Conclusion

Switzerland's multilingualism is a complex social phenomenon, which is inextricably intertwined with the country's historical past as a *Willensnation*, engrained in its constitution and public policy framework, and experienced in intercantonal social practices ranging from politics to multimedia. Switzerland's linguistic landscape has been substantially shaped by an increase in diversity over the last few decades, despite its long-established multilingual tradition and its very good international reputation for equal LPP (Kużelewska, 2016). One heavy influence comes from the growing popularity and use of English in the Swiss public sphere, virtual contexts including social media, and communication among speakers of different (national) languages. Additionally, migrants from a myriad of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds have gained in significance against the backdrop of increasing diversity and led to an increase from 3.7% in 1970 to 22.7% in 2019 (FSO, 2021) in the permanent resident population who speak non-national languages. This development presents a particular challenge for the education system since it is confronted with neoliberal mechanisms that are mobilized through English and ideology-laden curricula reforms on the one hand and by a growing student diversity without a corresponding increase in diversity- or inclusion-engaged teaching approaches, staff, or infrastructure on the other.

It has been my objective to elucidate the different societal forces that affect Switzerland's multilingualism and the implications for the education system from a critical social perspective by uncovering underlying power relations and hidden hegemonic mechanisms that are often obfuscated and invisible to those individuals who are directly affected by them. Therefore, the education system's local agents, i.e., students and teachers, were chosen as voices for this study. This study advocates a bottom-up policy decision-making process in which all actors are equally involved, and from which everyone can benefit equitably, by emphasizing the perspectives of students and teachers. In this section, I address the study's research questions and examine potential implications for theory, policy, curricula, and practice. Importantly, while this is this manuscript's last section, it is also a new beginning by which to re-engage with my participants' narratives and experiences,

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re-explore their language biographies, and revive their voices based on different (research) questions, specific social debates, and issues or ongoing policy reforms.

6.1 The Language Learning Debate as Starting Point

This study – at least the preliminary ideas and theoretical considerations – began with personal experiences that I had when moving to Switzerland just over four years ago, my first time ever living in an officially multilingual country. I quickly learned that *de jure* language policies were adopted differently in real-life interactions, that bi- or multilingualism could refer to the separate co-existence of two or more languages with little exchange among the multiple languages, and, perhaps most importantly, that I myself had held ideological beliefs about certain languages/varieties to which I had not been exposed previously. The more I read about Switzerland's multilingualism in the media or scholarly literature and the more I talked to local people, the more I noticed that there was one particular debate – the language learning debate – which mobilized the education policy decision to prioritize English over a national language to address sociopolitical issues of dominance and dependence. The debate I was witnessing echoed Blommaert's (1999) observation that

> debates develop against a wider sociopolitical and historical horizon of relationships of power, forms of discrimination, social engineering, nation-building and so forth…the outcome of a debate directly or indirectly involves forms of conflict and inequality among groups of speakers: restrictions on the use of certain languages/varieties, the loss of social opportunities when these restrictions are not observed by speakers, the negative stigmatization of certain languages/varieties, associative labels attached to languages/varieties (p. 2).

It was my intention to better understand and to disentangle the language learning debate, its underlying power mechanisms, consequences for certain groups of speakers, the education system, and its actors, and to amplify the voices of those affected by, but who were often excluded from, the debate.

These questions were addressed by talking to actors in the field of (language) education and were based on a theoretical framework that combined the concepts of *power*, *language*, and *education*, *critical multiculturalism*, *plurilingual identities*, and *unequal Englishes*. 94 questionnaires were completed by students and 34 in-depth interviews were conducted with students and teachers; this enterprise was embedded in a phenomenological research design (van Manen, 2017) with an emphasis on individuals' lifeworlds, their perspectives, practices, and experiences and was conducted with the objective of raising awareness of this crucial topic and its implications. The

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findings derived from the data are summarized in the following four sub-sections and each address the study's research questions:

- Linguistic repertoires, lived experiences of language, and identity expression through language in restrictive multilingual contexts;
- The reproduction of the 'monolingual habitus' in Swiss upper secondary schools;
- Language hierarchies;
- Symbolic power and legitimacy in the native-speaker and standard-speech ideologies.

6.2 Linguistic Repertoires, Lived Experiences of Language, and Identity Expression through Language in Restrictive Multilingual Contexts

This sub-section addresses primarily the first research question concerning how students' and teachers' linguistic repertoires are constituted and how they are employed to position individuals and groups within (restrictive) linguascapes. Since linguistic repertoires are closely linked to individuals' lived experiences of language, this sub-section also partly covers the second research question: What are students' and teachers' lived experiences of language? This question is further elaborated in sub-section 6.5.

All of the study's participants are speakers of multiple languages, although some either do not identify as such or are unaware of their habitual multilingual practices. As a result of the discussion in which my participants and I engaged, some of them indicated that they had become more aware of their language skills and practices, which can increase their self-esteem and confidence as the data and the existing literature suggest (Abendroth-Timmer & Hennig, 2014; Delpit, 2006; García, 2009). The perceived linguistic insecurity regarding their entire repertoire partly originates from their lived experiences of language often within restrictive linguascapes that impede the use of other languages than the local/official one based on language policies, laws, and ideologies. It further renders it more difficult, if not impossible, for some plurilinguals to fully express their identity when certain parts of their linguistic repertoire receive devaluation or even outright discrimination. At the same time, some participants felt more 'complete' or 'at ease' in settings in which they could freely use their linguistic repertoires and capitalize on different personality traits linked to each language. Languages, dialects, and other ways of speaking are hugely important to position oneself and (are actively and proudly used to) indicate membership of a certain speech group. This is especially true for minority languages, as was reported to be the case for Romansh, the Italian dialect spoken in Grisons, and for the various Swiss German varieties which all functioned as a means

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to distinguish speakers from the surrounding language majorities, thereby creating a greater sense of community.

The multi-faceted and non-linear nature of linguistic repertoires, influenced by migration and globalization processes, also suggests that they are always in flux, are co-constructed in interaction with others, and underlie a constant negotiation of skills, ideological constraints, and contextual or social cues. They "come to the fore, then return to the background, they observe each other, keep their distance from each other, intervene or interweave into something new, but in one form or another they are always there" (Busch, 2017c, p. 356). Suppressing certain parts of one's linguistic repertoire which are and remain ever-present and inter-dependent on other parts to make a whole, necessarily impacts upon individuals' subjectivity, perception of the self, and well-being. As expressed poignantly by Patrick, "even after 18 years…even when I only say two sentences…this origin, this identity is somehow very strongly expressed through language and…it remains very strong" (360–362).

6.3 The Reproduction of the 'Monolingual Habitus' in Swiss Upper Secondary Schools

This sub-section addresses the study's third research question about students' and teachers' perspectives on Switzerland's multilingualism and its multilingual education.

Monolingual language practices and LEPs are the norm in all three participating schools, despite the bilingual immersion programs, CAE exams, and most students' and teachers' awareness of the existing linguistic and cultural diversity within the classrooms. Certain selected (non-national) languages, such as English or Spanish for instance, are allowed within controlled settings such as specific language or CLIL classes. HLs, conversely, are sometimes institutionalized in LCO classes at lower secondary level, but not at all in post-compulsory education. The data also showed that it is not only the lacking offer or infrastructure for HL inclusion that is problematic; rather, the *de facto* exclusion of students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds due to – among other forms – existing language barriers to gaining entry to upper secondary education, for example, reveal a more profound systemic issue. Many also considered their L1 inappropriate and bothersome in official school contexts among the participating HL-speaking students and this indicates that a more profound attitude change is needed in order to increase minority language speakers' confidence and to decrease feelings of insecurity and shame. Furthermore, such change is likewise needed in the policy sector, given the prevalent perspective that it is "totally impossible to believe [all the HLs] will be integrated into school" (Jacqueline, 175–176). While providing institutional space and recognition for all students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds is certainly a complex endeavor, it is

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the only way for schools to achieve equity, capitalize on everyone's potential, and to provide valuable and meaningful learning experiences. The case of Romansh as a national, minority language, as described by my participants, clearly exemplifies how attitudes and policies mutually influence each other at both school and society level. It illustrates how thorough acquisition planning (Hornberger, 2006) can lead to official language rights, political and financial support for language promotion and education, and an increase in recognition of Romansh and its speakers. At the same time, pro-Romansh LEPs in Grisons, as summarized keenly by Henri (427–428), "tried to make the system equal for everyone, [but] they created inequality." French is a national language that is considered important by Grisons students, but is reduced to an optional subject for students enrolled in the German-Romansh bilingual program, which can decrease their chances of Switzerland-wide employability and can exacerbate intercantonal communication.

Conversely, many participating students viewed stronger English language skills as the primary objective for language classes at upper secondary level, which would adequately prepare them for future academic and professional challenges. In fact, many teachers also regard the CAE exam preparation as a greater responsibility than other curricula objectives, given that it leads to a prestigious certificate which has become viewed as a standard requirement for university or job applications. Although the exam is not mandatory in all three of the participating schools, the situation puts pressure on both students and teachers, to wit: it causes feelings of guilt in some students for not using their spare time to prepare for the exam and feelings of failure in some teachers for not achieving their pedagogical objectives. Moreover, although the CAE certificate attests that students have a high level of English language skills (C1), the data showed that those students taking the Cambridge Proficiency of English exam (C2) were admired (even more) by many students and teachers. Conversely, this also created tensions and discomfort in other teachers since they are expected to have a C2 level certificate to *teach* English; having both teachers and students 'officially' share the same language level is what undermined their authority.

Finally, school language teaching in Switzerland has been a crucial, but sensitive, topic for a long time. As Stotz (2006, p. 249) formulated it: "Squaring political power and evening out perceived or real grudges among the German-, French-, Italian- and Romansh-speaking groups has occupied the agenda for a century and a half." It is commonly seen as the education system's responsibility to pave the way for national cohesion and harmony through the learning of the national languages. At the same time, despite the covert and overt tensions, dissatisfaction, and inequity, Elmiger (2021) rightfully observes that "one can sometimes get the impression that at the school level, the field of foreign languages is too well ordered to be questioned" (p. 12 [my translation]). This order has been disturbed, however, with the language

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learning debate partly triggered through the introduction of English before a national language in some cantons.

6.4 Language Hierarchies

Language hierarchies are the central element of the study's fourth research question, and it deals with how students and teachers (de)construct and legitimize them. The data indicate that language hierarchies are a constructed social phenomenon that exist on different levels. They are reproduced and legitimized at a societal level through political decisions, individuals' perspectives and ideologies, and through public discourse. The same is true for educational institutions in which they are reproduced and legitimized through LEPs, curricula, and through their actors' perspectives and ideologies. Problematically, these hierarchies not only rank languages, dialects, or other ways of speaking, but also their speakers. As Arthur explained, for instance, being a speaker of Macedonian, a language which is generally considered with low prestige, often automatically labels him as someone from a low socioeconomic background. At the same time, all participating HL speakers prioritized the local national language over their HLs, due to its perceived higher status and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Many of those further considered ELF to be more important to their personal and professional lives, which in some cases created more profound inner conflicts of cultural or linguistic identification. The interview with Adya, for example, revealed that she was not only aware of these language hierarchies, but that she even used them to her advantage. Given Swiss German's societal importance, and the commonly perceived interwovenness of language and integration, she has adopted Swiss German as her most significant language to demonstrate her 'Swissness.' The majority language position is reinforced by perspectives such as: "German is simply everything" (Gita, 312) or "if they [migrants] want to stay in Switzerland, [they] necessarily [have to] also optimize German…" (Elisabeth, 432–433). As Heller and Duchêne (2012) observe critically: "If you don't speak the language of the nation, and speak it properly, you show that you lack the ability to reason and the strength to prevail that citizenship requires; you therefore can't claim access to political and economic power" (p. 5).

The German-speaking dominance or "Germanization" (Coray, 2009) is also felt by speakers of other national languages, interpreted by Victoria as "a friction" (Victoria, 194), which is particularly strong between the French-and German-speaking groups in bilingual Fribourg. These ideologies and tensions can be explained, Jeanne believes, by a reversed intentional demonstration of power capitalizing on the French-speaking dominant position in the canton, which is habitually perceived as undermined at a national level. The overall impression is that "German MUST be learned" (Victoria, 193) and prioritized over English, even though it is not liked by

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students. Many Fribourg students and teachers believe that they would decrease their chances of employment, given the *Romandie*'s dependency on German-speaking Switzerland, without strong German language skills. These arguments are seen as pretext or a mere uncritical reproduction of the *status quo* by others since students' language skills are typically higher in English than in German and social reality already demonstrates that ELF is the preferred choice for communication among speakers of different L1s in both private and professional contexts. Schools, and therefore their actors, are instrumentalized in order to maintain traditions and to improve social cohesion while Etienne, for instance, "do[esn't] know what holds us together culturally" (Etienne, 279). In fact, many German-speaking participants believed that ELF could reduce power dynamics and linguistic insecurity in communication among the different language groups, a common denominator impossible to achieve otherwise given each canton's (potentially) different implementation of LEPs. Yet, as Sonja summarized succinctly, these cantonal discrepancies and the lack of a Swiss-wide approach to reducing such language hierarchies impede the possibility of a satisfactory solution being generated that pleases everyone:

> I believe that's one of these decisions which can probably never be made satisfactorily because either you say, we want to remain competitive internationally, then it's clear for German-speaking Switzerland, that's English.…But if we say, to keep the feeling of nationalism and language diversity, then it would be French. Although (-) then the Ticinese would have (--), then they wouldn't be happy either because the first foreign language would be French and not Italian (256–262).

Finally, this quote, despite mentioning "language diversity," in fact only focuses on *national* languages, thereby exemplifying a prevalent language hierarchy, that is: the exclusion of Romansh. As the data indicate, Romansh speakers are often exposed to such discriminatory hierarchies and (are forced to) commonly defend their linguistic rights as a language minority on a cantonal and national level. That said, they (as well as the Italian-speaking minority in Grisons) can use their low position within the language hierarchies to advocate for their rights, raise awareness among speakers of other languages of potential unequal language policies, laws, and practices, and can receive more political and financial support. This requires strong conviction from the Romansh speakers themselves who are often accustomed to accommodating other language speakers (particularly German ones) since they are all bilingual in both Romansh and German. The same holds true for LEPs and the curriculum in Grisons schools which prescribe German as mandatory language for all students while Romansh and Italian, the canton's two other official languages, can be learned optionally. Yet, although language hierarchies often devalue minority languages, and are thus detrimental to their speakers, they are always in flux, socially co-constructed, and can be used as leverage to advocate for disadvantaged social groups'

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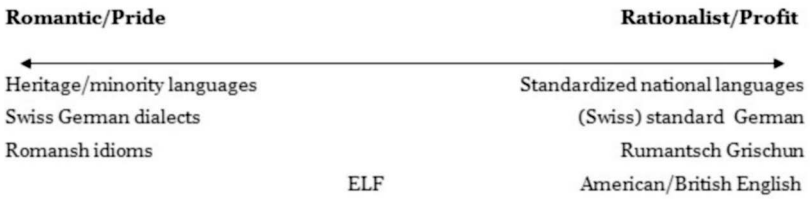
political representation, in changing the *status quo*, and to increase social equity as a form of 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1993).

6.5 Symbolic Power and Legitimacy in the 'Native-Speaker' and 'Standard-Speech' Ideologies

This sub-section primarily addresses the study's fifth research question concerning how students and teachers (de)construct and legitimize (existing) sub-hierarchies within certain languages and further exemplifies students' and teachers' lived experiences of language as part of the second research question (see also 6.2).

Language sub-hierarchies as social constructs capture well the different positions linguistic varieties and other ways of speaking along with their speakers have based on the perceived prestige, legitimacy, and their resemblance to an (imaginary) 'native-speaker' and 'standard-speech' yardstick (Bylin & Tingsell, 2021). The findings can also be presented as a continuum (see below) of romantic and rationalist poles (Geeraerts, 2003) with the former expressing identity and pride and the latter profiting from linguistic capital (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). Importantly, this does not exclude the possibility of employing Swiss German varieties or Romansh idioms, for instance, to gain profit, too.



Switzerland's linguistic landscape has become the site of a positionality struggle between tradition and globalization (Hua & Li, 2016) with an increasing complexity in linguistic diversity and interests. In order to acknowledge all the different idiolects on the continuum which defy simplistic categorization on either pole, active promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity is needed for which a critical deconstruction of the 'native-speaker' and 'standard speech' ideologies is key. The data show that this criticality is often lacking. There are students who, for instance, take American hip hop artists as their role models for the English language without fully understanding the different registers and contextual cues (Agha, 2005). There are others who see perfecting their English skills as the main purpose of education:

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"…the goal would be to, when you graduate university to be perfectly proficient. I mean, absolutely perfect [in AE]" (Jana, 148–149). Such native speaker ideologies often delegitimize Swiss English teachers who pursue different pedagogical objectives regarding accuracy and academic speaking and writing styles, although they simultaneously also reproduce the native speaker ideology based on a more formal register of AE or BE. On a policy level, admission requirements to Swiss teacher education institutions such as stays abroad or Cambridge proficiency certificates systemically reproduce the 'native-speaker' ideologies and incentivize pre-service English teachers to adopt an 'Inner Circle' variety to later pass on to students. At the same time, certain students are pressured by the high language expectations in AE/BE and feel much more comfortable in contexts where ELF is used as a common communication tool. The study has found that the reproduction of the 'native-speaker' ideology and the language sub-hierarchies, which favor prestigious varieties, can hegemonize speakers of other languages and social practices and impede meaningful, value- and judgement-free communication, thereby engaging everyone's potential. ELF and other translanguaging practices serve exactly this purpose and are not only applicable in international communication, but are very much appreciated as a mediator even in Switzerland's intranational communication. It provides a legitimate voice to all those who cannot fully use their language of choice due to sociopolitical constraints or underlying standard speech ideologies, which is often the case for both speakers of heritage and minority languages and for Swiss German varieties; the latter of those in particular cause tensions among the different language groups and are deeply embedded in power dynamics (Ribeaud, 2010), which can potentially be reduced through a non-national language such as ELF.

That said, existing beliefs that represent the majority language speaker position such as "social life in Switzerland simply doesn't work enough [without Swiss German]" (Elisabeth, 43) cannot be addressed simply by switching to ELF in order to avoid conflict. Adya's lived experiences of language, for instance, exemplifies the view that the 'native speaker' ideology can also refer to dialects and oppose the 'standard-speech' ideology. In her case, as she was told by her teacher, instead of speaking standard German – one of her L1s – she should adopt Swiss German to showcase her 'localness' and integration often questioned due to her 'non-typical Swiss physical appearance.' Swiss German can, thus, be used to strategic, profitable advantage to increase academic/employment opportunities and to pass as a 'true' Swiss person while reducing "undesirability associated with the category 'nonnative'" (Motha, 2014, p. 94). At the same time, others envy her for her standard accent in German, which is still often considered more prestigious by many especially in educational contexts, thereby again forcing her to adapt her linguistic repertoire to social expectations and ideologies. Exchange students are also impacted by the use of Swiss German in class, since it plays a central role in rapport building among teachers and students and is the natural way of communicating for its speakers, even though it

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is excluded on a *de jure* basis. For those who do not speak it, however, it can label them as members of the outgroup (Bourdieu, 1991) and can render integration more difficult. More transparent LEPs and equitable language practices are needed that recognize all students' and teachers' ways of speaking, paying particular attention to 'non-standard' idiolects that are officially censored from educational contexts. For instance, providing institutional space to Swiss German can not only reduce feelings of inferiority and deficiency, which many people experience when comparing their way of speaking with standard German norms and speakers, but it can also foster better understanding for exchange and/or *Romand* students who learn the standard variety exclusively. The situation is similar for the different Romansh idioms, three of which have been standardized into RG while the other two have been excluded. Despite the systemic hierarchization of individuals' ways of speaking through status planning processes (Hornberger, 2006), the distinction of more or less prestigious varieties also impacts their position within society at large. Those living in more rural areas in Grisons, whose ways of speaking resemble less the (artificial) standard(ized) language, are often considered to be "a second category person" (Henri, 344).

Finally, instead of viewing languages, dialects, and other ways of speaking as hierarchies, they are better understood as existing on a continuum and as movable. Language practices in an increasingly diverse society are more complex and translingual and, thus, defy simplistic dichotomous categorization as '(non-)standard' or '(non-)native.' Raising awareness of the potential sociopolitical, economic, and/or mental consequences of such existing social constructs is a responsibility of the education system, however, and should be taken seriously (Delpit, 2006).

6.6 Theoretical Implications

A general remark is needed on terminology. Throughout my theoretical framework, data analysis, findings, and the discussion, I make use of concepts and terms that are used because of a lack of better terminology or because they are established terms in the literature, which remain no less inappropriate. These include, for instance, native speaker, standard speech, the somewhat forced distinction among individual's L1, L2, etc. when one's linguistic repertoire is much better described as a dynamic continuum, national/foreign/heritage languages, or ELF. By defining these concepts with a fixed name, I contribute to the reproduction of categories that do not authentically depict social reality's complexity and that might be considered inappropriate by individuals for whom I use the terms. A theoretical implication should be to deconstruct such terminology more thoroughly, given the (discursive) power of categories (Butler, 1997), and to commonly decide on adequate descriptions and terms with participants or ethical advisors for future research. These implications

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might be limited to the theoretical/empirical context and gradually change mentalities and habits of the wider society since these categories typically fulfill practical or pragmatic purposes in everyday social practices.

The study's underlying theoretical framework consists of different theories, frameworks, and concepts to situate my study and to embed my research questions. It positions language and education at the interplay of different influences and mechanisms such as neoliberalism, power, social justice, hegemony, critical multiculturalism, LPP, identity, and applied teaching approaches. These were considered indispensable to capturing the multi-faceted nature of both language and education, the different functions and constituents, and actors involved on the societal and educational levels. Despite the multiple foci and different international theoretical and applied orientations, the theoretical framework seemed partly insufficient to capturing the complexity on a *national* level. A framework combining all these aspects with a focus on its national linguistic and educational landscape would be beneficial, given the plethora of details regarding Switzerland's education system, the different education levels, cantonal discrepancies, curricula reforms in some regions and not others, policy documents in four national languages, and political involvement through referenda. This would allow for an investigation of intranational aspects further and comparatively among more cantons, language regions, mono-/bi/trilingual cantons, influx of HLs, and its policy framework from a historical or contemporary perspective and would allow us to then engage in further comparative studies in international contexts. At the same time, adopting a national lens when globalization and migration processes make social life increasingly diverse, dynamic, and complex might perhaps be counter-intuitive. Yet, although education has no boundaries, national education systems continue to impose limits and restrictions and, thus, serve as different research sites, which can be used to learn from each other until boundary-less, equitable education is achieved. That said, a more nationally focused theoretical framework should not replace the one used here since, from a post-structural perspective, concepts such as *identity*, *language*, and *power* are always in flux, constantly being (re-)produced through discourse and space, and can continuously be re-appropriated by individuals as agentive subjects. Thus, research that combines international and interdisciplinary perspectives with a *national theoretical framework* can contribute to new policies and practices that are necessary for the future of education.

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6.7 Implications for Policy, Curricula, and Practice

> The school is a large ship which, no matter how fast it cruises, is difficult to maneuver: each attempt to reorient its trajectory can only be envisaged in the long term, because often a change of course – even a small one – is only translated into reality slowly and gradually. (Elmiger, 2021, p. 100 [my translation])

While implications for policy and practice are often listed separately in other research, I intentionally combine both aspects here and add specific implications for school curricula within the study's focus on upper secondary education. I consider it to be more appropriate to highlight the necessary paradigm shift of common, bottom-up policy decision-making processes with all actors involved.

Important policy strategies as suggested by the EDK (2013) ten years ago without sufficient implementation to this date – also endorsed by this study as recommendations – include:

- the active promotion of students' plurilingualism through excursions in neighboring language regions or countries, use of teaching material in different languages, project-based learning for students of the same HL, inclusion of the community and parents as speakers of HLs, culinary/cultural/musical activities associated with different languages, co-/team-teaching with other language subject teachers, book/film clubs for different languages, etc.;
- the facilitation of collaboration among language teachers to enable team and integrative language teaching through interdisciplinary study programs for all language subject teachers and the introduction of modules on multilingualism and migration for all pre-service teachers;
- the expansion of CLIL particularly regarding authentic and tailored teaching material to take local/national curricular requirements into consideration, authentic and rich target language input, and appropriate teacher preparation and compensation;
- the development of an internet platform to organize school exchanges.

It is crucial not to neglect these ongoing challenges when they are redebated in current curricular reforms among other urgent social issues such as digitalization, cli-

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mate change, or the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic as critically important educational topics for future generations.

Generally, objectives for post-compulsory language teaching need to be revisited. While detailed objectives based on the CEFR exist regarding language proficiency, more profound questions concerning students' actual language *use* outside of school need to be asked. Are students trained to study or work in a different language region? Do they learn how the different cultural mentalities represented in Switzerland actually work? Are they meant to create meaningful encounters with peers from another language region and accommodate them by speaking the other's language? Should everyone in these encounters be able to speak their national L1, thereby practicing receptive multilingualism? To what extent do schools see themselves or are seen as responsible for teaching their students the basics to ensure national cohesion, peaceful cohabitation, and mutual understanding? How can the teaching of national languages, English, and other languages create synergies instead of competition? It is essential to discuss these questions, to which no satisfactory answers have yet been found, before adopting new policies or curricula and thus continuing a way of language teaching that has only been moderately successful in output and has done so "more out of obligation than conviction" (Elmiger, 2021, p. 110 [my translation]).

While schools have increased their offers of bilingual programs over the last decade, there is more to be done on a systemic level to provide this to as many students as possible in an equitable way. Thus, it should not be up to individual school leaders to decide whether such programs are to be implemented at their school, how many financial resources allocated, and which teachers charged with carrying them out. Rather, such decisions should be made at the cantonal level at least in order to have consistent programs in case students have to change schools, to efficiently manage human and financial resources, and to collaborate with the canton's teacher education institutions to fill the demand for bilingual teachers. The majority of bilingual programs are also conducted in the local national language plus English. While this is sensible, to a certain extent given that many university study programs (at MA level) are offered in English, students are already very used to and exposed to English in (almost) natural contexts outside of school, as the study's data have shown. CLIL in a second national language, for instance, could provide a chance for students to discover the language through authentic content with less emphasis on grammar and literature and would allow them to choose among an even greater number of universities or job opportunities across all of Switzerland after graduation. This, in turn, requires trained teachers who can teach in a second national language and/or English, which again depends on teacher preparation and continuous training for in-service teachers. Importantly, CLIL is primarily a *bi*lingual teaching approach and is often associated with common languages in which study programs and teaching materials exist and, therefore, is seemingly

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incompatible with a *multi*lingual teaching mentality. That said, dedicating CLIL teaching to the national languages or English opens up time and resources to be allocated to HLs and language and culture classes, time which would otherwise not exist. This study, therefore, argues for the adoption of a transdisciplinary approach to teaching in which subjects are combined and taught based on students' desires and needs, and on logistical requirements, albeit to a lesser extent.

Additionally, given Switzerland's rather small size and good infrastructure, exchanges among the different language regions to experience the other languages and cultures firsthand and to learn together with peers in natural contexts should be promoted, institutionalized, and subsidized to a much more significant degree. Offers should further be expanded to include not only students, but also (pre- and in-service) teachers, and school leaders. Despite financial support through *Movetia*, for instance, some teachers reported that many educational institutions were reluctant to organize exchanges. A great deal of additional effort, energy, and time is needed (particularly from teachers) who deserve incentives for their tremendous work. Investing in such intercultural encounters can help to deconstruct existing prejudices and stereotypes and might inspire adolescents to learn about other languages and cultures so that they no longer feel like "they don't like us at all, they speak Swiss German, we can't understand anything [and] they won't understand us" (David, 171–172). Another implication can be derived from David's experience, to wit: how to deal with the dominant use of different Swiss German dialects in the German-speaking part of Switzerland when the French-and Italian-speaking parts learn standard German in school. Instead of adhering to 'standard-speech' ideologies, schools should teach languages in the way they occur naturally, especially if the objective is to increase communication and understanding among Switzerland's different language groups. Therefore, students from the French- and Italian-speaking regions could be trained to understand Swiss German and might learn about its cultural value and the (linguistic) differences among the various local dialects, SSG, and standard German. Again, such measures require language teachers with (receptive) competences in Swiss German, updated teaching material to guide teachers and provide students with authentic exposure, and finally concern the integration of such competencies in teacher preparation.

Finally, given the study's embeddedness in this transformative period, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, further implications concern education's digital future. Given the increased opportunity and improved technological infrastructure in schools, minority and heritage language classes in particular could be made available to a wider audience via online learning tools. The lack of infrastructure or teachers in a specific language were commonly mentioned as reasons why schools do not offer LCO classes or teaching in minority/heritage languages. This was discussed with a Romansh teacher during an interview as a viable solution to reaching Romansh-speaking students in Zurich who would otherwise not receive any formal

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instruction in their L1. The same could be tested for students' other L1s. That being understood, the introduction of online learning opportunities for minority/heritage language-speaking students must not be seen as a replacement for learning experiences with other students in person. However, it can serve as an innovative, temporary, or bridging solution until schools are in a position to provide the necessary infrastructure and can recruit qualified teachers to also serve the interests and needs of *all* students and can stop promoting a linguistically restrictive education.

6.8 Future Research and Conclusion

The study strived to contribute to this change toward more equity and social justice and future research can further expand on this ambitious goal. This can be done by integrating individuals from linguistic and cultural backgrounds unaccounted for in this study, notably the Italian-speaking region. Given the uniqueness of every canton and its education system, including other cantons would also serve well as interesting research sites if urban centers were compared to more rural areas of Switzerland, for instance. Furthermore, migrant students with lower linguistic competences in the local school language are an essential inclusion, given the linguistic barriers and Switzerland's exclusive admission system to post-compulsory education. Including school leaders as important decision makers, regarding the implementation of students' HLs at an institutional level, is also recommended. Additionally, it would be interesting to draw a comparison among the different education levels (primary, secondary, tertiary) and to investigate the different challenges and successful practices of educational institutions regarding linguistic and cultural diversity. Future research could also analyze existing teacher preparation programs, curricula, and teaching material in order to determine whether the implications described here are practicable.

Although this study has come to an end, its purpose continues and becomes increasingly relevant every day. Switzerland's linguistic landscape is increasingly more diverse and complex with migration flows across Europe and different international policy changes impacting the Swiss job market for expats ruled by neo-capitalistic mechanisms. Languages, as one of the most crucial markers of one's identity and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), are caught between different societal forces that incorporate sameness or difference and either equity or injustice. Due to underlying hegemonic processes, not all speakers can employ their linguistic repertoires equally in social practices either because they are censored from official contexts or because of their perceived low self-esteem, which is in turn linked to linguistic insecurity. Others whose linguistic repertoires include the majority language and who fit into the socially constructed category of the legitimate 'native speaker' can benefit from it effortlessly to the disadvantage of the minoritized language speakers, how-

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ever. Problematically, the education system partly reproduces and legitimizes these mechanisms by adhering to such ideologies and to the 'monolingual habitus.' Yet, if all of the actors involved can manage to deconstruct discriminatory policies and practices, regarding certain languages and/or groups of people, and can engage in the promotion of *true* linguistic and cultural diversity and structural change instead, then we are one step closer to equity and social justice. Only by further engaging with and advancing research on social diversity, and those processes that impede it, can we appreciate what makes us human and how we might learn from each other to succeed in our ever-changing society.

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