified in early childhood education who speak German. As analysed in this thesis, this is a major hurdle for childcare providers offering bilingual education in German and similar target languages, where the community language is poorly maintained and where there currently is no major migrant intake. Hence, in order to increase the pool of bilingual and trained early childhood educators, a wide range of languages will have to be well maintained and studied. Additionally, the LOTEs that are spoken widely by trained early childhood educators could be matched with appropriate bilingual programmes, instead of ignoring educators' bilingualism and employing them as designated English-speakers. Furthermore, bilingual education needs to be an integral part of every educator's training.

Another way to improve the fundamental problem of recruitment and retention of staff for bilingual education is to adapt childcare regulations and funding systems, all of which are based on a monolingual education model. Specifically, this means including options for bilingual childcare providers to hire staff from overseas, recognising qualifications gained overseas and introducing a funding scheme to support start-up providers.

Lastly, the EYLF, which formulates learning outcomes for young children, will require a stronger emphasis on LOTE maintenance and learning.

Changing such aspects of early childhood education policy will facilitate bilingual programme implementation. Such programmes will need significant support if they are to be offered widely and affordably so that they can bring about a change in parents' attitudes (see above). Going one step further, such widely available and affordable language education options will also have to be expanded in the school sector in order to enable

pathways throughout education and articulation between schools. This would ensure that bilingual education options support parents' newly developed favourable intentions, rather than undermining them as they have done so far.

However, most recent government initiatives have failed to invest in staff qualification and bilingual programme development, seeking instead to circumvent this very aspect. With the professed aim of “reviving language study in this country”, the Australian Government has recently pledged to provide approximately ten million dollars to trial language learning software at preschools without the requirement to employ bilingual staff (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014). Such software will be developed in Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian, French and Arabic. Arabic and Mandarin are the two most frequently spoken LOTEs in Sydney (see Chapter 1.2), and qualified bilingual staff could easily be matched to such initiatives. Due to the strong dialectical relationship between the public, family and institutional level (see Figure 9.1), it is obvious how changing policy in one will greatly influence another. However, implementing software programmes in isolation is unlikely to influence family attitudes and policies. Great potential exists in Australia, but this will remain untapped unless stakeholders start recognising and supporting it, beginning at a point which is currently deliberately circumvented: bilingual early childhood educators.

### **9.3 Directions for future research**

The global trend towards bilingual education and towards introducing it in the early childhood sector has already been noted. It will be important to follow this trend in Australia, given ongoing developments and changes in the sector. A focus on the German language will continue to be highly relevant given its dual status as community and world language, as well as the fact that established pathways into primary education and beyond exist for this language. Furthermore, it will be important to focus on other languages as well. There exist research lacunae in relation to languages of more recent migration (e.g. Tagalog) as well as to languages that have traditionally been well maintained in Australia (e.g. Greek or Turkish). Research into Mandarin in early childhood education is especially pertinent given that Chinese is now the most frequently spoken LOTE in Australian society and Sydney, as well as being the language of Australia's major trading partner. In view of policy initiatives to increase Australia's Asia literacy (see Chapter 2 or also Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2014), it is not surprising that

parental desire for their children to learn Mandarin is frequently expressed in media discourses, as it was in this study.

More generally, with the rapid growth of both Australian multilingualism on one hand and bilingual education around the world on the other, it would be interesting to observe how the intersection between them evolves. Research could focus on Australian ideologies and parental attitudes as well as their practical implications in respect of the early childhood sector in Australian language and education policies. Such discourses may well lead to an increase in the number of early childhood education providers offering bilingual education in the future.

The present thesis also highlights a need to explore the public-private interface in more depth. Currently, research perspectives on bilingual education on one hand and family language policies on the other rarely intersect and tend to be investigated in isolation from each other. By combining these two research strands, academic work could contribute to providing a more holistic picture of the strong relationship between them, which would help to further enhance our understanding of the dynamics in bilingual early childhood education.

On a final note, the future development of Fritzkidz deserves to be the focus of continued research. The present thesis is based on research conducted during Fritzkidz' early stages of operation. Even within the relatively short period of my fieldwork, changes occurred constantly, such as refurbishing interiors and exteriors, staff changes, bilingual programme implementation changes, children moving up to different rooms, changes in the clientele or even changes in education and care regulations. This means that collecting data today would most certainly have resulted in very different findings, particularly on the micro level. Extending the research presented here into a longitudinal investigation is thus highly desirable and would continue to expand our understanding of bilingual early childhood education as a dynamic process.

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## Appendix 1: Transcription Conventions

Some of the data for this study comes from written sources such as pamphlets or emails. The majority, however, comes from spoken conversations, which have been transcribed for analysis. Outlined below are the major transcription choices made for this thesis, most of which are adopted from Piller (2002).

### Representation of languages

Interviews were held in either English or German according to the interviewees' preference. Some interviews started in one language and were then continued in another, and many interviews with German-speaking staff or members of German-speaking families (whether the interviewee was the German speaker or not) were characterised by code-switching between English and German. All data is presented in the original language. Complete utterances in German are transcribed in German and followed by their English translations, which are represented in italics in a smaller font (see Example 1 below):

#### Example 1:

Aber es ist für mich, ja, nicht so wichtig, dass ich denke,  
dass ich jetzt ihre Berufschancen damit verbessere.  
(Regina, German)

*But for me it's like, yeah, not that important that I think I can improve  
their career opportunities with this.*

For interviews which were held mostly in English, but contain isolated lexical code-switches into German, the translation is positioned within the paragraph directly following the German expression, distinguished by double brackets and italics (see Example 2 below):

#### Example 2:

If he, um, turned around and says, "Mama, you know, we live in Australia. I'm not interested in this German routine. Reading and writing in German, you know, might help me to communicate with the Urgroßmutter und Großmutter und Kusine, um, wer auch immer, aber dann-" (*great-grandmother and grandmother and cousin and whoever else, but then-*). You know, if he turns around and says, um, "Stop it Mama, I just want to play football on a Saturday", then that's his prerogative. (Janice, German)

For interviews which were held mostly in German, but contain isolated lexical code-switches into English, the German transcription is kept as is and is then translated into English (see Example 3 below):

**Example 3:**

Ne, und wenn ich mir jetzt die achtunddreißig Kinder unten angucke, denke ich, dass viele das gerne as add-on Bonus sehen, aber ob das nun wirklich deren Hauptteil nun ist, das glaube ich nicht. (Birgit, German)

*Right, and if I consider the thirty eight children down there, I think that many like to see it as an add-on bonus, but I don't think that it's really their main goal.*

Different hesitation markers are used for English and German in order to accord with respective conventions. For English, hesitations are marked with “um”; for German, “ähm” is used.

In some cases, a deviation from the standard orthography to a commonly known semi-standard variant is used. These variants include “gonna” (for “going to”) and “cause” (for “because”). Deviations from the standard language were transcribed as spoken and not marked with “[sic]”.

## **Fonts**

Transcriptions of spoken data are represented in Century Gothic font.

Very few quotes come from emails or other written sources such as pamphlets. If they are not used as quotes within the main body of the paragraph, but as isolated quotes, they are represented in Arial Narrow font.

## **Adopted transcription conventions**

Adopted from Piller (2002), the following transcription conventions are used in this study.

Words and pauses:

.	short pause, i.e. less than half a second (preceded and followed by a space)
..	long pause, i.e. more than half a second
-	truncation, i.e. incomplete word or utterance
>>spoken rapidly<<	the utterance between the double arrows is spoken rapidly
<b>CAPS</b>	emphatic stress ("T" is excluded from this)

Paralanguage:

@	laughter (one @ per syllable, i.e. @@@ = "hahaha")
@laughingly@	the utterance between the two @s is spoken laughingly
((coughs))	clearing throat or cough is written between two brackets
hh.	audible exhalation
.hh	sharp breath intake

Analytic intervention:

/???/	inaudible utterance
/transcriber's doubt/	doubtful transcription
<u>underline</u>	analyser's emphasis

All interviews were first transcribed into a verbatim record using the transcription conventions described above. For the purpose of improved readability, represented quotes in this thesis have been cleaned of most hesitations, interruptions or false starts, while retaining their original style.

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire

### BILINGUAL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Where appropriate, please tick more than one box per question.  
Feel free to add information where necessary. Please answer the questions honestly and  
considerately.

- ☐ By returning the questionnaire in the RETURN BOX, I acknowledge that I  
have read and understood the subject information statement.
- ☐ I have been given a copy of the subject information statement to keep  
(detachable slip at the end of the questionnaire).

Date: ____/____/____ Child enrolled since: ____/____/____			
Fritzkidz Centre: <input type="checkbox"/> Fritzkidz 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Fritzkidz 2			
Days of enrolment (general): <input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday			
Age and gender of children enrolled:			
Child I:	_____ years _____ month	<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female
Child II:	_____ years _____ month	<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female
Child III:	_____ years _____ month	<input type="checkbox"/> male	<input type="checkbox"/> female
Does the child live with the mother?		<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Does the child live with the father?		<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Is there any other guardian?		<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no

#### SECTION 1: FAMILY BACKGROUND

1.1 Please indicate your relationship to the child.

☐ mother ☐ father ☐ guardian

1.2 Please indicate your age.

☐ under 20 years ☐ 36-40 years  
☐ 21-25 years ☐ 41-45 years  
☐ 26-30 years ☐ 46-50 years  
☐ 31-35 years ☐ over 50 years

1.3 Where do you live? Please name the suburb.

\_\_\_\_\_

1.4 How long does it take you to get from your home to the childcare centre?

\_\_\_\_\_ minutes

☐ by foot ☐ by public transport  
☐ by car ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

1.5 Please fill in the family tree. If you have more children, for whom the information differs from the child indicated, please add the information on both sides of the box.

Child	Child's Father / Parent 1	Child's Mother / Parent 2	
<p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Year arrived in Australia: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	
<p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p><b>Child's Grandfather</b></p> <p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>
<p><b>Child's Grandmother</b></p> <p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p><b>Child's Grandfather</b></p> <p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p><b>Child's Grandmother</b></p> <p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>	<p><b>Child's Grandmother</b></p> <p>a) Country of birth: _____</p> <p>b) Country of residence: _____</p> <p>c) Language/s spoken: <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p> <p>d) Language/s spoken to child: <input type="checkbox"/> see above <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____</p>

---

1.6 What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

<input type="checkbox"/> less than 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree or equivalent
<input type="checkbox"/> Year 10 (School Certificate) or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree (MD) or equivalent
<input type="checkbox"/> Year 12 (Higher School Certificate) or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate degree
<input type="checkbox"/> TAFE Certificate/Diploma or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree or equivalent	

---

1.7 What is your average annual household income (gross) in AUS Dollar?

<input type="checkbox"/> 0-25,999	<input type="checkbox"/> 135,200-166,399
<input type="checkbox"/> 26,000-62,399	<input type="checkbox"/> 166,400-207,999
<input type="checkbox"/> 62,400-83,199	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 208,000
<input type="checkbox"/> 83,200-103,999	<input type="checkbox"/> prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/> 104,000-135,199	

---

## SECTION 2: FRITZKIDZ

---

2.1 Why did you choose to place your child in childcare?

<input type="checkbox"/> beneficial for child	<input type="checkbox"/> time management for myself
<input type="checkbox"/> prepare child for school	<input type="checkbox"/> work related reasons
<input type="checkbox"/> support child's language development	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

---

2.2 Why did you choose to place your child in Fritzkidz childcare in particular?

<input type="checkbox"/> convenient location	<input type="checkbox"/> availability
<input type="checkbox"/> reputation	<input type="checkbox"/> the bilingual program: learn German as a foreign language
<input type="checkbox"/> educational approach/ philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> the bilingual program: increase contact with German (also outside of home)
<input type="checkbox"/> atmosphere, facilities and staff	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> cost of operation	
<input type="checkbox"/> hours of operation	

---

2.3 How did you find Fritzkidz?

<input type="checkbox"/> internet: childcare websites (e.g. echildcare, NCAC etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> media
<input type="checkbox"/> internet: googled German childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> word of mouth
<input type="checkbox"/> internet: googled bilingual childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> walked past the centre
	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

---

2.4 What do you think: What do your family and friends think about your child's enrolment in a bilingual centre? The majority of them...

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
strongly approves	approves	is indifferent	finds it strange	does not approve

---

2.5 Was the bilingual program a reason for choosing Fritzkidz? If yes, please continue with SECTION 3.4

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it was the main reason	<input type="checkbox"/> No, but I did not mind either
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it sounded interesting	<input type="checkbox"/> No, I would prefer an English-only centre
<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

---

## SECTION 3: Bilingual Childcare

---

3.1 The bilingual program was not a reason for choosing Fritzkidz. To what extent has your attitude towards language learning changed while having your child enrolled at Fritzkidz? If not at all, please continue with 3.4

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a lot	a little	not at all

---

3.2 Please indicate in what way your attitude has changed?

---



---

3.3 What made your attitude change?

---



---

3.4 What are your feelings about the existence of the bilingual program?

☐ very happy      ☐ happy      ☐ neither happy nor unhappy      ☐ unhappy      ☐ very unhappy

3.5 How do you assess the quality of the bilingual program?

☐ very good      ☐ good      ☐ neither good nor bad      ☐ bad      ☐ very bad

3.6 Which statements are applicable to you?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm impressed how my child can react to the teachers' German instructions | <input type="checkbox"/> my child's language learning progress is rather slow             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my child sings German songs at home                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> my child does not use any German outside of the childcare centre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my child uses German phrases at home                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> my child does not particularly enjoy learning and using German   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my child seems to enjoy learning German                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm confused whenever my child speaks German in public           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm proud whenever my child speaks German in public                       | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____  |   |

3.7 Why did you choose the German language?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> family background                          | <input type="checkbox"/> cultural benefits   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> it was the only available foreign language | <input type="checkbox"/> the language was not the main reason for choosing FritzkiDz |
| <input type="checkbox"/> value of German in Australian society      | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> economic benefits (job market etc.)        |  |

3.8 When should a foreign language be introduced in the curriculum?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-school                | <input type="checkbox"/> High school (Year 11-12) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school (Year K-6) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary Education       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior school (Year 7-10) | <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all               |

3.9 How important is it to you that your child learns a language other than English? If not important, please continue with 3.11

☐ very important      ☐ important      ☐ no preference      ☐ not important      ☐ not at all important

3.10 Why do you want your child to learn a language other than English?

- ☐ speaking a language other than English is well regarded
- ☐ bilingualism is academically beneficial
- ☐ speaking a language other than English is culturally important
- ☐ bilingualism increases opportunities
- ☐ bilingualism provides a career advantage
- ☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_

3.11 Do you plan to continue with German language education?

- ☐ no, it is not planned  
☐ no, no primary school offers German in my area  
☐ yes, if I find a convenient solution  
☐ yes, my child will travel a long distance to school if necessary  
☐ yes, my child will get private tutoring in German  
☐ yes, my child will go to the German School  
☐ yes, my child goes/ will go to the German Saturday School  
☐ yes, my child will go to a school in a German speaking country  
☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_

3.12 Rank the priorities for your child's future school with 1 being high and 6 low priority.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> low/ no tuition fees | <input type="checkbox"/> reputation                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> language program     | <input type="checkbox"/> quality of school (rated by myschool etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> proximity            | <input type="checkbox"/> extra-curricular activities                |

3.13 What do you think are the opportunities AND threats of early childhood language learning?

## SECTION 4: Language Maintenance and Revival

If your child has no German heritage, skip section 4 and continue with the dashed box on page 7.

4.1 Excluding the time at Fritzkidz, how many hours a week does your child listen to German media (TV, video, computer)?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 2 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 7.5-10 hours       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 hours         | <input type="checkbox"/> 10.5-14 hours      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5-7 hours       | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 14 hours |

4.2 Excluding the time at Fritzkidz, how many hours a week does your child listen to German books/ stories?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 2 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 7.5-10 hours       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 hours         | <input type="checkbox"/> 10.5-14 hours      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5-7 hours       | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 14 hours |

4.3 Excluding the time at Fritzkidz, how many hours a week does your child speak or listen to German speaking children?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 2 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 7.5-14 hours       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 hours         | <input type="checkbox"/> 14.5-27 hours      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5-7 hours       | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 27 hours |

4.4 Excluding the time at Fritzkidz, how many hours a week does your child speak or listen to German speaking adults?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 2 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 hours          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5.5-7 hours       | <input type="checkbox"/> 7.5-14 hours       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14.5-27 hours     | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 27 hours |

4.5 How important is it to you that your child understands and speaks some German?

- |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| very important           | important                | no preference            | not important            | not at all important     |

---

4.6 How important is it to you that your child speaks German on a native-like level?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

very important      important      no preference      not important      not at all important

---

4.7 How important is it to you that your child reads and writes German?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

very important      important      no preference      not important      not at all important

---

4.8 Why do you want your child to speak German?

☐ no preference whether my child speaks German or not

☐ others expect my child to speak German

☐ to communicate with family

☐ to excel at language classes later at school

☐ the language is part of my child's culture

☐ the language is part of my child's heritage

☐ my family might move to a German-speaking country

☐ additional German language skills provide more opportunities for my child

☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Thank you very much! Please detach slips and put the questionnaire in the **RETURN BOX**.

Are you willing to talk about bilingualism in early childhood education in more detail during an interview? If Yes, please indicate your name, phone number and/or email address below, detach it and put it in the **RETURN BOX**. Thanks.

☐ Yes, please contact me to arrange a follow-up interview.

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Subject information statement – Participant's copy, please detach

This questionnaire is part of the research project "Bilingual Early Childhood Education." It is the purpose of the study to investigate parental experiences with bilingual childcare, including their motivations and expectations.

The project is being conducted by Victoria Benz (telephone: [02] 8021 9024, email: victoria.benz@students.mq.edu.au) to meet the requirements for the degree of PhD under the supervision of Prof. Ingrid Piller (telephone: [02] 9850 7674, email: ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Linguistics

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Victoria Benz and Ingrid Piller will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be obtained, if you contact Victoria Benz under the email address above. Findings arising from this research might be published under the condition of anonymity, without including any information that might identify you.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate. Return of the questionnaire will be regarded as consent to use the information for research purposes.

*The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax [02] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.*

## Appendix 3: Interview Guides

### For parents

- Children: How many children at Fritzkidz? For how long?
- Residence: Where? How far to centre?
- Parents: Working? Migration history?
- Languages: Languages spoken? Frequency and intensity?
- Childcare general: Reasons? What kind of day care did you have in mind? What is a good childcare centre to you?
- Fritzkidz: Reason for enrolment? How was it found? Feelings about bilingual programme?
- Bilingual programme: Importance? Why German? Expectations? Satisfaction? Likes? Dislike? Would you have chosen the centre without the language programme? NOW? What does child gain? Influence on own view about language learning?
- LOTE learning: Importance? Perspectives? Benefits? Doubts and fears? Opportunities of language learning in Australia? Circumstances under which you would continue with bilingual education?
- School: Reasons for selecting a school? Are LOTEs taught? German? Feelings about that?
- Attitude: Languages compulsory at school? Can you think of a situation where your child used some German outside of the centre? How did that make you feel? Some people say, “Why bother learning a language other than English. It is the world language; we can get around with it”. What would you tell them?

### Specific to German-background parents

- Language maintenance: Importance? Reasons? Identity? German in Sydney? Plans for future? Benefits? Doubts and fears? Opportunities of language learning in Australia? How much German is spoken to child?

## For educators

Fritzkidz Centre:	<input type="checkbox"/> Fritzkidz 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Fritzkidz 2	Do you speak or understand German?:	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
First language:	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> German	other:		

To what extent do you agree with the following

1. Parents are interested in the education and activities offered.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
2. Parents are generally involved in the children's education at Fritzkidz.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
3. Parents are interested in the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
4. The bilingual teachers are well informed about the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
5. The non-bilingual teachers are well informed about the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
6. Teachers are given enough training on how to implement the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
7. I am happy with the way I support the bilingual programme. / I am efficiently teaching German at Fritzkidz.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
8. Our centre director has high expectations of our performance in terms of the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
9. Our centre director strongly supports us in the planning and implementation of the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
10. When should a foreign language be introduced in the curriculum?
11. Do you know where interested parents can continue German language education?
12. Do you know the bilingual education model here at Fritzkidz?  
☐ yes, \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ no
13. What are the bilingual programme goals at Fritzkidz?

14. Do you know other programmes, methods and principles?

- ☐ yes, \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ no

15. How would you describe your role in the bilingual programme?

16. Have you had any training in bilingual education?

- ☐ yes, \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ no

17. What percentage of your utterances directed to the children are in German?

\_\_\_\_\_ %

18. Is this according to the principle suggested at Fritzkidz?

- ☐ yes  
☐ no

Comments:

19. What facilitates and what hinders usage of German?

- ☐ yes  
☐ no

Comments:

20. In your opinion: What is bilingualism?

21. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of early childhood language learning?

---

## NOTES

## For centre directors

FritzkiDz Centre:	<input type="checkbox"/> FritzkiDz 1	<input type="checkbox"/> FritzkiDz 2	Do you understand German?:	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
First language:	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input type="checkbox"/> German	other:	_____	

### To which extend to you agree with the following

1. Parents are interested in the education and activities offered.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
2. Parents are generally involved in the children's education at FritzkiDz.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
3. Parents are interested in the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
4. The bilingual teachers are well informed about the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
5. The non-bilingual teachers are well informed about the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
6. Teachers are given enough training on how to implement the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
7. I have high expectations of the teachers' performance in terms of the bilingual programme.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
8. I am happy with the way I support the bilingual programme. / I am efficiently teaching German at FritzkiDz.  
☐ strongly agree      ☐ agree      ☐ neither nor      ☐ disagree      ☐ strongly disagree
9. When should a foreign language be introduced in the curriculum?
10. Do you know where interested parents can continue German language education?
11. Can you describe is the bilingual education model here at FritzkiDz?
12. Can you describe the bilingual programme goals at FritzkiDz?
13. Do you know other programmes, methods and principles?  
☐ yes, \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ no
14. How many per cent the teachers' utterances directed to the children are in German?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ %

15. What is the programmes' greatest weakness?

16. What is the programmes' greatest strength?

17. Is this according to the principle suggested at Fritzkidz?

- ☐ yes  
☐ no

Comments:

18. What facilitates and what hinders usage of German?

- ☐ yes  
☐ no

Comments:

19. How would you describe your role in the bilingual programme?

20. Have you had any training in bilingual education?

- ☐ yes, \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ no

21. In your opinion: What is bilingualism?

22. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of early childhood language learning?

---

## NOTES

#### For the MD

- Brochures: You have changed the brochures from marketing “German-English bilingual centres” to “bilingual education”. When? Why? Can you tell me more about it?
- Support: Can you tell me something about the support you receive for Fritzkidz? From where? Financially? Administrative?
- Fritzkidz background: What was your vision when you first started the business in Australia? Who was the target group?
- Professional background: Tell me something about your professional background.
- Bilingual programme: Tell me something about the organisation of the bilingual programme: past, present and future. What does „bilingual childcare“ mean to you? What are threats for the bilingual programme? What are the risks and opportunities? What does it mean to you to run a bilingual childcare centre in Sydney?
- Fritzkidz: What is your focus when establishing the centres? Is it a challenge to offer high quality education AND a bilingual programme? How do you evaluate the situation after 2.5 years? What works well? Where are the problems? How do the next two years look like? What are the plans for Fritzkidz Australia?
- Staff: There is a high staff turn-over amongst German speaking staff. Why is that?
- Parents: How would you describe the parents’ involvement? Interest? How do you learn about parents’ focus? What do you think about the current situation?
- I spoke to a mother from the Nursery in Suburb 1, who did not want to complete the questionnaire, because her child was „too young for bilingual education“. What does such a quote tell you?

#### For the CEO

- Fritzkidz Australia: How did the Fritzkidz Australia venture start? What was your vision?
- Bilingual programme: What was the incentive to offer a bilingual concept? How do you evaluate the situation after 2.5 years? What are similarities and differences between Germany and Australia in regards to the bilingual programme?

## Appendix 4: Parent Information Statement and Consent Form



Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Science  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109  
Professor Ingrid Piller

Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 7674  
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 9199  
Email: [ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au)

### PARENT INFORMATION

**Project Title:** Bilingual Early Childhood Education.



My name is Victoria Benz and you might know me as a former teacher at Fritzkidz. Currently, I am a PhD student at Macquarie University (Faculty of Human Sciences, Department of Linguistics) and at Hamburg University, Germany (Institute for International Comparative and Intercultural Education). The purpose of my study is to look at the expectations, wishes and perspectives of parents seeking bilingual early childhood education – you! Results from this study will have the opportunity to provide new information on the role of language teaching and bilingual education starting at an early stage in Australia. It is hoped that this will enhance our understanding of families' desires (in terms of language learning), and that we can devise guidelines in language planning and politics.

You can help in this study by consenting to complete a questionnaire and/or to participate in an interview. The interview will be recorded with a digital mp3 recording device, so I don't miss any important information. No names or other information that might identify you will be used in any documentation or publication arising from the research. You may withdraw your consent at any time and without having to give a reason. In this case, your interview data will be destroyed. Your participation, non-participation or possible withdrawal will not in any way affect your child's (children's) care at the childcare centre.

If you participate in an interview, written transcripts will be made from the recording. They will not contain your name or details that might identify you. The mp3 file will be securely retained for the minimum of 5 years. Only I will have access to the safely stored data.

If you are interested in obtaining feedback, you can contact me personally or by e-mail (indicated above) and you will be provided with a copy of the research findings.

Completing a questionnaire will take approx. 15 minutes and participating in an interview approx. 45 minutes.

It will not take long to complete the questionnaire and it will be completely anonymous and confidential! Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from it at any time! Your participation or withdrawal will not have any consequences regarding your child's care at the centre!

If you are willing to participate in this study, could you please complete the attached consent form? If you have **ANY QUESTIONS** about this study, do not hesitate to contact me (see contact details above). You can also contact my supervisor Prof. Ingrid Piller from the Department of Linguistics at Macquarie University ([02] 9850 7674, [ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au](mailto:ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au)).

Thank you so much for your time to read this information! I appreciate your cooperation!

Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Science  
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109  
Professor Ingrid Piller and Victoria Benz

## INFORMATION and CONSENT FORM

Phone: +61 (0)2 8021 9024  
Email: victoria.benz@students.mq.edu.au

### Bilingual Early Childhood Education

You are invited to participate in a study of the “Bilingual Early Childhood Education”, designed to explore parent’s motives for enrolling their children in a bilingual childcare centre. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of the needs, wishes and plans parents hold for their children’s future in regards to language learning.

The project is being conducted by Victoria Benz (telephone: [02] 8021 9024, email: victoria.benz@students.mq.edu.au) to meet the requirements for the degree of PhD under the supervision of Prof. Ingrid Piller (telephone: [02] 9850 7674, email: ingrid.piller@mq.edu.au) of the Department of Linguistics. Findings arising from this research might be published. This will be done under the condition of anonymity, without including any information that might identify you. A summary of the overall findings of the research can also be obtained by contacting Victoria at the e-mail address above.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview with Victoria, who will ask you questions regarding your languages at home, your reasons for choosing Fritzkidz as your childcare centre and your plans for your child’s future language education. The interview would take 30-60 minutes of your time and you may also be invited to participate in follow-up interviews in the future. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded. If you are happy being interviewed, but do not wish to be audio-recorded, Victoria will make notes while the interview is conducted and you will have the opportunity to review these notes.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. Only Victoria Benz and Ingrid Piller will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be obtained, if you contact Victoria Benz under the email address above.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

☐ I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview. ☐ I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.

I have read and understand the information above, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name (in block letters): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's Name / other witness (block letters): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone [02] 9850 7854, fax: [02] 9850 8799, email: ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.*

# Appendix 5: Final Ethics Approval

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR  
(RESEARCH)  
Research Office  
CSC East Research HUB, Level 3



2 June 2015

Professor Ingrid Piller  
Department of Linguistics  
Faculty of Human Sciences  
Macquarie University NSW 2109

**Reference: 5201100818(D)**

Dear Professor Piller,

## **FINAL APPROVAL**

**Title of project: Dynamics of bilingual early childhood education: Parental attitudes and institutional realisation**

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee. Approval of the above application is granted, **effective 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011** and you may now commence your research.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research>

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Chief Investigator: Professor Ingrid Piller  
Co-Investigator: Miss Victoria Benz

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
Progress Report 2 Due: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
Progress Report 3 Due: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2014  
Progress Report 4 Due: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
Final Report Due: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2016

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current\\_research\\_staff/human\\_research\\_ethics/application\\_resources](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/application_resources)

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ABN 90 952 801 227 | CRICOS Provider 00002J



3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current\\_research\\_staff/human\\_research\\_ethics/application\\_resources](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/application_resources)

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/>

[http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how\\_to\\_obtain\\_ethics\\_approval/human\\_research\\_ethics/policy](http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy)

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anthony Miller  
Chair

Faculty of Human Sciences Ethics Review Sub-Committee  
Human Research Ethics Committee