Findings

This section of the study presents findings retrieved through a data analysis of the questionnaires, along with the interviews conducted with students and teachers, and is divided into themes that have been further divided into subthemes. The results derived from the questionnaire, through descriptive statistics (summarized in a table in Appendix C), are embedded in the following sub-sections, although information on Fribourg students could only be provided for 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 due to the lacking interview data. Findings are separated by student and teacher and by canton in the case of students' and teachers' interviews. All of the names have been changed to guarantee participants' privacy (see Appendix D for a list with pseudonyms). Participants' accounts are expressed through direct quotes (whenever possible) throughout the findings section. The verbal data, taken from the questionnaires, do not have any line numbers whereas those taken from the interviews indicate the exact transcript line numbers in parentheses.

4.1 Plurilingual Identities within Restrictive Linguistic Diversity

Despite its focus on linguistic diversity, Switzerland is a restrictive multilingual country which often limits the development of diverse, non-linear language biographies, the opportunities for meaningful lived experiences of language, and full identity expression for plurilinguals.

The findings illustrate that there is a great variety of different languages and cultures present in Switzerland today, yet this diversity does not happen in practice since policies and laws dictate which languages are officially allowed in each canton. Therefore, although all of the participants are speakers of multiple languages, they cannot always freely choose which one to use and not all are equally aware of their linguistic potential. Restrictive language policies, which emphasize (certain) national languages and which exclude individuals' HLs, have bodily-felt consequences and lead to a certain homogenization or assimilation. The participants' own perceptions of themselves were sometimes contradicted by their narrated language

biographies; in some cases, this led to a change from identifying as a speaker of one language to a speaker of multiple languages. The data also demonstrated that determining fixed categories, such as L1 or FL, often neither accounts for individuals' non-linear trajectories, due to migration or globalization processes, nor for the emotional or intellectual attachment that speakers have to certain languages which they may consider neither 'first' nor 'foreign.' Finally, the often-lacking opportunities for participants to make meaningful lived experiences with their entire linguistic repertoire increases linguistic insecurity, particularly in those languages most crucial for authentic identity expression and this distorts how individuals assessed their language skills *tout court*.

Students from Zurich and Fribourg specifically are exposed to many different HLs, which they primarily speak at home. However, while their linguistic repertoires might be more diverse, they report generally having lower competences in their HL compared to their second L1, the local language. Students from Grisons, conversely, are typically perfectly bilingual in their two L1s – Romansh and Swiss German/German. English has become an integral part of students' everyday lives and is employed mainly in online activities that occupy much of their time outside of school. French is perceived as a burden by some students in Zurich, who also complain about mandatory language exchanges, even though the average attitude is rather neutral. French is not at all associated with their personal interests and leisure activities. This is not the case for students in Grisons who generally do not learn French in school unless they purposefully select it as either an optional or specialization subject. They show a rather positive attitude toward it and consider it an important subject, given its status as a national language. In fact, many students regret not learning French as a *mandatory* language subject in school. Furthermore, students in Fribourg who learn GFL show a similar pattern in attitude and behavior to students in Zurich concerning French. For instance, one student mentioned that "I've learned German…but I simply don't like it, so I was less motivated." They seem to associate German strictly with school and forced language activities; as one participant reported: "German – only in school if necessary." Italian is generally linked to vacation and, therefore, is perceived less as an obligation. It is not a mandatory subject in any of the three schools (in Grisons, this is true for the Romansh-speaking section). Finally, Romansh only plays a role for students in Grisons who are enrolled in a Romansh-German bilingual program. It is not a school subject in either Zurich or Fribourg.

4.1.1 Students in Grisons

Almost all of the students in Grisons spoke primarily Romansh and Swiss German/German. They would sometimes also use Italian or English, depending on where they lived or which exposure they had due to hobbies, for instance. The majority of

them associated English with social media, internet, and Netflix where they had the opportunity to make international or "e-friends," as Jovin called them. It became evident in their answers that the vast majority shared a passion for English, since it enabled them to communicate with people from all over the world online, to watch series not (yet) made available in Romansh or German, and to travel. Italian was associated with vacations in Italy in specific, a common destination for many. Additional languages mentioned by a few students were Norwegian, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese. Whereas Norwegian was autonomously learned via a smartphone application, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese were languages spoken by either family or friends. Sebastian spoke Dutch at home with his father, Melina was surrounded by Portuguese through her best friend, and yet others had family or friends in Spain or South America with whom they spoke Spanish.

While many of them grew up bilingually, either with one parent speaking Swiss German/German and the other speaking Romansh, others learned Romansh exclusively in school. Jovin explicitly pointed out that being asked to determine his L1 (on surveys or in administrative contexts, for instance) was impossible since he felt unable to make his linguistic repertoire fit into normative categories: "…it is always a bit of a conflict when I have to put German as my first language, it [Romansh] is simply equivalent for me" (Jovin, 18–20). Many participants stated that they were constantly exposed to multiple languages and switched accordingly. These included not only switching among languages but also among identities, habits, and personality traits associated with certain languages. Yet, others demonstrated that they were more convinced of monolingual practices and policies linking it to a more structured and traditional society in line with their values. They believe that Romansh is an authentic indicator of belonging and true Grisons origins, associating immigration and foreign cultural, moral, and political imports with chaos. They also perceived an attack on their language, through mockery or ignorance, as an attack on their personality as it is closely linked to the local dialect.

Multiple participants further reported that they either consciously or unconsciously looked for Romansh speakers when they were in locations in which Romansh was not spoken. For instance, Timo remembered being on vacation with his family in Scotland and overhearing another family speaking Romansh at dinner. He said that he had felt confident talking to them because they shared Romansh as a connection, and this led them to meet again the next day. He is certain that he would not have done so if it had been any other language. Several students had very positive experiences when they used Romansh as a 'secret language' in different places outside Grisons. Hanna said that she had been asked about the language that they were speaking by strangers and when she replied "Romansh," they were fascinated and curious to find out more about it. The interest in Romansh, as she said, positively impacted her self-esteem and made her proud. Furthermore, Jovin explicitly stated that he had no knowledge of French, but would soon be sent to the Romandie

to conduct his mandatory military training. He was determined to find speakers of the same language, which would also provide a sense of belonging and group membership, something that he did not expect to find in a French-speaking community. Sebastian shared the same experience; instead of talking to people from other language regions, he would instead limit his interactions to speakers of the same language. The group identity seems to be even stronger in exactly those linguistically and culturally different places, outside of Grisons, and really function as a connecting element.

That said, Romansh identity is also promoted within the Romansh-speaking community, which was highly appreciated by students. There are specific activities that bring Romansh-speaking individuals together within Romansh-speaking territory, connecting them to their linguistic and cultural heritage and that even celebrate the community itself. For example, these included parades and village fairs that function as strong identity markers and an essential part of Romansh speakers' experiences. Yet, the focus on creating this specific in-group, and of being part of the community can also be perceived as forced and unnatural. As Jovin (9–10) admitted: "…then I learned Romansh from my father, almost forcibly I would say." He experienced other restrictions caused by linguistic ideologies, held by some Romansh speakers, which also negatively impacted his mother's self-esteem. Originally from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, Jovin's mother still does not feel legitimate when speaking Romansh after many years of living there, as he reported. Although she understands and is able to speak it, she prefers using Swiss German while justifying herself for not speaking Romansh (although Swiss German is a local language as well). Furthermore, the constant emphasis on speaking Romansh, and the perceived pressure to do so as a minority language speaker, renders it more difficult to value and involves using other resources from one's linguistic repertoire. At the same time, making Romansh a requirement in certain federal and cantonal public administration and government jobs, by introducing quotas, prioritizes 'local' recruitment and hinders migrants and Swiss citizens from other language regions alike from being competitive in the job market. On a federal level, Romansh speakers perceive a lack of understanding and condescension *vis-à-vis* their enhanced chances in recruitment situations through quotas. In the case of Grisons, prioritizing Romansh speakers can cause emigration of professionals or even 'brain drain' in certain sectors, resulting in the loss of crucial resources in a region shaped by a rather difficult economic and demographic development trajectory. As Jovin pointed out, however, quotas also serve the purpose of officializing and attributing power and justice to a minority language.

Another consequence of Romansh's minority status within Switzerland is that it is impossible for them to use it to communicate with other Swiss language regions. They generally try Swiss German first, but many switch to English for intercantonal communication with other language groups. English plays a crucial role for all stu-

dents and takes up a very big part of their spare time. They all listen to, speak, read, and write in English primarily online on social media, on Netflix or on YouTube. Despite the positive associations, such as freedom, interconnectedness with the world, and innovation, the existing expectations to speak English proficiently are very demanding for some students. Jovin, for instance, revealed having a "bad conscience" (Jovin, 292) for not watching series or films in English as a form of preparation for the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE). That said, he reported that his motivation to learn English is purely professional: "It's not about English, it's simply about having English up my sleeve for a job. Here is my diploma (--) in the end, if I can speak English or not (-), I only do it for the job or to have better opportunities" (Jovin, 302–304).

Timo shares Jovin's opinion regarding English and limits its relevance within Switzerland's linguistic landscape to the status of a mere tool. He likens the concept of ELF to Switzerland's political neutrality in which a *neutral* language, such as ELF, is compatible with its mediator position on a global geopolitical scale. Yet: "it's nothing you would associate with Switzerland's identity" (Timo, 354–355). English here is reduced to its communicative function while the national languages express the local identities and cultures.

Finally, students' lived experiences of language were both negative and positive. While language can provide a sense of belonging and can strengthen ties with a given space and group, it can also exclude individuals from the community, impact their mental health, and can incorporate symbolic violence.[1]

4.1.2 Teachers in Grisons

Like students, teachers from Grisons are exposed and accustomed to multiple languages in their daily lives. They are all speakers of at least two languages with many switching among as many as four languages regularly to accomplish different tasks within diverse linguascapes. They all speak Romansh, Swiss German/German, Italian, English, and French to a certain extent with some also speaking Spanish. Many of them, consciously or unconsciously, switch among languages since they are exposed to different languages at work and in their spare time.

Typically, at least one main regional language is spoken by everyone, depending on where individuals live in the canton of Grisons. Similar to the data retrieved from students' interviews, teachers' lived experiences of language show that Romansh as a minority language in the canton of Grisons has a binding function and connects its speakers to a community. Gita's family language background illustrates this very well. Her father, a Romansh speaker, worked in a store in a primarily German-speaking environment in Grisons, but he managed to attract many Romansh-speaking

1 This is explained in greater detail in section 4.5.1.

clients: "because they knew that he could speak Romansh and that's why they always came to him" (Gita, 59–60). Speaking the same language here is linked to common values as well serving as a motive for individuals to support the speech community financially. According to Gita, the reason that other Romansh speakers shopped in the store was the fact that her father shared their linguistic and cultural background.

Typically, participants are themselves plurilingual and often switch among Romansh, Swiss German, and Italian, due to migration of different language groups as well as extended family within the canton, which results in multi-faceted language repertoires. While they are generally very proud of Grisons' multilingualism, especially in the case of the minority language Romansh, the situation is more complex and complicated for Romansh speakers. As Martin explained: "We have to learn German as Romansh speakers. We can't just say no, we're not going to learn German…we are a bit under pressure" (180–182). Despite the pressure to become bilingual, the situation is perceived as yielding a positive outcome in the long run. These underlying power dynamics manifest themselves in beliefs and attitudes toward language and culture which, according to Martin, have long been established within the family context and are then sometimes reproduced without analyzing and questioning them at school. In the minority language context of Romansh in specific, Martin perceived the parents' influence as crucial regarding the transmission of Romansh cultural values and traditions. Although the school can sensitize its students, he believes that the family is responsible for the affective dimension that is linked to language acquisition.

A common linguistic practice in the trilingual canton is mutual understanding based on *receptive* linguistic competences. This implies that individuals can typically make use of one of the three official languages with which they are most comfortable and which they can expect their interlocutors to understand the most easily. Although all Grisons interviewees were plurilingual, their level of confidence was not equal for every language to which they were exposed on a daily basis. Consequently, understanding one another and speaking one's own L1 is the preferred approach to multilingualism in Grisons in order to reduce the pressure of being (or feeling) forced to speak a certain language. Speakers are particularly flexible and attentive since they regularly engage in multilingual meaning-making practices and depend on a more involved cooperation in order to guarantee understanding. Other non-regional languages are not usually included in this approach. Certain situations, however, require using different, non-local languages; this sometimes comes close to changing one's personality in a positive sense for Nicole, for instance. The feeling of transformation is even more drastic for her when speaking English – a language hugely important to her identity and that is associated with positive experiences abroad, achievements, and a greater communication space. Yet, she still describes Romansh as "the language of the heart" (Nicole, 453) and represents the common ground among its speakers, connecting them and reinforcing their sense of belong-

ing. Although it is something very inherent, it needs to be actively employed and expressed in order not to either lose or forget it, which is not always feasible in a minority language context dominated by Swiss German.

The same is true for other non-regional languages, as was stated by Henri. HL speakers also deserve to express their languages and cultures. He believes that integration cannot work if individuals are forced to suppress important parts of their identity. A first step would be to do away with monolingual standards, which to him are very limiting and discriminatory. He goes on to explain that multilingualism should be considered the new norm since it more accurately resembles the social reality, rather than reproducing monolingual norms as more and more HL speakers come to live in Grisons. As he put it: "monolingualism is divisible" (Henri, 168); therefore, multilingualism needs to be adopted as the most appropriate, contemporary, and equitable perspective. As he advocates, only if people see the world in a more pluralist way can there be mutual understanding and respect for diversity and otherness. Yet, opportunities are lacking to practice authentic multilingualism, especially for minority languages such as Romansh or many other HLs since they (want to) adapt to (mostly Swiss German-speaking) monolingual speakers. As Gita pointed out, the linguistic situation in Grisons is reversed from the situation encountered at the national level where Swiss German is the majority language. She explained that it is considered odd to *only* speak Swiss German because of the daily exposure to both Italian and Romansh. Monolinguals are virtually considered 'non-locals' since everyone else typically speaks German *in addition* to another language. At the same time, she experiences an increasing popularity of Swiss German even as a written language in her Swiss German-speaking environment, which had long been considered a taboo.

4.1.3 Students in Zurich

The common language spoken at home by all Zurich students in the study is Swiss German/German. In addition to this language, though, students also speak Bosnian, Vietnamese, Hungarian, Italian, Urdu, Romansh, Turkish, Swahili, Macedonian, and Tirolean dialect. These HLs are connected to students' families and relatives from their own (or their parents') countries of origin. Other languages that they learned in school were English, French, Spanish, and a few took optional Mandarin classes. Similarly, English seems to correspond very well to students' spare time activities, such as watching Netflix, films, videos, series, and tutorials, chatting, online gaming, social media, reading books, (online) newspapers, scientific papers for school (especially in biology), listening to music and podcasts, bookings, programming, writing blogs or in forums, (inter)national meetings for

Fridays for Future,[2] political parties, and finally for traveling or exchange programs with English-speaking countries. Their interest in English even includes learning American Sign Language, "just because the language is so interesting," as one participant stated. French, conversely, is strictly associated with school and is used, as one student reported: "only when I have to communicate with someone who only speaks French."

More precisely, Swiss German is by far the most relevant and most commonly used language for students from Zurich at school and in their spare time. As Nicolas explained, *Züritüütsch* ['Zurich German,'] is all one needs to live there and the language in which he can best express his identity. Nevertheless, all of the participants' linguistic repertoires are very diverse and incorporate crucial links to their identity and personality that are unaccounted for in a monolingual, Swiss German-based linguascape. Arthur, for instance, perceives his identity to be made up of Macedonian, Swiss German, German, and AE. To him, Macedonian represents his roots and heritage as well as a tool to express himself:

> …whenever I speak Macedonian and also when I'm in Macedonia, then I'm happy to speak Macedonian because it connects me to something that I can see as myself. Whereas German, there isn't such a strong connection, of course, I use it to communicate (Arthur, 40–43).

Speaking one's HL can also trigger and strengthen feelings of joy and belonging, as Arthur's quote demonstrates. Knowing where one's home is, and where one comes from, is a complicated sensation especially for (second generation) immigrants like Arthur, who engage in a continuous (re-)positioning on an identity continuum between Macedonian and Swiss. He refers to himself as a foreigner in Switzerland, which might be the result of constantly being asked about his 'true' origin:

> Yes…for example, when I speak Swiss German there is often the question if I come from Grisons. Something I didn't understand for a long time until I heard people from Grisons and they literally have this *Züri-Ausländer-Akzent* [foreign accent deviating from the one common to Zurich] (Arthur, 16–18).

According to Arthur, the legitimate and accepted accent is the one spoken in Zurich and this one only. The local Swiss German variety spoken in Grisons is already considered foreign. Along with being considered foreign, a current connotation of Grisons' accent is its 'rural backwardness' compared to Zurich's urban accent. When I asked him whether he still spoke that way, he explained that his language skills had improved immensely, but that other friends with the same language background sounded more aggressive and made more grammatical mistakes than Swiss

2 Fridays for Future is a global climate strike movement that started in 2018.

German monolinguals. As a "*secondo*,"[3] he is also 'detected' as a foreigner when on vacation in Macedonia since he 'deviates' from the expected Macedonian standard: "It's like the problem for *secondos* in Switzerland, it's mostly the problem that you're a foreigner here and then also in Macedonia" (Arthur, 48–49). For Arthur, speaking Macedonian leads him to his origins which cannot be found in his passport, but are rather represented linguistically: "…I am Swiss now, I have a Swiss passport, but for myself, I have to know where I come from…For me it's important to have an identity" (Arthur, 38–39). That said, this does not mean that the other languages that he speaks are insignificant. When writing lyrics for rap songs, he first chose to do so in English but then felt that the emotional connection was lacking and therefore switched to Swiss German. He explained that it was easier for him to do so in Swiss German because he wanted to express his identity and to write about personal and emotional topics. He concedes, however, that his way of speaking in Swiss German is, as he put it: "very Americanized or Hiphopized" (Arthur, 175) resulting from his passion for American music and films. Similarly, Nicolas, who considers himself a monolingual Swiss German speaker, acknowledges that his way of speaking is very much influenced by anglicisms. As he explains, his use of English within Swiss German is "not to be cool," (Nicolas, 40), but rather indicates the membership of a certain (age) group and, according to him, is the norm among his friends.

For Adya, her first and personally most significant language is Urdu. She connects it with her 'true origins': "[My parents] are both from Pakistan and I also somehow come from there and all my family is there" (Adya, 32–33). Since she was not born there herself, speaking Urdu functions as a legitimator to claim her Pakistani origin. Similar to Arthur, she states that she only "*somehow* come[s] from there," (Adya, 33 [emphasis added]) indicating that she feels as though she is in between two cultures, with the Urdu language connecting her to her family in Pakistan. Despite Urdu's importance for her family and her life in general, she is also extremely pressured by her parents to speak it. When meeting other Pakistani friends of her age, she would sometimes prefer chatting in Swiss German – a language that she shares with them; however, her parents do not allow this. English, conversely, plays an important role and brings immigrant families together. It is used as a *lingua franca* since newly arrived families and friends in particular do not (yet) speak Swiss German/German. Furthermore, Adya relies on English to write to her Pakistani family since she can neither read nor write in Urdu. As she formulated it: "It's very hard for me, I'm illiterate [in Urdu]" (Adya, 153). Identifying as illiterate in the language that she con-

3 The term *secondos*, for which various definitions exist, has a controversial connotation in Switzerland. It can refer to second-generation immigrants born in Switzerland or non-Swiss (by passport) adolescents living in Switzerland independent of their place of birth. Approximately 330,000 members of the non-Swiss population in Switzerland falls into this category (Maurer, 2003).

siders most meaningful in her life can negatively impact her self-esteem. She also sometimes speaks English with her friends from school, especially when they meet other students their own age from international schools in Zurich. It is spoken (and acquired) in an almost natural environment and functions as a mediator among different cultures and L1s for expats and migrant families. As Adya stated, she is very proud to speak it and to have access to such diverse people by using English without feeling the same pressure that she does with Urdu or Swiss German.[4]

Yasmin, having had positive experiences with her L1 Turkish outside her family, equates her (more diverse) language repertoire with opportunities that she would not have otherwise. The experience that made her realize this was a school excursion in Poland where Turkish connected her to other Turkish-speaking students there. This was an experience that emphasized her individual strengths and made her special when compared to her fellow Zurich students. Ever since the encounter, she has become aware of the possibility of using language as a mediator among different cultures and languages. Being able to apply Turkish in a new space with other students of her heritage cultural background made her improve her own rather negative attitude toward her language repertoire, which she felt was rather undesired and insignificant in the Swiss German context.

4.1.4 Teachers in Zurich

Similar to Zurich students, Zurich teachers are plurilinguals too, even though they do not all identify as such. The extent of their varied language repertoire changes with teachers' age and the subjects taught at school. While younger and FL teachers tend to have a more diverse language repertoire, older and German language teachers differ mainly in their daily language use. While they all share linguistic competences in Swiss German/German, English, and French, how extensively and proficiently they employ those in their daily lives varies. That said, Nesrin, for instance, speaks Bosnian as her L1 and teaches French and Italian. She believes that her plurilingual repertoire shapes her way of thinking and behavior. Having Bosnian as her L1, she is convinced that she has been unconsciously influenced in terms of how she perceives the world and how she positions herself in it. For example, she identifies strongly with the fact that Switzerland is officially a multilingual country, even though she believes that not everyone is aware of this, and its pluralism could be promoted better. Tina, a teacher of the same subjects, has also been strongly influenced by Switzerland's linguistic landscape and this led her to intensify her lived experiences of language with French and Italian during many stays within these linguistic regions as well as the choice of her study program. She is very engaged in promoting the learning of national languages at school and continues to actively use them

4 This aspect is explained in more detail in section 4.5.3.

in her spare time as well. Eleonore, a German teacher, shares this positive attitude toward Switzerland's multilingualism having grown up in an officially monolingual country: "I think it's wonderful how Switzerland is handling its multilingualism. I think it's very admirable and also worth protecting.…I don't know what is more important than language [for one's identity]. Language is THE identity marker *per se*" (Eleonore, 95–96; 304–305). For her, being able and allowed to speak one's language equals expressing one's identity. As a speaker of standard German in a Swiss German environment, she is very conscious of her identity expression through language. The same holds true for Swiss-German speaking Patrick:

> …so, I grew up in the canton of Bern, then I lived in inner Switzerland for 9 years and then I've lived in the canton of Zurich for 9 years and when I introduce myself to my classes and at parent-teacher-conferences, it's immediately obvious that it's not possible that I could have grown up here [canton of Zurich], but that I come from the canton of Bern. This is something you notice immediately, even after 18 years…even when I only say two sentences. This also shows somehow that this origin, this identity is somehow very strongly expressed through language and that it remains very strong… (356–362).

Elisabeth, who is also politically active on a local community level, seems to adapt her way of speaking to the role that she plays in a certain space. While the language that she connects with her identity and home is Swiss German, she finds it necessary to switch to SSG on more formal occasions and in order to make herself understood by everyone. Speaking Swiss German, according to her, is the norm however, and this should be respected as such by non-locals. Both Elisabeth and Carmen postulate that as a speaker of Swiss German in Switzerland, there is no need to speak or learn another language because of its status as the majority language and German-speaking Switzerland's nationally dominant geo- and sociopolitical position. Although it might be possible to strictly remain monolingual for German-speaking Swiss citizens (whereas even this could be refuted when defining Swiss German as a separate language from German), all of the participants are exposed to and influenced by their lived experiences of multilingualism. Sonja shares the following experience of language that she had:

> I like to remember the time when I was a child. One of my aunts used to live in Lausanne [French-speaking part]. My cousin is still there. Whenever you'd go to Lausanne, you'd simply speak French. I think, there wasn't a lot of German in return…I was ok with the idea that when I go to the Romandie as a German speaker, then I try to struggle along in French. And the same when I go to Ticino. And yet, today I feel like there is a fast switch to English. (301–307)

Despite the effort of speaking an FL, it visibly accounts for a precious experience – more so than switching to English for the sake of simplicity. That said, Sonja explains that she feels more at ease when teaching English than speaking SSG in class:

> …I teach English, but I also studied German and I feel better when I *can* speak English in the classroom than when I *have to* speak standard German. Swiss German is fine because then I am myself somehow. These are my origins, standard German, to me, has this formality to it and English, for instance, I used it in daily life situations when I did the exchange…this shows, this is somehow, it must have a lot to do with identity and maybe also with experiences (340–344 [emphasis added]).

Sonja's experiences demonstrate how closely language is linked to identity and how associations made with and between certain languages can influence the individual's well-being when (forcefully) speaking it. The imposition of SSG in formal settings results in Sonja's preference of English and connects it to positive experiences while widening the gap between SSG and Swiss German. The context in which a language is learned also seems to play an important role. English, for instance, was learned without much pressure and continues to be applicable in authentic contexts such as music, film, and the internet; it is often automatically associated with ease, simple communication, and fun. Sonja and her colleagues are of the opinion that their students are much less aware of Switzerland's four national (and other commonly spoken) languages and that they no longer have the same lived experiences of language due to English's increasing popularity and omnipresence.

4.1.5 Students in Fribourg

Students from Fribourg generally reported that the most significant language in their lives was French. Some also spoke English, German, Cantonese, Japanese, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish as their HL, while many only spoke French both at home and in school. Similar to Grisons, Italian was associated with and used for vacations in Italy or in Italian-speaking Switzerland. Some students also mentioned having relatives in this region. German was almost exclusively connected with school and was used only "when the context really requires it," as Lucien said. Yet, students also link German to the Goethe language certificate that they obtain throughout upper secondary school.[5] English, conversely, symbolizes the possibility to read different books, news from abroad, watch films, and to listen to podcasts and audiobooks. It is the language chosen for traveling and school exchanges with the UK and with the USA. Marie further stated that she engaged in additional self-study using

5 The Goethe certificate is a language proficiency certificate that attests to a certain level of knowledge in German that is provided by the *Goethe-Institut*.

online material, Rosetta Stone, or the Migros language courses. The enrolment in AL courses was justified by her in terms of the fear of not being good enough in school: "Since I didn't have English in primary school, I was scared I wouldn't be good enough in secondary school." Finally, English is considered most important for social media where it is often the most commonly employed language for communication.

4.1.6 Teachers in Fribourg

Etienne is a great example of how complex and nonlinear linguistic repertoires and how misleading the meaning of L1 and similar terms can be:

> So, literally, so, the meaning of the word strictly speaking mother tongue, the language of the mother, which is really crucial, is Swiss German for me. But that goes way back, and I was born in a bilingual city [anonymized]…and then I was born into a Swiss German family, but actually Swiss German I never really (--) I was only in [anonymized] for the first 4 years and I never went to school there. My parents moved to the USA. There, I did the first year of kindergarten in the USA and the first class of school was in American for me. So, my writing, for instance, does not correspond with my speaking because I learned how to write in the USA…somehow that sticks. Then we came back to Switzerland fairly early, but not to the German-speaking part but to the Romandie. There, I did my entire studies from almost the beginning in French. I spoke Swiss German at home, it was a static language…with many mistakes….So German is actually a foreign language even if it's actually my mother tongue…What I like least and what I know least how to speak, is Swiss German (7–24, 52).

Etienne vividly illustrates how migrating to different linguistic and cultural spaces (as a child) can have a lasting impact on one's (academic) development and identity. Although he defines Swiss German as his "mother tongue" in the beginning, he later says that German is his L1 even though it is technically a "foreign language." Moreover, he says that he can better express himself in French, which defies simplistic and homogenizing generalizations of (one) L1 and competency. To further foster his plurilingual repertoire, he alternates among German, English, French, and Italian for reading and is exposed to several languages daily.

Jeanne's lived experiences of language as a French-English bilingual have also shaped her identity and have had an impact on her professional trajectory. For instance, when deciding to become an English teacher, her motives were influenced by her desire to find out and to understand more about her origins which had been, as she felt, a bit neglected due to the dominant French exposure. According to Jeanne, as a French speaker in the canton of Fribourg, it seems more difficult to really engage in multilingual practices since there is a (perceived) strict division between German-

and French-speaking communities and during interactions Swiss German/German speakers tended to switch to French to accommodate people. The opposite is true for the German-speaking colleagues who can switch more easily and can make use of their plurilingual repertoires. Although not every teacher speaks as many languages as David, for instance, who speaks German, Spanish, French, Italian, and English, they constantly switch at least among Swiss German, SSG, and French. Victoria learned French as an exchange teacher in Switzerland and is now fully immersed in the language, even while continuing to improve her language skills. A role model of authentic language learning herself, she believes that it is very important for students to be proud of their L1s and to integrate them into class. According to her, her students' L1s include, among others, Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Arabic, and Yoruba. She perceives the link among language, identity, and space to be very important, which can also negatively affect each other and can even lead to crises if one's identity cannot be expressed fully. As Victoria summarized it:

> There are of course also conditions external to language that ultimately lead us to our actions and identity, that construct our identity, if you will. But a great deal is also linguistically conditioned and therefore…there are also crises of identity when you live in another linguistic region…that is clearly the case (312–317).

4.2 'Monolingual Habitus' in the Education System

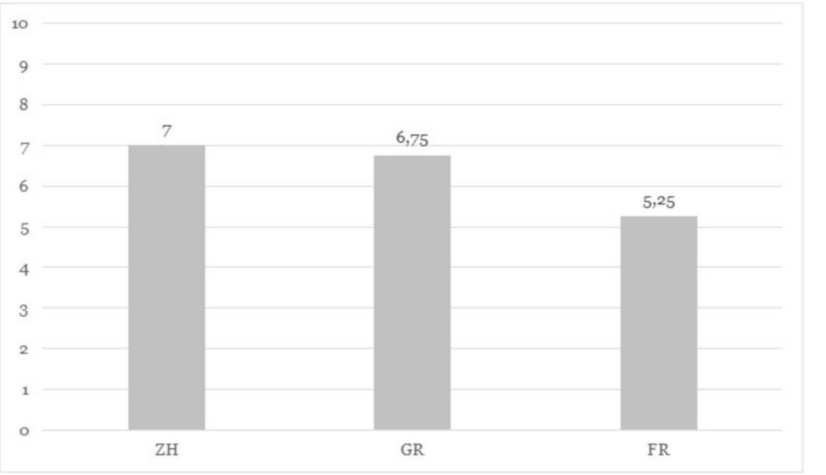
Switzerland's teaching and education system mostly reproduces and legitimizes the 'monolingual habitus' and promotes a selective, ideology-laden linguistic diversity.

Although all participants have diverse linguistic repertoires, they can hardly ever use them freely in educational contexts. Thus, institutional structures, overt and covert LEPs, and the participants' own perspectives on legitimate school languages impede the adoption of a 'multilingual habitus' (Benson, 2013). The following sub-section compares student data from the three cantons before the subsequent sub-sections present the data by position and canton in greater detail.

4.2.1 Comparison of Student Data

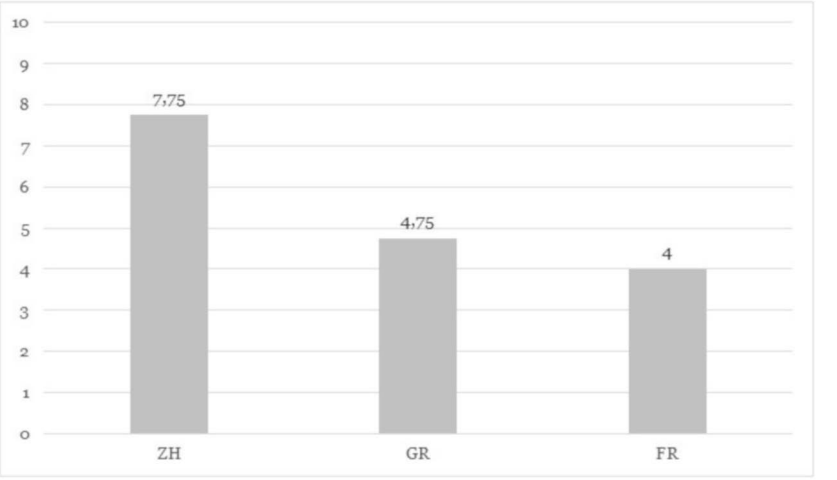
Students are generally rather satisfied with language teaching with Zurich students most satisfied (7), very close to Grisons students with 6.75, before students from Fribourg who are least satisfied (5.25).

Figure 7: Students' satisfaction with language teaching



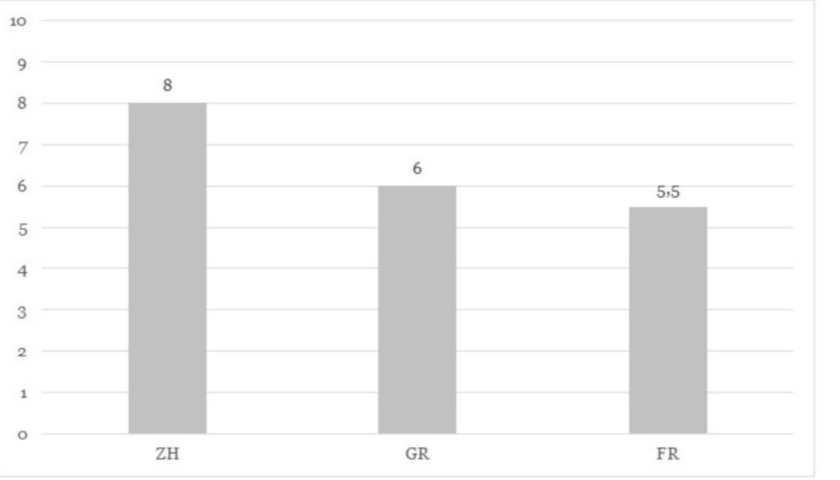
Whereas Zurich students agree that English should play a more dominant role in school than other languages spoken in Switzerland, students from Fribourg and Grisons tend to be neutral or rather disagree.

Figure 8: Prioritization of English in school



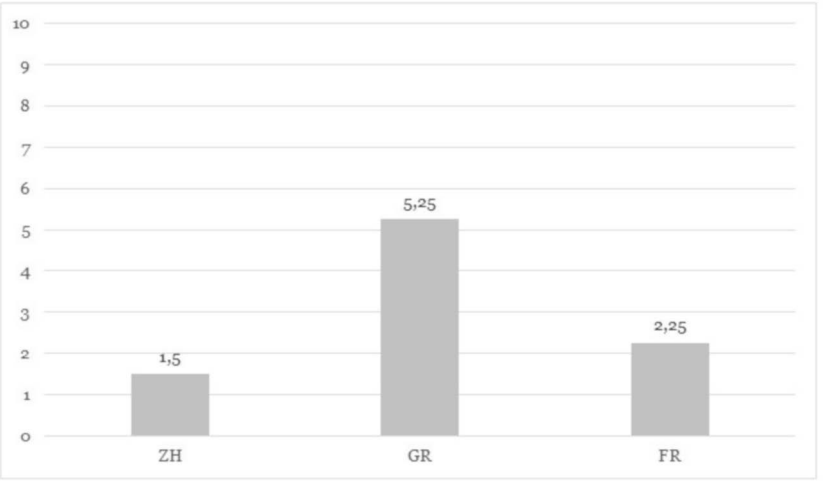
The same trend can be observed when asked about English's priority in the curriculum, which would be promoted by Zurich students while students from Fribourg and Grisons, although they also agree, are a bit more hesitant.

Figure 9: Prioritization of English in the curriculum



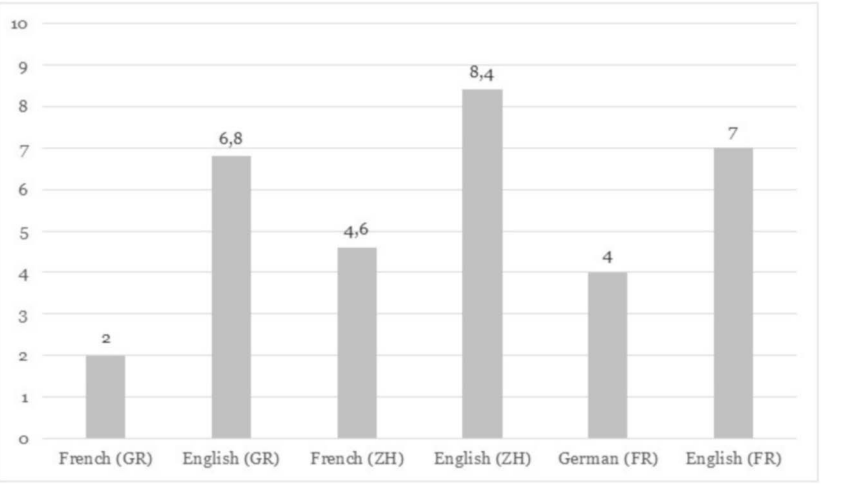
Furthermore, while Grisons students are slightly in favor of incorporating students' HLs into the classroom, students from Fribourg and Zurich are (rather) against it. Students from all three cantons are, however, open to discussing languages and cultures in school to an even greater extent.

Figure 10: Including students' heritage languages in the classroom



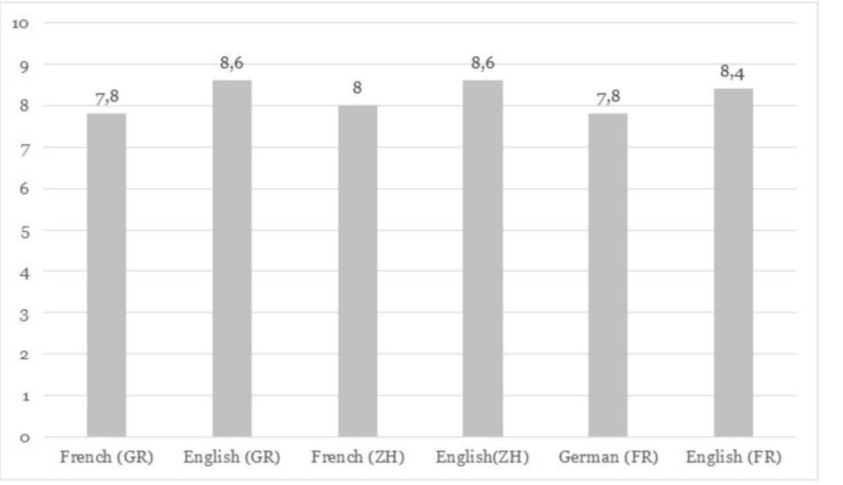
Students' self-evaluations for the non-L1 national languages are lowest in Grisons students' French competences (2), followed by Fribourg students (4) for their German competences and highest for Zurich students (4.6) for their French competences. It needs to be pointed out that many Grisons students, who report that they like French, do not necessarily take French classes in school given its optional status in the curriculum. This might distort the self-evaluation data for this cohort of the students. Students from all three cantons indicated higher competences regarding their self-evaluations in English. Students from the canton of Zurich have the highest self-evaluation (8.4), followed by Fribourg students (7) with students from Grisons estimating their English skills lowest (6.8).

Figure 11: Self-evaluations in non-L1 national languages and in English



The following table shows students' grades as they reported them to be on their last school certificate. While students' grades in English are better in all cantons than in the non-L1 national languages, grades in both subjects are higher than their self-evaluations.

Figure 12: Grades in non-L1 national languages and in English



4.2.2 Students in Grisons

In Grisons, all of the participating students are speakers of at least one of the official school languages. They unanimously stated that there was no need to integrate their L1s more actively in class since both SSG and Romansh were already well represented. They explained that Romansh was very present since it is a medium of instruction for both bilingual and immersion programs. They are generally very satisfied with their ability to use their L1 at school and acknowledge the financial implication behind the promotion of a minority language. Similar to the students in Zurich, they also appreciate the opportunity to practice German in an academic context because they typically speak Swiss German outside of school. The general awareness of one's L1's positive impact on other languages seems to be present; as Anastasia put it: "First languages should also be promoted because if not, children cannot learn a new language."

Thirty-one percent of Grisons students did not respond to the question of whether they would like to change languages learned at school whereas 36% would in fact like to change as opposed to 33% who would not. The majority of students who were in favor of changing the language offered at school would like to reduce Romansh and/or German classes since they are both L1s to most. They argued that that they would benefit more if they could learn French, which is not a mandatory subject because their language skills were already high in these two languages. As Melissa reported: "I think it's sad that I have to speak in English in Switzerland because I don't know how to speak French." Others argued that French and Italian should both be mandatory language subjects. Generally, many are unhappy with the fact that their 'only real' FL is English, as Linda reported in the questionnaire:

> I wouldn't drop any languages but [would instead] introduce more. We only have Romansh, German, and English. This means that we don't really learn another language such as French or Italian. For this, you have to choose an optional class. With one or two lessons per week, it's not enough to really learn a language.

Many also wrote that Latin classes should be reduced and spent on English, Italian, or Spanish. They would feel more motivated if they could use these languages outside of school and for university, which is rarely the case with Latin. Conversely, many are also satisfied with the languages offered at school considering them to be both very important and relevant to them, especially given the focus on English.

The biggest advantage that students see in Grisons' upper secondary education system is its elaborate, high-quality bilingual immersion program. It is offered in the three official cantonal languages (Romansh, Italian, and German) and even

provides specific language classes in the distinct Romansh idioms.[6] Students noticed that official Romansh classes at upper secondary level increase Romansh's value when mentioning this to non-Romansh speakers. Second, the co-existence of several idioms sensitized students to linguistic heterogeneity within the Romansh-speaking community and it improves the interaction among students. They are conscious about the fact that despite Romansh's minority status within the canton and the school, it is substantially subsidized to offer such bilingual programs especially in Romansh: "People are more aware now again of our language. The state has put a lot of money into Romansh, which I find great. And also at school, to have the possibility to do a bilingual *Matura*" (Leonie, 22–25).

In addition to this, certain subjects apply the CLIL method and are taught in English. Jessica believes that CLIL should be in English: "because it makes more sense for the future" (Jessica, 160). They unanimously agree that authentic and constant exposure to a certain language is necessary to learning it in a sustainable manner. By sustainable, André, for instance, means that language learning should also be useful and applicable after school. According to him, this is not the case for all language subjects in school: "Something needs to change because otherwise you can simply get rid of language teaching if at the end all you remember are 10 words" (André, 338–340). Students find the more useful focus on communication lacking in classes, textbooks, and in the curriculum as a whole. Students certainly seem to equate communication with a more informal way of speaking, one typically used on the internet as they mentioned YouTube or Ted talks, films, and music. Furthermore, a common criterion by which language teaching is judged by students seems to be how restrictively a given language is spoken during class, thereby denying the use of other languages altogether. The more strictly the use of a certain language is controlled and demanded in class, the more the students like it and agree with its purpose. They appreciate it when teachers – as role models – speak the language and also when they tell their students to actively and consequently use it without allowing them to switch to other languages. Students are rather disappointed when German or Romansh are 'tolerated' in an English class and when there is neither an incentive nor the opportunity to use it more actively. According to Jovin, the actual speaking time in English is very limited in class:

> [A]mong students, we also speak German….if you have a question and you raise your hand and you're allowed to ask the teacher something, then you speak English or when the teacher asks something in English. And in a class of 25 students, this happens maybe once a week, and then I say one sentence per week in English… (279–282).

6 Since this study focuses on the Romansh speakers in Grisons, it will not go into detail concerning the bilingual programs that are available in German and Italian.

Yet, the opposite seems true for Romansh classes in which the use of Romansh is demanded more strictly by some teachers. According to Hanna, it felt strange to speak Romansh to a friend in class, with whom she was used to speaking Swiss German, and now was supposed to change. Although she perceives it to be very odd when doing so, and is constantly reminded to speak Romansh by her teacher, she defines the school's language imposition as "logical" and "normal" (Hanna, 13–14).

André expresses his concern with textbooks' narrow focus that should be widened to include (more) speaking and online material, something more in line with students' interests. Hanna, for instance, agrees by saying that: "Actually, I'm very satisfied [with language teaching], but it's taught so much by the book, [and] curriculum" (Hanna, 170–171) indicating very little flexibility and spontaneity. Then again, almost all of the students believe that English is no longer *learned* in school. English language classes are instead seen as a support; they particularly appreciate learning new specific content-related vocabulary in their CLIL classes in which they are taught their specialization subjects such as biology, chemistry, or history in English. Jessica is very happy about having the opportunity to pursue chemistry classes in English and about how easy the transition was into English. She would have considered it too difficult had it not been for the institutional structure and for the teachers encouraging immersion programs. Yet, as Timo explains, this offer is only valid with sufficient inscriptions, which is usually the case especially for the natural sciences. Conversely, idiomatic expressions, speaking, and writing to a certain extent happens primarily online, through Netflix or YouTube videos. This is not at all the case for French. Unaware of such online equivalents in French, the students do not see much relevance in their private life.

The CAE is a crucial element provided by the school, and which cannot (yet) be replaced by students' everyday interactions in English. Everyone (except for one student) is very happy and enthusiastic about the exam linking it (almost exclusively) to better future academic and job opportunities. It is a great priority within the school where it holds a special status and represents a common objective that every student graduating from upper secondary school is expected to achieve. Conversely, Jana, for instance, perceives the prioritization of English as potentially detrimental:

> [I]n the last two years [of upper secondary school], the focus is only on the language certificate, the Advanced English, and I noticed that at the end, when you're done with the Advanced, the motivation slowly goes away. You lose the pleasure a bit if all you do is grammar and spelling. (252–255)

Jana would favor less 'drill' to pass the CAE in English and more time for literature in other language subjects. In her opinion, by wanting to cover as much content as possible in a short time, teachers neglect spending time on actual books. Additionally, all students would appreciate it if language subjects focused less on languages *per se* and more on the associated cultures. They believe that raising awareness of stereotypes

and giving insight into daily life in a specific language region, and the corresponding value and belief system, can help to develop important competences. Jessica, for example, would be very interested in learning more about "the culture" and "the history" of a certain language and also about the people who speak it (Jessica, 269; 274). Zooming in on the national context, Sebastian argues for a school subject on Swiss languages and cultures: "We have a fairly high diversity also within Switzerland. That would be interesting for me to discuss this more" (Sebastian, 215–217). That said, the focus on bilingual programs in the national languages and CLIL subjects in English leaves almost no space for other languages at school. As Sebastian and Leonie state, a basic-level sensitization to and addressing other languages such as Arabic, Russian, Spanish, and Mandarin would be interesting and could also potentially be relevant for future language developments. While English is today's international *lingua franca*, it is unsure whether or not one of the other languages will become more powerful in the future, in which case it would be useful to have a basic knowledge of that language already.

Despite students' overall great satisfaction with language teaching, its biggest advantage is also one of its biggest disadvantages. While the bilingual programs and Romansh classes are highly appreciated, there is, as students reported, first, a lack of specific textbooks for language courses, but also to teach CLIL in Romansh; second, a lack of language learning opportunities apart from Romansh; and third, a sometimes forced and exaggerated emphasis on Romansh. Textbooks in Rumantsch Grischun exist, and in addition to this Romansh teachers create their own teaching material, which are made available via iBooks. Despite its innovative nature, some students perceive this circumstance as almost discriminatory because it makes them stand out from their fellow German- or Italian-speaking students who have 'regular,' that is, printed textbooks. Romansh-speaking students are envied by those and sometimes even harassed. Sebastian explains that:

> [U]nlike others, we have iPads for our textbooks because they would be too expensive to print, to work with them as print outs for four years and then we have to justify ourselves that we have an iPad especially for this. (126–129)

Timo also considers the iPads to be one of the causes for competition among those students who have them and those who do not. This competitive behavior creates tensions, barriers, and negative (learning) experiences for some students.

Another problematic development lamented by some Romansh-speaking students is the reduction of French classes to an optional subject, which had been a mandatory subject prior to curricular reforms. That means that they have to select French among several other optional subjects, unlike Romansh, German, and English, which all students in the Romansh-German bilingual program learn mandatorily. This becomes clear and is reiterated throughout Hanna's entire interview:

> I would like to learn French…I have more contact with French-speaking people and with Italian-speaking people…I think, it's also a disadvantage [for job opportunities] when I say I don't speak any French at all, I think. And it is really the case. I would actually like to speak French…this was also one of the questions in your questionnaire, if I liked how the languages were distributed in school and I do think it's a pity not to have French because it's still a part of Switzerland…If I could, I would of course speak French but then it's mostly English [in interaction with other French-speaking Swiss students]…I have had the experience where they don't know any German the same way I don't know any French (56; 61–63; 121; 134; 143–145).

Unlike Hanna, the French-speaking students that she encounters have learned German as a first FL for approximately ten years. That said, Jana, for instance, explains that she would have liked to have chosen French as an optional subject, but that the class was constantly canceled in recent years due to insufficient inscriptions (Jana, 75–76). Melina further argues that French is a very important language and is indispensable to working in the Federal Government (Melina, 101–102). However, since she is sure that she wants to be a psychotherapist, in which case French would not be an obvious advantage, she did not consider French to be important enough to choose as an optional subject. Conversely, Leonie, Jessica, and Timo believe that French would be too complicated to learn and Sebastian even argues that learning French is pointless overall (Sebastian, 194–195). These perspectives are based on minimal or no exposure to French (as a subject) since French classes are optional and other interactions with the French-speaking part of Switzerland are either limited or non-existent. This is not easily compensated by offers elsewhere since ELF is the language most frequently used by students for virtual communication and on social media.

Generally, the strong focus on Romansh, German, and English with high-level objectives and proficiency-orientation impedes one's investment of time and resources in other languages. Given Italian's importance within the trilingual canton and French on a national level, these languages deserve more space in the curricula and classrooms according to some students. Only one student said that they were interested in learning Portuguese – a language she considered to be important given that her best friend comes from a Portuguese immigrant family with whom she used to spend a great deal of time. Melina stated that although there were many immigrants in Grisons, she did not have much contact with them; this was also due to the fact that they rarely made it into upper secondary schools:

> A: They [migrant students] are not in school with you, are they?
> M: No. Not anymore, they still were in primary and lower secondary but not anymore in upper secondary. (45–47)

Despite their presence in society, Portuguese-speaking migrant students are underrepresented in (Romansh) post-compulsory education. Except for Melina, other HLs do not seem to be interesting to other students and also remain unrecognized on an institutional level.

4.2.3 Teachers in Grisons

The linguistic composition of classes in the German-speaking section is somewhat heterogeneous according to Martin, who teaches in both the Romansh- and German-speaking sections. While the Romansh section is predominantly Romansh-speaking or bilingual in Romansh and German, the school's German-speaking section includes students whose L1s are, among others, French, Serbian, Tamil, Croatian, and other Slavic languages. Roberto mentions that several scaffolding techniques can be employed in the FL classroom in particular so that students with different L1s can be more engaged and valued. For instance, he uses grammatical comparisons among different languages and draws on students' L1 knowledge to establish parallels and differences in the language acquisition process. By providing a part of their linguistic knowledge and sharing it with others, they receive recognition and demonstrate strengths which had often been totally unknown to their fellow students beforehand. Although this is already a practice in school, Martin argues for a greater awareness of the linguistic diversity and richness that exists in schools, but also for the institutionalized program offers from which more students might benefit. He has witnessed students regretting their choice of not enrolling in the Romansh-German bilingual program while Roberto sees an increase of inscriptions in Italian-German programs, primarily from non-bilinguals, to authentically learn an additional national language in immersion. These decisions are often made by parents hoping that their children will obtain better employment opportunities due to a bilingual upper secondary diploma. Similarly, expectations from students and parents are high regarding English language learning, as reported by teachers. This causes stress among those English teachers who see it as their fault if their students fail: "…they just have to pass, otherwise I'm not a good teacher" (Nicole, 289–290). The CAE is regarded (and imposed as such) as an indispensable qualification for their students' academic and professional future and it impacts the teachers' self-concept if the students' future were to be affected negatively.

On a positive note, the policy reforms come with a change in attitude toward Romansh. While it was previously commonly considered to be an informal, colloquial way of communicating in somewhat remote areas of Grisons; it is now – as an official, cantonal language – one well established as a medium of instruction. However, although it was introduced approximately 20 years ago as a compulsory subject in bilingual programs, it still does not have the same status as German, for instance, which is compulsory for all students regardless of their study program. These dif-

ferent restrictions not only reproduce hierarchies, according to Henri, but also their emphasis on these few chosen languages solely is rather limiting and does not do justice to the actual linguistic diversity:

> When I think about my school in [anonymized], I can have 10 languages in one class, which exist as such, but which are strictly ignored institutionally and 10 out of 20 students will probably be plurilingual, at least latently, but they will be virtually made into monolinguals through submersion (123–127).

The underlying objective, as suggested by Henri, is to "submerge" plurilingual students into the target language in order to maximize their assimilation while simultaneously suppressing their linguistic repertoires. Henri, who strongly opposes the idea of the ideal native speaker, suggests several strategies across the curriculum over time to implement a more equitable multilingual education and to do away with existing language hierarchies. In fact, he would like to develop a catalogue with examples of prototype languages so that teachers could prepare lessons based on this in order to sensitize students to different languages (or language families). He further perceives it to be essential to connect students' lived experiences of language to the content of the class and to raise awareness of the potential within the classroom. He explains that an element for comparison among the different languages could be their underlying prosodic nature, indicating that every language sounds differently. Students could explore which instrument would best represent the sounds of the new language and can listen out for words that also exist in languages with which they are already familiar. Henri further believes that being exposed to a new language through a short presentation can render visible fellow students' strengths and can result in admiration and respect for, rather than discrimination against, 'otherness.' According to him, students could also observe gestures, facial expressions, and other metalinguistic elements, which can also be integrated into music or arts classes. As he put it: "All it takes is fantasy and a bit of interdisciplinary thinking" (Henri, 232).

Gita stated that she refers to other languages in her language classes, but does not at all feel competent enough to include languages with which she is not familiar or to do so to a more significant degree. Nicole acknowledged that she had never consciously thought about including students' L1s or other languages prior to the interview. When asked about her multilingual practices in the classroom, she explained that she already uses several techniques to integrate them without even knowing that she did. For instance, she stated that she regularly asked students for equivalent words, compared grammatical structures, and she also raised awareness of parallels or differences for students to recognize connections among the languages.

Nicole also believes that a more interdisciplinary language teaching approach would be desirable, but that it would be very hard to implement due to fixed institutional structures; the strict separation of subjects, the separate German-, Romansh-,

and Italian-speaking school divisions, schedules, and curricular requirements including learning objectives and materials impede more flexible, team-teaching approaches. Henri shared this impression and agreed that if the infrastructure were not as rigid as it is, then students' pluralist backgrounds could be integrated and acknowledged to a much greater extent. He further perceived the problem as residing in teachers' exclusion from decision-making processes. Gita strongly agreed and added that in-service teachers should be given a say and that this should be properly included when it comes to curricular reforms and decision-making. For her, it is incomprehensible that politicians would have the sole deciding power when it is up to the teachers to implement those decisions to the letter. Hence, whenever policy and curricular decisions are made, they are not made by a heterogeneous group of individuals, but rather monocultural and monolingual policy makers largely unaffected by the potentially discriminatory nature of those policies.

Henri is further of the opinion that English does not need such a strong emphasis in school since most students learn it automatically in their spare time, due to its omnipresence. Gita further criticizes English's non-negotiable imposition onto students. National or other HLs need better promotion by teachers and school leaders, textbooks, and curricula, especially in the context of a minority language. As mentioned previously, the fact that French or Italian have only an optional status within the Romansh program is lamented by all teachers. Henri explains the circumstances of this particular policy decision:

> Then MAR [curriculum for upper secondary education] came and everything was harmonized. Then one language needed to be dropped and for us, this is tragic and not good, French was dropped. Now it's Italian. We have the paradox that we're learning German and Romansh, but not Italian and not French. This is really sad. The potential would be there. With regard to the fact that they tried to make the system equal for everyone, they created inequality. This again is an idea that comes from monolingual thinking (423–429).

The paradox is that for Romansh-speakers, neither Romansh nor German are languages to be *learned* since the great majority are already fluently bilingual. Counting them as FLs, much like English, is a disadvantage for Romansh-speaking students since they could easily master ALs with which they are unfamiliar. Wanting to harmonize subjects and requirements, and wanting to make the workload even among all Swiss students, most Romansh teachers believe that their students have been deprived of an opportunity to easily expand their linguistic repertoire, especially considering the fact that they usually cannot use their L1 outside of Grisons. Although Gita also believes there is a rather systemic issue in language teaching, she perceives the unbalanced distribution of isolated lessons and the transitions from one school year to the next to be problematic. First, the conditions in which languages are learned in school, i.e., in short blocks of 45 minutes, 1–3 times a week, do

not at all correspond to how they are acquired naturally. Second, and related to this, transitioning from one school year to the next with possible changes in class composition and responsible teachers often has as a consequence that progress in language learning is very slow and fragmentary. According to her, language learning should only begin in secondary school (not in primary) in order to avoid multiple repetitive transitions and limited progress. Her experience has shown that most adolescents in both lower and upper secondary schools have acquired efficient learning techniques and strategies and are motivated to apply those to learning languages. They are also often old enough to stay abroad for a longer period of time during which time they can learn a language intensively and authentically and, therefore, can benefit more from their language classes in school and *vice versa*. Often, however, the language that students learn voluntarily is English, but occasionally they learn Spanish.

She further believes that language teaching necessarily needs to be *multi*lingual and not *tri*lingual. Gita, therefore, teaches a module on the linguistic reality in Grisons that emphasizes its heterogeneous nature, despite the restrictive focus on the national languages plus English in the curriculum. Furthermore, the school itself is becoming more multilingual due to students with increasingly different L1s. Yet, the admission exam[7] at the beginning of upper secondary, which is a condition to even enroll in post-compulsory education in Grisons, is very difficult and almost impossible to pass with insufficient knowledge of the official languages, according to Gita. Students from migrant families in particular face these language barriers and rarely have any support to meet the requirements, which are especially demanding when it comes to academic German language skills. Gita says:

> …there is nobody who can help them if they have problems. Most of those who are in my class, their parents can't help them. In none of the subjects. These are not academics, the parents. I find it difficult. Here, more should be done. That would be something and this has been a special concern of mine for a long time. To me, this is not tolerable that there are always so few children from other countries in our school. But as I said, there are already more than 10 years ago (222–227).

For Gita, the situation is paradoxical and incomprehensible: While the society is becoming more multicultural and more multilingual, the school continues to focus on selective, prestigious languages while ignoring important societal trends. The awareness of students' linguistic and cultural division, as a result of the selection process occurring with the admission exam, seems to be there, as Gita clearly demonstrates. She further believes that the institutional structures, the adherence to existing traditions, and finally the lack of support for students in need indicate

7 Gita explains that the admission exam for upper secondary schools in Grisons evaluates students' competences in German and Italian or Romansh, English, and mathematics.

that the education system reproduces the divide between high- and low-performing students. Additionally, although some private tutoring offers exist, they are oftentimes financially inaccessible for migrant students and for their parents. As a project initiated by the canton of Zurich – an upper secondary education level system renowned for its particularly difficult admission exam shows, these institutional mechanisms can be changed. Gita reported that:

> In Zurich, there is a project where adolescents come on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with an admission interview, where they have to show that they are willing to work and then they were able to at least participate in support classes…[and] 60% passed the exam (235–239).

To sum up, although bilingual programs are hugely important, especially given the minority status of Romansh and Italian, the strong (institutional and political) focus on only those (plus English) obfuscates the actual societal linguistic reality which is made up of many more languages. Yet, in fact, the language offered in school in many cases rather adequately mirrors its students' linguistic repertoires since only a small minority of students with different HLs make it to upper secondary school in the first place. Nevertheless, teachers are interested in and willing to promote multilingual education as best as they can with some already intentionally doing so and providing concrete examples of how to implement it.

4.2.4 Students in Zurich

Thirty-nine percent of the students responded that they had a different L1 than German, of which only 5% were in favor of integrating it into class. The reasons for why they would like to do so were that they were looking for an exchange with students who might have the same experiences, problems with, or feelings toward a mainly monolingual school. Another student said that it would be interesting to share one's cultural and linguistic background with fellow students, especially if this could be done using their L1. The rest of the students who speak a different L1, however, would prefer not to integrate it more actively. For instance, they said that they enjoyed speaking German in classes and also saw this as an opportunity to practice it, learning new vocabulary and phrases that they would otherwise not do, given the specific diglossic situation of Swiss German and SSG. They were happy speaking their L1 at home, with friends from the same language background, and on other private occasions. Some felt that their L1 "doesn't fit into the school context" or that "it is not worth it" because very few people speak it. They further perceived the local language to be necessarily the one taught and spoken in class. Others did not consider it to be realistic, thinking that the teacher would also have to speak the same L1 in order to integrate it.

Students were further asked whether they would want to drop a language which they were learning at school and intensify or introduce others that were not taught. While 36% of Zurich's students did not answer this question, 33% were in favor of and 28% were against changing the languages learned at school. The most common answer given was that students desired to drop French and to intensify English classes. This was justified by the fact that students had been learning French for a long time without the possibility to apply it and with very little connection to their personal lives; as Tom said: "I would get rid of French…Except for one internship, which I was forced to do as part of the curriculum, I have never used French outside of school." Furthermore, they saw greater relevance in English and in investing more hours therein to perfect their language skills. Yet, there were also students who argued the opposite, that is, who were in favor of keeping French because of its status as a national language. As three students explained respectively: "I don't like French, but I understand that it must be a part of our language learning" or: "I don't like French, but the priorities are set and I know that it is the second most important national language" or: "It makes sense to teach French because it is a national language, but I do not enjoy learning it." Other languages in which students would be interested include Russian, Arabic, Romansh, Spanish, Italian, and Mandarin. For instance, Philipp stated: "Mandarin is spoken much more commonly worldwide, and it would be really interesting. But it is of course not realistic but interesting to just imagine the situation." Some students use the same argument for Spanish saying that it is a very relevant language on an international level and is interesting for many who travel or work abroad before continuing with university. There are students who complain about the influence of politics on language learning. They believe that they have to learn Italian *only* because it is a national language and if the curriculum considered students' interests and activities, then it would offer Spanish instead. Others would like to have a choice between French and Italian, given that they are both national languages and Italian seems more useful to some in their spare time. As Marco reported: "I would get rid of French and introduce Italian. I don't like French. I could use Italian for vacation." The same is true for Romansh, a national and some Zurich students' first language.

One of the biggest differences concerning language learning between Grisons and Zurich students is that the latter mandatorily learn French alongside the only official medium of instruction, German, and the second FL English. Another difference is that no bilingual or CLIL programs are offered at this school, which is lamented by all of the participating students. They reported that, if it were introduced, then they would prefer a German-English bilingual option over a German-French option. Samira and Nicolas, for instance, believe that it would be greatly advantageous to them, especially as preparation for university:

> Generally, I find [CLIL] a very good idea, especially if you want to study at university later on. There, many lectures will be in English and I think it's good if you have the basic vocabulary in English or to understand the medium of instruction, if that is already done in school. That way you have a big advantage, of course (Samira, 94–97).

> What I would find interesting personally with regard to university, for example at ETH [Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich], where almost everything is in English, is that we have the mathematical concepts in English already at secondary II school (Nicolas, 102–105).

Yasmin strongly agreed because she has already chosen her future study program. As she explained, she will need proficient English skills not only to study Banking and Finance but also for her professional experiences with future clients. She is in favor of CLIL in English in order to have more academic language exposure in addition to the CAE and ELF used on the internet and among friends. In fact, her interest in and passion for English had made her consider enrolling in Zurich's private, English-only Hull's School[8] instead of the public upper secondary school. She also has many friends who are students at Hull's School and who practice its English-only policy, even outside of school and while in Yasmin's company. Yet, she changed her mind since first, she was given the possibility to take the CAE in her current school and second, she thought it was more beneficial to conduct an exchange semester or even her entire Master program in an English-speaking country. Unlike in Grisons, CAE preparation classes are not part of the mandatory curriculum for all students. They are free, additional classes on top of the regular workload and take place during lunch breaks, as students reported.

Samira, who also judges English to be much more valuable for her academic future finds it nonsensical that they are obliged to take a graduation exam in French but not in English. To make matters worse, given her specialization in sciences, she does not understand why she has *four* French lessons and only *two* physics lessons per week. According to her, this arrangement is "strange" (Samira, 265) and does not correspond to her interests and choice of specialization. If CLIL existed, then she would like to increase the lessons in sciences and therefore have those be taught in English. CLIL could offer a satisfactory solution to addressing difficult and often contested lesson planning in combining sciences lessons taught in ELF or, if possible, any other language. Although CLIL is not institutionalized as a bilingual program, Adya explains that English is used: "In biology…for instance, in order to find scientific articles, we conduct research in English in the optional subject" (Adya, 202–203).

8 According to Hull's School's website, the vast majority of its students are German-speaking Swiss nationals (https://www.hullschool.ch/en/).

Conversely, students like Arthur, for instance, reported watching academic tutoring videos on the internet in English, given the higher volume of opportunities it presents. However, for him, understanding the subject presented in academic English, with which he is less familiar, is a challenge. Although students encounter certain difficulties when it comes to understanding content-related information in English, Yasmin is convinced that any other language learned at school would be impossible for CLIL: "I believe for French or Italian, we are really still missing vocabulary and generally practice and exercises, for instance. I noticed this a lot in my class. French or Italian is out of question for us" (Yasmin, 255–257). Nicolas finds even more drastic words to characterize the situation: "There are so many of us who actually don't like French. For them, it would be torture" (Nicolas, 131–132). He goes on to say that "if you live in the German-speaking part of Switzerland then you're like spared a bit from French" (Nicolas, 209–210). That said, he recognizes an increasing potential in the *Romandie*, especially in the Lausanne area where the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology is located. With this in mind, French could in fact become a more important subject, even in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Regarding his current language learning, Nicolas further explains that CLIL, except in certain subjects such as sciences, would not be extremely beneficial for the students since their private life is very much influenced by and filled with English-speaking media, communication, and activities already. Importantly, students often equated English with the spoken, informal language commonly found on the internet, in social media, and in e-games. Not everyone seems to be aware of the different registers that a language can encompass and the different functions that these can have.

Being convinced that good language teaching means implementing a target language-only policy in the classroom, students are nevertheless also interested in the wider offer of other languages. Arthur, for instance, whose L1 is Macedonian, did not learn it in school but with his parents. He believes that parallel L1 classes would have helped him to learn how to write and to practice the language on a different level than simply speaking it while on vacation in Macedonia. Knowing that there are many other Slavic languages and speakers of those at school, he suggests that a common language to be learned could be Russian. According to him, Russian classes had once been part of the optional curriculum, but were canceled thereafter. He further advocated Italian classes: "I would find it good if Italian were introduced mandatorily. After all, it's a national language" (Arthur, 289–290). Similarly, Yasmin, whose L1 is Turkish, has acquired it through her parents and does not associate it with school at all. The only time her Turkish language background became interesting in the classroom was when one of her teachers started learning it for personal reasons: "And then I talked to her shortly about Turkish, also about grammar, but other than that, Turkish is not really a topic at school" (Yasmin, 22–23). When asked whether she would prefer learning English or Turkish in school, she answered English without hesitation. Nevertheless, she went on to explain that she "would find it exciting if a

project could be done in which all foreign languages spoken in class would be put together" (Yasmin, 27–29). A project, as Yasmin suggests, could at least make students and teachers aware of the linguistic and cultural diversity at hand.

According to Nicolas, optional Chinese classes are offered which is a relevant language to learn for him, given the demographic development and its importance on a global scale. He also mentions Arabic, a language not offered in school, but in which he would be very interested due to its different writing and sound system. That said, unlike Russian or Chinese, he does not believe "that [Arabic] would be much of use for later" (Nicolas, 80). Adya would also like to learn Arabic, not linking the language to future career opportunities, but to her private life. As a speaker of Urdu herself, she would like to learn to read Arabic script, which would help improve her reading and writing competences in her L1. As mentioned previously, calling herself "illiterate" in Urdu (Adya, 153), she delegitimizes her status as a native speaker, for which Arabic classes in school might compensate.

Finally, Nicolas reveals that language learning in school not only serves him on a practical level, in applying the language in a context outside of school, but that his Latin classes in specific have helped him to develop analytic skills. Latin, as he argues, is an ideal language to better understand the underlying structures of language as a system and allows for comparisons of modern FLs accordingly. Latin classes were an important element to find parallels among languages, to deduce language history and families, and to establish a basis for further language learning. A substantial part of the Latin classes is also spent on cultural history and involves teaching students about people, places, and the developments associated with the Latin language. Although Latin is not spoken anymore, and therefore taught in the school's official language, i.e., German, it has both a multilingual and multicultural character. It could even be argued that it is *more* so and more strongly oriented at combining multiple languages and sensitizing students to this diversity than modern FLs, such as either French or English.

4.2.5 Teachers in Zurich

Among Zurich teachers, one of the most important, yet "controversial topics" (Patrick, 159), according to Patrick is CLIL. Although CLIL is an increasingly popular teaching method in upper secondary schools throughout the country, Patrick perceives it to be rather unlikely that it will ever be introduced at his school in the near future. Since no nation- or canton-wide policies on bilingual programs exist, teachers are confronted with expectations from parents and students, increasing pressure from the industry, and competitive private schools. One of the major difficulties in implementing CLIL is that teachers do not usually have the necessary training in bilingual teaching. In cases where they did pursue further training, many still often lack the confidence to teach bilingually since they rarely practice

the second language. As a teacher of German, Patrick is rather worried about the reduction of German lessons per week while science subjects are gaining in significance. If both German lessons are reduced and (certain) science lessons are held in English, then students will speak and write less and less (academic) German. This is particularly relevant in the Swiss-German language region in which CLIL could deteriorate the acquisition and competence of SSG, as Sonja explains:

> [I]t's probably also important to find a balance because also in history class, vocabulary is developed, the German vocabulary, if that is only taught in English then you'll maybe lose the competency to express yourself well in your mother tongue or for us rather the school language or how should I call this…. (148–152)

Growing up speaking a dialect, most students only learn SSG in school and consequently need register- and content-specific input in order to develop proficient linguistic competency. Interestingly, Sonja first refers to the language used in school as the students' mother tongue before 'correcting' herself and calling it *school language* – still hesitant about the appropriate terminology. What is certain is that unlike students in other Swiss linguistic regions, where the regional language is equivalent to the school language, Zurich students are primarily exposed to Swiss German, something which is not usually allowed in school. This complicates matters further for children with different HLs, who have to learn both Swiss and SSG in school. Adding still more languages can be overwhelming, as Elisabeth noted:

> [S]omehow they speak Serbian at home, then they should learn the dialect [Swiss German], they have to learn standard German in school, starting in grade 2 English on top of this and then starting in grade 4, French on top of that. And you see, they're not proficient in any of those languages, also not in standard German. (-) I think it's extremely difficult. (263–267)

Sufficient knowledge in SSG is, however, critical to entering either university or the job market – one of upper secondary schooling's primary objectives. In this case, CLIL could be an advantage for monolingual students more than for plurilingual ones for whom it would be an additional 'burden.' Sabine, who completed a CLIL training to teach history in English, agrees and believes that CLIL should not be imposed upon every student and that not all students would benefit from it equally. That said, she also thinks that while many of the students are very interested in CLIL, only certain students have the necessary academic skills and prior knowledge to enhance their linguistic performance. She generally likes the idea and says she that she would have liked to learn languages in school in this way herself, but language immersion programs do not have the same priority for everyone. For instance, if the applied teaching concept is oriented at communication, interaction, and students' output, then it can be hard to combine this with CLIL where students should present groupwork or must conduct discussions in an FL. Viewed like this, CLIL

seems rather compatible with teacher-focused instruction for students who want to be exposed to rich, content-specific vocabulary, which is contrary to current pedagogical trends and teachers' perspectives. Generally, most participants stated that they find it important to have a good relationship with their students and to choose content according to students' interests and lifeworlds, which they consider fun; however, and as Sonja pointed out, the language needs to be one to which she can relate as well. They want to convey their subject with passion and to actively involve students in the learning process, rather than imposing their content and objectives onto their students.

Similarly, an important criterion for good teaching according to Sabine, for instance, is fun and feeling at ease. As she elaborated, language learning can be detrimental to students' mental health when they are forced to speak in front of the class, since it can result in mockery, embarrassment, or shame. Adopting a more easy-going attitude as a teacher can also help students to relax and learn a language in an almost judgement- and stress-free environment. This is of course only possible since Zurich teachers are considerably free to decide relevant content for their language classes. This means that the school's curriculum provides a certain framework or orientation and remains rather flexible and adaptable to both students' and teachers' personal needs and interests alike. All of the teachers are aware that they have a great deal of liberty to plan their lessons, yet at the same time Patrick noted that their teaching remains influenced by internal or cantonal policies and by the EDK's recommendations. Eleonore, conversely, is particularly grateful for having the possibility to design a self-study semester program for students according to her interests and theirs. Nesrin, who is a rather novice teacher, is excited about the liberty provided by the open curriculum. Nevertheless, she is also very adamant about achieving the set objectives: "Because after all, that's my job, I need to achieve this" (Nesrin, 81–82). It needs to be pointed out that all language teachers consider it important that students enjoy and feel at ease in the classroom in terms of the chosen content and the learning environment.

However, the task of creating such positive circumstances is perceived to be much easier for English teachers than for others: "Yes, well, they [the students] perceive the language [English] to be more important than other foreign languages, which they would have to learn, for instance, French…this facilitates my work with them" (Sabine, 60–62). In fact, similar to the students' perspectives described previously, teaching French to students with no or very low motivation to learn it is "apparently a torture" (Eleonore, 231). She, therefore, suggests reducing the number of years of compulsory French learning in order to "shorten the general suffering of teachers and students a bit" (Eleonore, 235–236). She further proposes investing more resources in exchange programs with the *Romandie* to create more meaningful learning experiences for students and to help them discover the utility of French, which is often questioned by or unclear to many students.

The same circumstances facilitating the teaching of English also simultaneously and paradoxically render it more difficult. Exposed to (primarily) informal language on YouTube, blogs, Netflix, etc. on a daily basis, students equate this with native-like language and undermine the value of academic English that is expected in school. This "anything goes"-approach (Sabine, 52), according to Sabine and other teachers, represents an overall tendency to pay less attention to linguistic accuracy, i.e., orthography, grammar, and registers. This is especially challenging for English teachers since they are expected to transmit and to demand the use of standard language even as students orient themselves toward social media to learn 'authentic' English.

Additionally, the students' perception of English being more important than other (foreign) languages is mirrored in the school's distribution of lessons. Teachers unanimously agree that most of the pressure was applied to French teachers since they are the first to have their lessons reduced across the curriculum. Patrick is also rather worried that the reduced German lessons, compared to an increase in English or CLIL lessons (in English), will send the somewhat questionable message of institutional prioritization of English, as mentioned previously. Tina, a teacher of French and Italian, compares the situation to a vicious circle since students' motivation to learn French as a mandatory language is very low, their language skills are continuously decreasing and the fewer hours that they are exposed to it, the less likely they will be to improve. The situation is somewhat different and less tense for Italian since it is an optional subject and students are typically interested when they initially sign up. The national teacher associations for Italian and French and the support which they obtain from them also differ hugely, as Tina explains. While Italian teachers seem to be very active and enthusiastic in organizing *settimane della Svizzera italiana* [weeks of Italian-speaking Switzerland], French teachers seem to be stuck in a similar vicious circle. The less motivated students are, and the more French lessons are reduced, the more difficult it is to find the strength to teach, let alone to have fun and feel at ease in class.

English's increasingly dominant role generates conflicting perspectives, not only among teachers but also within themselves. That is, some of the answers given were contradictory, something which hints at the difficulty of finding one's own position in this ideology-laden polarity. Sonja, for instance, realized herself that she was contradicting an answer that she had given previously and concluded that the prioritization of English over national languages was a very difficult topic with no satisfactory solution for everyone. The development is, therefore, problematic as English seems to divide the language subjects further while language policies envision the integration of those into an interdisciplinary language learning program called *Mehrsprachigkeitsdidaktik* [plurilingualism didactics]. Integrated into the school's pi-

lot project about the future of schools,[9] the idea is to strengthen the connection among language subjects, often viewed as 'soft subjects,' as a measure to compete against the increasing proportion of 'hard science' subjects. Although it is not yet institutionalized, it has become clear that this approach can be implemented more easily in projects than in class schedules that are organized based on fixed structures and routines. One such example of inclusive multilingual learning was Carmen's week-long project in which she sensitized her students to Romansh with the help of the Lia Rumantscha[10] in Grisons.

In addition to this, Patrick pointed out that for him, the future of schools, and especially the future of language classes, will need to take demographic development into consideration. He sees a clear tendency toward increasing numbers of students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and calls for an urgent rethinking of monolingual and monocultural schools. Patrick says:

> [A]nd I think, this awareness, which (--) of this linguistic diversity, different languages, which are used [in school], are a central aspect of school, to make this clear. It's not only the four national languages, but also, I just don't know how many languages, I used to know how many languages are spoken at home in my son's school. Maybe approximately 20 if I remember correctly and I think children should already understand that this is simply the social reality and I think if we always talk about integration it's a deciding aspect that we are aware of this (320–326).

Furthermore, Elisabeth agrees that although the situation at upper secondary level is different from lower secondary, where more than 40% of the students have a migrant background, the school still needs to rethink its strategy. Similar to the situation in Grisons, upper secondary schools seem to have fewer students with a migrant background; again, this might be linked to the rather difficult admission exam or conditions. Many students who make it to the upper secondary level have Tamil, Kurdish, or Albanian origins. Although teachers seem to be commonly aware of this, it is not recognized as a 'problem' at an institutional level. Patrick, who as a German teacher remarks upon the great discrepancies between students' oral and written expression, argues that GFL classes are crucial for (but not only for) migrant students. Without proficient language skills in German, they also fall behind in other subjects since they are co-responsible for developing argumentative and analytical skills and evaluating appropriate language as part of the subjects' grade. These arguments, Patrick explains, were used to apply for and finally led to additional funding

9 The school has conducted a pilot project about the future of schools in which the focus is put on interdisciplinary and autonomous learning organized more collaboratively in projects instead of divided by separate lessons and teachers.

10 Lia Rumantscha is a non-profit organization promoting Romansh language and culture.

for GFL courses. The fact that language is the underlying requirement that follows all other subjects is an obstacle to those who do not have the possibility to learn it and who, as a consequence, are denied post-compulsory education. That said, an increased offer is needed to account for the increasing number of students with different academic requirements.

Alongside the lacking institutional support, some teachers, although very aware of the school's linguistic and cultural diversity, seem less convinced about the need to actively promote it in their teaching. The most common perspective is to equate applying multilingual education with speaking multiple (heritage) languages oneself in order to employ them in the classroom, in a manner similar to the medium of instruction. Sabine explains, for instance: "it is for me French, Italian, German, and Latin, to which I can refer" (Sabine, 165–166), feeling competent enough in those languages to make references or connections in her English lesson. She raises the issue of students' stigmatization due to their different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, something with which other teachers face. Although she would be willing to give students the space and allow them to integrate their L1s into the classroom, Sabine fears that this would create a bigger divide than it would serve to sensitize students or to bring them together:

> I'm sometimes a bit skeptical because the majority of the students here would talk about more or less the same culture, the Swiss German culture, and then there are 1, 2, 3 per class who would talk about a different culture and this can have an encouraging effect on the one hand. On the other hand, how should I say, stigmatizing, as different, as exotic in the broadest sense and that's why I am (--), it depends a lot on the class, how class cohesion is, how the mood is, if I were to do it.… Most of the time, I let them choose if they want to talk about themselves or if they want to do something about the village in which they live in Switzerland (171–178).

Providing an option for students to choose between their heritage language and culture and the one to which they are exposed in Switzerland is of course less imposing and allows students to make their own decisions. Nevertheless, this diminishes the chances of demonstrating individual strengths and personal trajectories to fellow students in an official classroom environment and to receive important recognition. Similarly, Sonja reported:

> If it's about exchanging opinions, this will be exciting for sure, if they grow up differently or also grew up differently or also even lived in a different country for a few years and then moved to Switzerland…I try to use that. Because I think, everyone can benefit from it. The language *per se*, I think is more difficult, it's for sure possible when I also know the other languages. So, I also know a bit of

> French, Italian, and Spanish and I also do point to those, but other than that, not so much. I find it difficult because I don't even know it myself (212–219).

A better understanding of and hands-on material on multilingual education is needed for (more) teachers to integrate other HLs and to feel confident and competent to do so, as some teachers have urged. Furthermore, such integration is impossible without adequate institutional support and training in teaching materials, textbooks, and other online resources. That said, Nesrin, who seems to base her decisions on her recent teacher education and linguistics classes, is a strong advocate of multilingual education. Not only does she refer to herself in her position as a language teacher as a mediator between the Germanic and Latin cultural groups in Switzerland, but she is also very adamant about promoting plurilingual identities. Nesrin sees an urgent necessity to act and to transmit a broader awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity in Switzerland:

> I see it in my classes that it's apparently not always so clear that other languages also exist in Switzerland. Often, it's like erased from the consciousness and only when you go to Lausanne or a multilingual area, you're suddenly aware that there are also other languages in Switzerland (158–161).

Although Switzerland is a multilingual country with four official national languages, each canton determines its/their own official language(s). Living in an officially monolingual canton, such as Zurich, can imply uncommon exposure to other languages and Nesrin suggests that schools should, therefore, raise awareness of other language groups in order to increase mutual respect and understanding. Referring to a university seminar on language and identity, which had strong influence on her, she explains how language unconsciously shapes our way of thinking and self-perception. She exemplifies this with French, where, like English, the grammatical subject (e.g., *I*) is typically in the first position in a declarative clause (e.g., *I saw you last week*). Simply analyzing sentence structures and comparing those in different languages can function as a basis to further discuss cultural values and beliefs and to critically assess stereotypes. For example, Nesrin explained that it could be perceived as "arrogant" (Nesrin, 175) in other cultures to predominantly refer to oneself and constantly repeat the subject (*I*) when speaking. Furthermore, she organizes small projects on linguistic topics such as language families through which she can demonstrate both familiarity and parallels among languages, to deconstruct the often-perceived 'otherness,' and to draw on student examples in the classroom. She noted that it was important to give students the necessary time to raise questions since learning about their HLs and their cultural origins is not usually a part of discovering their identity. Unlike other teachers, Nesrin believes that she does not have to know a language in order to integrate it into the classroom:

> I've also already taken Turkish examples, I don't speak Turkish, but I have a Turkish person in one of the classes and it was important for me to show the students that the languages work differently…Then I asked the Turkish student to say a sentence in Turkish. It was about the endings. (215–220)

That said, she also shares a concern with one of her colleagues who had tried to integrate other languages into her French class and tried to make references among them, to which students responded with incomprehension. For them, it was difficult to connect different disciplines and to arrive at a more holistic and inclusive approach to learning. This shows that many are accustomed to traditional institutional structures and are in need of guidance in terms of new learning approaches.

4.2.6 Students in Fribourg

Sixty-five percent of Fribourg students either gave no response or stated that including their L1s more actively into class did not concern them, while 20% were enthusiastic about it and indicated that they would like to integrate their L1s in order to share their linguistic and cultural backgrounds with fellow students or to improve their L1 competence. For instance, Julia reported: "Yes, I would love very much to include Mandarin…as an optional class since it's a very important and very interesting language. It would help me to show others my culture and origins." Other reasons mentioned were the difference in proficiency between the official school language and the L1. It would be beneficial to have L1 classes to develop literacy skills. Ricardo, whose L1 is Italian, would like to introduce Italian instead of German classes. Since they are both national languages in Switzerland, the best option for him would be to let students decide which one they would like to learn. Conversely, 10% of students are against including their L1s. They prioritize the languages spoken in Switzerland and perceive a focus on those they view to be clearly necessary.

Moreover, a slight majority (55%) of students are against changing the languages offered at school while 25% are in favor of it (20% did not respond). The most commonly cited reason for why the languages offered should remain unchanged is the importance of both FLs – German and English – for French-speaking students in Switzerland. As two students explained it: "English is very important on an international level and for everything that has to do with accessing information. German can seem less important but in Switzerland, I think, it's important to learn it" or "…because German and English are the fundamental languages in Switzerland." Mona even expressed the desire to intensify German, due to its importance, and the time spent on learning it from an early age. Not all agree, however, and call instead for a greater emphasis on English due to its international reputation. Yet, others still would like to have Italian as an optional subject along with the possibility to choose between German and Italian. Additionally, there are also students who would like to

learn Spanish in school because it is considered a "useful" and "nice" language. Students are also aware of internationally important languages, such as Mandarin or Russian, and some would be interested in learning them.

4.2.7 Teachers in Fribourg

Several of the teachers interviewed taught CLIL which, at the school in the canton of Fribourg – unlike the school in the canton of Grisons – is offered in both a national language (French or German) *and* in English. This needs to be emphasized since, as Etienne pointed out, bilingual education implies different languages depending on whether it is offered in a private or public school. Typically, a privately run school offers bilingual programs in English and in the regional language, whereas public schools tend to maximize the offer of national languages in their bilingual programs.

Teachers' perspectives on the school's CLIL programs are generally very positive. According to Victoria (290), there is no better way of teaching. Etienne adds that the ideal scenario would consist of mandatory exchanges for students *and* teachers, especially in a bilingual canton like Fribourg where this could be organized relatively easily (Etienne, 367). CLIL classes also provide the opportunity to easily draw from other languages since there is more meaning being negotiated and there is a stronger focus on comprehension. This seems to create a more open and flexible atmosphere into which multiple languages might be integrated. Etienne makes use of this when he deals with historical sources available in different languages such as Italian, Spanish, or Russian, for which he asks students' help: "I try this too and I don't even speak Russian. But students do. I always think it is great" (Etienne, 153–154).

That said, Jeanne explained that it is in fact very challenging to teach CLIL because: first, the choice of adequate textbooks and other materials is very limited; second, Jeanne says that the curriculum does not provide enough information on bilingual programs and about their specific objectives and is sometimes even incompatible with the teaching material at hand. Jeanne exemplified this with the topics 'imperialism,' 'colonialism', or 'nationalism' which are all presented differently with divergent emphases in English- and French-speaking textbooks. Given the limited offer in CLIL textbooks, based on the Swiss curriculum, Jeanne makes use of teaching material from England, thereby guaranteeing authenticity on the one hand, yet necessarily deviating from the common Swiss teaching standards and objectives for upper secondary education on the other. This raises challenging questions about whether, for instance, history taught as CLIL is primarily concerned with learning the subject in a different language or whether it impacts its perspective on *what* is being transmitted exactly. Furthermore, it renders teaching this topic in specific difficult for Jeanne, who believes that she *must* teach her lessons according to the curriculum,

although she finds it "fairly strict" (Jeanne, 33): "Well, I have to follow the curriculum, it is imposed by the schools, by the institution, by the public education system" (Jeanne, 21–22). To her, following the curriculum is positive since everybody does it in the same way; this provides structure and clarity, especially for students. David, who also thinks that the curriculum "is really important" (David, 44) because of students' transition between classes and different teaching styles among colleagues, is generally very happy about a guiding structure. Defending and supporting the *status quo* and the curriculum imposed by the school, he never considered having the possibility to choose interesting content or objectives for himself: "I never asked myself the question how it would be if I could only do what I would like to do or what the students would like to do" (David, 59–60). Similarly, when asking Jeanne about her personal objectives in teaching, she was very hesitant to provide an answer. After a pause, she said: "Hmm (=) (--). For me, it is to be able to transmit my competences and my knowledge. And then that students see the importance of learning a language and that they will succeed" (Jeanne, 246–247).

Conversely, there are teachers who do not consider the curriculum to be essential to their teaching and there are those who believe that it should provide even more guidance and even a more detailed repertoire for lesson planning. Victoria, for instance, criticized the curriculum's focus on developing *competencies* such as 'critical thinking,' given that it neither clarifies how those are to be achieved nor explains what they entail in detail. As she put it: "I find these general formulations concerning competence-oriented teaching important of course, but I'm also saying that (-), you can hide very easily behind those" (Victoria, 59–60).

Luisa is still more critical regarding the curriculum and of other policies, such as EDK recommendations on multilingual education. Although the EDK's strategy encourages schools to invest in and offer mobility and exchange programs, they are not usually implemented at the school (nor is their recommendation binding in any way). In fact, Luisa has the impression that any attempts made by teachers are impeded institutionally. For instance, exchanges and excursions with other language regions are discouraged and a more flexible interpretation of the curriculum, to integrate multiple languages, is not accepted. Over time, as Luisa stated, teachers willing to foster multilingual education simply give up trying and stick to the school's regular curriculum. According to her, the regular curriculum is very traditional and this is incompatible with her personal teaching principles. Instead, she follows the CEFR, determines the specific skills which students need to achieve at a given level, and tries to emphasize the communicative aspect of language learning. This is also problematic for David who shares her idea of language being communicative, which somehow seems to be in conflict with the curriculum: "If we taught a bit more in a communicative way or if we were allowed (-), this is again about curricula, I think, this could maybe lead to students realizing that what I learn in school will be useful" (David, 243–245). Furthermore, Luisa prioritizes learner

autonomy, expects students to take responsibility for their learning, and sees them as active partners in knowledge construction. That said, she explains that "I often realize that this is something that was rarely done before" (Luisa, 52–53). Students seem overwhelmed and are often unable to work autonomously, in groups, or just opt to determine learning objectives for themselves.

The curriculum, as well as the underlying institutional structures, further impede a reorganization of language teaching, which would (in theory) be supported by several teachers. Block courses of several weeks could be introduced, as teachers have proposed, based on empirical findings suggesting longer and more intensive exposure as a more efficient and natural way of learning a language. Etienne goes even further and asks: "Does it still make sense to learn foreign languages in school?" (Etienne, 350). The way languages have been and still are taught in today's schools does not correspond to students' (virtual) language use and exposure. This is why:

> I ask myself if foreign languages still make sense in the traditional lesson in class. I would also see it like this, for instance, a mandatory year abroad in upper secondary. This would be 1,000 times more efficient than grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary. (Etienne, 354–357)

Yet, as he further suggests, this line of argument is detrimental from an employee's point of view since, if put into practice, many (language) teachers could potentially lose their jobs. This demonstrates how teaching strategy decisions about language learning, as well as political and policy decisions, are interdependent and how difficult it is to align all actors' interests.

This inherent problem, although it is not expressed in the same dramatic way as Etienne's formulation, is perceived as such by almost all teachers. David, for instance, describes the situation of language learning as "this resistance against the second national language [German]" (David, 48–49), of which he – almost sarcastically – estimates that "1% of the students would call this their favorite subject" (David, 247–258). He further suggests that this resistance against the language by L1-French speakers is partly driven by stereotypes, prejudices, and hardened negative attitudes toward its speakers, the deconstruction of which should be a very important topic in German classes. David argues that regional and cultural studies informing students about daily life in other linguistic and cultural regions would be crucial to increasing motivation for language learning and for mutual understanding. The current, strong emphasis on literature, while important, is neither authentic nor very meaningful for students and often does not lead to a higher level of proficiency. In fact, as a teacher of German and Spanish, David concludes that "they have three years [of Spanish] until *Matura*, and when they do the *Matura*, the level of Spanish and German is the same, I guess at that point, they have learned German for 10 or 12 years" (David, 259–260). Learning German is seen as an obligation, for which many students do not have the sufficient motivation to succeed; this is also an

aspect that was highlighted by Luisa who views it as a "desperate" dilemma (Luisa, 179). Students' lacking motivation and negative attitudes toward German impede learning and enjoying it – quite the contrary to how *English* language learning is described. Although teachers like Luisa invest a great deal of time into making GFL classes more enjoyable, she realizes that much of it derives from outside of school and other spheres of social life.

Mentions of multilingual education with a focus on HLs is only marginally present in the data, given the enormous challenges, based on the school's curriculum, CLIL, and conflictual language classes. This might be because HL speakers are typically perfectly fluent in the school's official language(s) and are, thus, well integrated; this might also be because there are only very few HL speakers on upper secondary level *tout court*, according to Etienne. Similar to the cantons of Grisons and Zurich, admission exams before the beginning of upper secondary schools select students who will complete their *Matura* and who will then, most likely, go to university. Put plainly, the selection is often made between students with and without a migration background, of which the former start working after lower secondary education and the latter continue their academic trajectory. The majority of those who do have a different linguistic and cultural background are of Portuguese origin and sometimes they speak their L1 during break as Etienne explains. However, for him it is not an option to include it or any other HLs into his German classes:

> A: And if you were to actively include it [Portuguese] into your class…?
> B: Well, in a language course, that's pretty problematic. Then, it makes no sense anymore to do German.
> A: What do you mean by 'it doesn't make sense anymore to do German?'
> B: I can't allow my Portuguese students to speak Portuguese in my German course. (143–151)

That said, as mentioned above, Etienne is happy to integrate other languages in his CLIL classes where the objective is not only to improve language skills. Nevertheless, multilingual education approaches seem incompatible with his set teaching objectives for German classes. Jeanne perceives it to be a very sensitive issue and is rather skeptical when it comes to including other languages into her classes, since the curriculum is already dense and students are already learning multiple languages. Conversely, Luisa still applies them in her classes, even though she stated that empirical studies are inconclusive as to whether multilingual education approaches improve language skills *per se*. The intention is to raise students' awareness and to foster their identity and the overall recognition of different L1s in an official setting. Yet, it depends on teachers' individual efforts and interests to create meaningful lessons and/or exchanges based on multilingual education because it is not a priority in school, in the curriculum or in textbooks. It is a great challenge to design

such lessons and to find the right way to recognize the HLs in the classroom, since doing it wrong could lead to a certain stigmatization, as Luisa explained:

> …I'm a bit scared that I rather create exactly something I don't want. In summer, I always offer so-called special days. We had to hand in a topic, and I would like to work on linguistic and cultural stereotypes. I only fear that no one will sign up. (236–239)

Even if the effort is made, and if the specific courses are available, then students' interest in these topics will generally be low. When engaging in such activities, there is also always a risk of reproducing 'otherness' and exposing students to something too personal that they might not want to share.

Another condition to fully embrace multilingual education or language learning in general, according to David, is reflecting upon one's own language repertoire:

> The problem is, (-) it's not a problem, the students also reflect little about their own languages and then it's also complicated to have a conversation [about that]…I often do this [comparing languages] with French also because it's fun to me, but I often realize (-), they all speak French as their first or second language, but often they can't compare the foreign language with the first language…they have never dealt with this [before]… (103–105; 110–113).

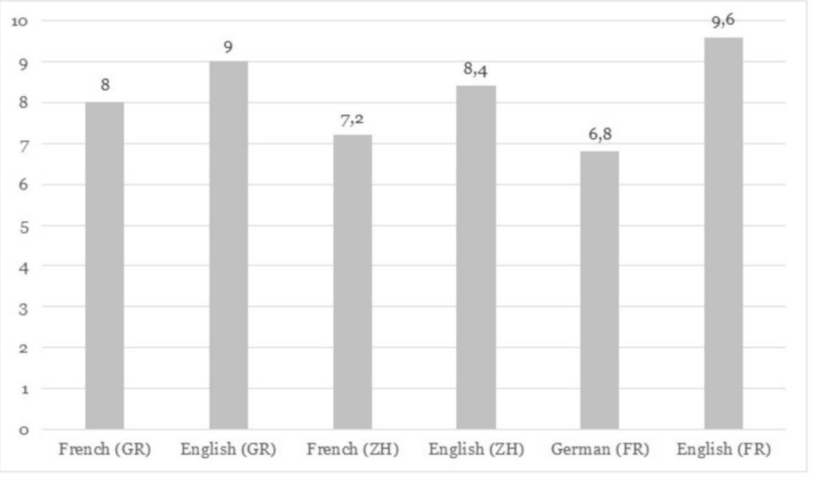
According to David, reflection about, and understanding of, and appreciating one's own language repertoire is crucial to further engage with other languages and cultures. Although he thinks that it is also the school's responsibility to promote HLs, additional language course offers from the country of origin are needed to foster not only oral language proficiency, but also on a written/academic basis. Similar to others, he does not consider it possible to include multiple languages into his classes because of his lacking competencies. That is, he believes that it is very challenging to make meaningful connections among languages since he does not speak the students' L1s. On the contrary, Julien and Victoria, for instance, believe that including other L1s is possible even without being able to speak them. While Julien tried to integrate Polish in German grammar classes, with the help of a student, Victoria and her students created a rap song containing French, English, Serbian, Croatian, Turkish, and German. Such language activities attribute official recognition to HLs and do not require the teacher to have proficient language skills. According to Victoria, more recent teaching approaches, such as co-teaching, theater pedagogy, and interdisciplinary self-study projects are hugely beneficial for language learning. A final concern that she shared during the interview was the canton's decision to cut funding for native-speaker teaching assistants who support local teachers in teaching language classes in their L1. This authentic, co-teaching experience was very helpful for students as well as teachers.

4.3 Language Hierarchies

Language ideologies exacerbate the symbolic power of languages and determine the 'market-value' of linguistic varieties and their speakers through hierarchies.

The following table illustrates a noteworthy result, given the study's focus on Switzerland's language learning debate caused by certain cantons' decision to prioritize English over a second national language. It shows that students from all three cantons prefer English to the non-L1 national languages of German or French, especially students from the canton of Fribourg who like English the most. French as a language subject in school is liked better by Grisons students (although it is optional for them) than by those in the canton of Zurich, whereas Fribourg students like German even less. The findings further indicate that while students from Zurich tend to agree that English should be used as an intercantonal *lingua franca*, students from Fribourg and Grisons tend to disagree.

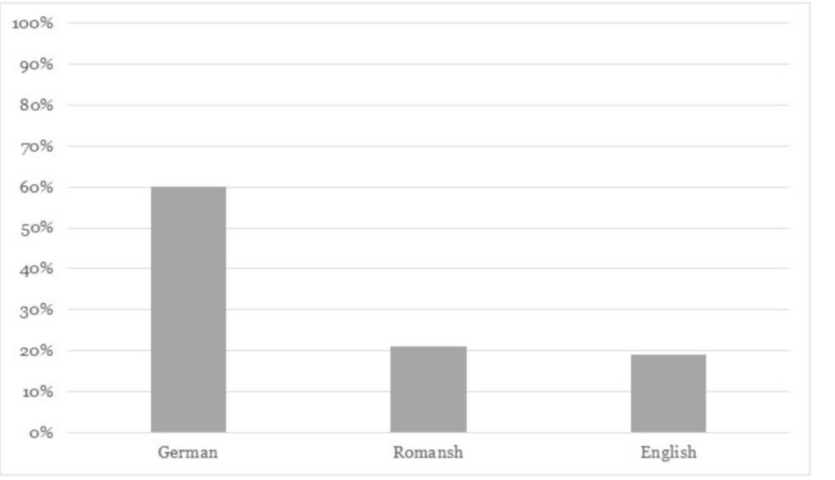
Figure 13: Liking non-L1 national language versus English



4.3.1 Students in Grisons

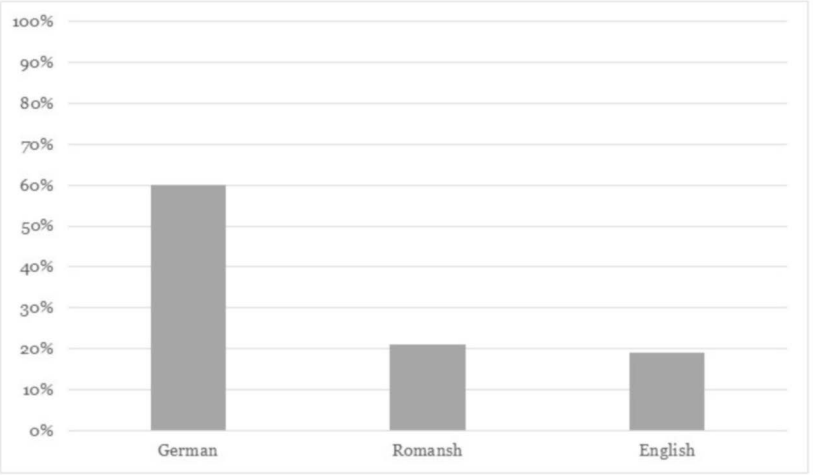
In Grisons, a slight majority of students (53%) chose Romansh as their most relevant language in private life, followed by 45% of students who ranked Swiss German first. In fact, two students put Romansh and Swiss German both first explaining that it was impossible for them to decide which one was more relevant to them personally. English was ranked most relevant in one case while Spanish and Norwegian were ranked third place twice and once respectively. Forty-five percent of the students' personal rankings do not include English as a top 3 language. There were no single-language answers; 18% considered two languages relevant for their personal lives with the rest of the students choosing at least three languages.

Figure 14: Ranking the most significant language in their personal lives – GR



60% considered German the most relevant language, 21% chose Romansh, and 19% chose English for their professional or academic lives. French was voted second and third once respectively while Spanish was voted third twice. All except for one of the rankings included English and all except for two listed more than two languages.

Figure 15: Ranking the most significant language in their professional lives – GR



Eighty-two percent of Grisons students voted for English to be learned before French; 18% favored French. Almost all students who were in favor of French explained their answers by saying that they would rather learn French first "out of respect for the nation," as one student put it succinctly. French would automatically deserve to be prioritized over a language that is not officially spoken in any language region in Switzerland, given its high status as a national language. Another reason often cited was the similarity between Romansh and French and, therefore, the simplicity to learn it first. Nevertheless, the opposite was also stated by approximately 20% of the students who considered French to be more complicated than English and who, therefore, preferred learning English. That said, the main arguments still referred to English's popularity and importance on an international level, very similar to the ones mentioned by Zurich students. English is perceived as *the* universal *lingua franca*, inextricably linked with unlimited freedom and necessary "to be part of the world," as Enzo noted. Furthermore, English is not really considered a school subject by many any longer. It is acquired almost naturally on the side, mostly online, which makes English classes at school enjoyable and seemingly easy (especially when compared to other language subjects), as students reported.

Given Romansh's minority status, language hierarchies are a real and lived phenomenon, to which the majority of the students are constantly exposed. They exist and are experienced on both a *de jure* and a *de facto* basis. Generally, their personal language hierarchies are determined by their L1 – in this study's case, either Romansh or Swiss German; students with Romansh as their L1 consider it to be the most significant language while the same holds true for students whose L1 is Swiss

German. Importantly, *all* Romansh-speaking students necessarily also speak Swiss German/SSG, while the inverse is not considered the norm. This is exacerbated by the fact that only very few books or even any other printed or digital content exist in Romansh, so reading and writing happen almost automatically in German, as Christine explains. The hierarchy becomes even more visible "when there are many German speakers then you automatically speak German, even with people who are there and would be able to speak Romansh. (-) Because it would somehow be impolite" (Christine, 37–39). She goes on to explain that as a Romansh speaker, she has learned to adapt herself to her surroundings and to the existing language hierarchies. German is and, according to many students, should be the *lingua franca* used and understood by everyone (although this is less the case for Italian-speakers in Grisons). The overall impression is that Swiss German dominates Switzerland; yet, as Jana pointed out: "Here [in Grisons], it will be a long time until Germanization takes over, so to speak" (Jana, 194–195). This shows both Romansh's hitherto uncontested priority and importance and also an ongoing development of Swiss German/German domination which might lead to the extinction of Romansh someday.

Furthermore, the 'Röstigraben' – the German-French language border – is perceived as being too far away for students to be in physical proximity with French. Although Hanna acknowledges that French is a part of Switzerland, and she regrets not learning it in school, when asked to choose between Romansh and French as a subject, she responds: "Romansh is still more important for me" (Hanna, 49). Jana added that Italian is much more relevant in the trilingual canton than French and should, thus, be learned prior thereto.

André sees English's influence and omnipresence in a *de jure* trilingual society as a problematic development. Aware of the fact that Zurich and other German-speaking cantons have decided to prioritize English over a national language, he believes that "the importance of English is becoming too big. First one's own national language, respectively the second and then only after that English because you have to be able to communicate with our own people first" (André, 209–211). For him, the hierarchy is clear: National languages should come before English so that communication within Switzerland can be guaranteed to take place in a national language. He further added that ELF would not be successful in Switzerland since "only one language for four different cultures does not really work well because every language also has elements of this culture" (André, 291–292). He believes that federal regulations, binding for all in Switzerland, are needed in order to achieve more equitable language learning and use of national languages and to counteract the current trend of prioritizing ELF. The problem with this, as he explained, is that language learning in schools is decided on a cantonal level, even though there should be a higher national interest in Switzerland's four languages. For Jana, for instance, it would be "strange" (Jana, 181) to communicate in English and it would create an unnecessary distance among the language groups. They generally feel that communication has

worked well in the past and that there is no need to change it although concrete examples of successful interaction among German-, French-, and Romansh speakers are rather lacking in the conversation.

4.3.2 Teachers in Grisons

The teachers' overall impression is that English is heavily prioritized and is endangering Romansh's already difficult minority status even more. For instance, this prioritization is materialized in the school's CAE exam and the importance given to it institutionally. As Roberto pointed out, the narrow focus on English is detrimental since it no longer qualifies as an outstanding skill. English, according to him, only serves well when coupled with other skills since the vast majority of individuals, with whom their students will compete for positions, will be as competent in English as they are. Henri compares this to an economic phenomenon with which he exemplifies the situation to his students: "…economists who always say, English is the language of the economy. No economist would say everybody should invest in the same stock. The economy would collapse" (Henri, 334–336). Thus, speaking English is not an advantage *per se*, since the competition is too big; however, combining it with other skills such as speaking Romansh, for instance, might be beneficial for students. As both Roberto and Henri have observed, however, some students are unaware of this and focus solely on English. For Henri, national languages should be prioritized over English on a moral basis. He advocates the idea of a strong cohesion in one's community: "At first, immediately the neighbor's language, that's part of it. You're not a good world citizen if you don't treat the neighbor well, that's obvious" (Henri, 271–272). Speaking one's neighbor's language can facilitate communication and demonstrate interest, openness, and integration according to Henri. Other teachers have a similar understanding of how speaking the same language can ameliorate social cohesion. As Gita pointed out, ELF "is absolutely out of question" (Gita, 409–410) as a common language for Switzerland. Unable to really justify her opinion, she would prefer improving her knowledge in other national languages instead of using ELF and calls herself "conservative" (Gita, 404).

Nicole cautions that ELF's spread is a natural development and cannot be stopped forcefully. Yet, educational policies intentionally impede full bilingual programs in English and offer them in the three official cantonal languages instead in an attempt to gain control over this development. Some teachers have argued that if CLIL were offered in English, then the risk would be too high that students would decide to no longer enroll in the traditional bilingual programs. Language hierarchies are, therefore, renegotiated and influenced by different forces on both societal and educational levels. Paradoxically, although the Grisons teachers' emphasis seems to lie on the promotion of the cantonal languages, Henri laments the non-existence of exchange at the school level:

> The school does call itself multilingual, but the habitus is rather monolingual. The language that is used is German. That's the one that is expected from everyone. We have these three sections, per se, they are already bilingual, but even the exchange among these three sections, it doesn't exist. You could do so much more here" (249–253).

Thus, the hierarchy is clear with German being the most relevant language used and is expected from everyone. As Gita put it: "German is simply everything" (Gita, 312). Italian and Romansh, as *de jure* equal languages, are rather undermined and cannot compete with the majority language. From a pragmatic point of view, Gita argues that Romansh can even be said to be dispensable:

> A: And Romansh?
> B: To be honest? It works well without [Romansh]. Except they want to become teachers or they already know "I want to go back to my valley and open a store there or to work in an institution where you must know it". But for studying, effectively, you don't need it (317–319).

As mentioned previously, Henri believes that one of the underlying issues that exacerbates the existing language hierarchies is the lacking exchange among the school's Romansh-, German-, and Italian-speaking sections. All Grisons teachers believe that if the school reproduces the separation of languages and cultures, then students will potentially internalize these mechanisms and will act them out within society. As Henri further explained, it is up to the smaller language groups to seek exchange and to adapt to the German-speaking majority, which remains rather independent and autonomous. Furthermore, the same hierarchy exists within the curriculum. Whereas German is a mandatory subject for all students, both Romansh and Italian are optional and are, thus, indirectly labeled as dispensable.

On a cantonal level, Italian, Romansh, and German are *de jure* equal languages with huge *de facto* discrepancies. From a prescriptive perspective, the language law that safeguards the national languages' equal status is of great value in the trilingual canton. However, its implementation is not controlled, and its efficiency is questioned by many participants. Educational institutions and other national agencies such as Movetia, following a political mandate, have the task of promoting exchanges and thus of ameliorating understanding among the language regions. Such policy-based and subsidized offers show that interaction among them does not happen typically or naturally and needs to be incentivized. In those situations, Romansh-speaking students are neglected as appropriate exchange partners since it is neither learned as a language anywhere else in school nor do they learn French to really benefit from such exchanges.

As Henri further pointed out, it is only possible to mistreat Romansh and to deprive its speakers of their linguistic rights because "you don't have to be afraid that

someone is going to take legal action" (Henri, 103–104). Growing up accustomed to such inequality, Henri's experience shows that Romansh speakers do not (dare to) demand their rights:

> This also has to do with the typical situation of a minority language. When you grow up, it doesn't work without German. You have this image that Romansh is like the family language, at least for some people, it's limited to friends, then the language doesn't need a public presence in this sense. Of course, politics has to intervene here, they try. But it's often in contrast to people, the people themselves. They say, no, it's actually enough for me when it's German. A small minority is very often very open toward the majority. A little submissive even. (108–114)

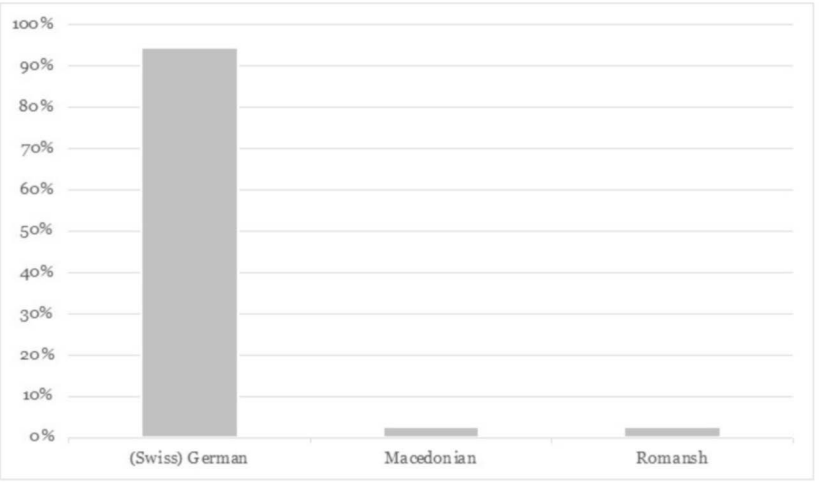
Henri confirmed that even though there is a certain political engagement to rearrange the existing language hierarchies in favor of Romansh, this does not come to pass because some of its own speakers are unassertive, are (superficially) satisfied with the *status quo*, and limit their L1 Romansh to private life. Others reported that Romansh is more restricted to the family context while they (unconsciously) switch to Swiss German in public space. That said, it can be further undermined even within the family context, as Nicole experienced, when there is more than one family language. In her case, Swiss German as well as Romansh were the languages spoken in her family, even though Romansh automatically lost out its place to Swiss German whenever her father, the German-speaking parent, was around. Romansh's minority position is also positive for Roberto, whose lived experiences of language are primarily shaped by being a minority speaker of Italian in Grisons and *not* Italian-speaking Ticino. Sharing the minority position with Romansh, Grisons' Italian speakers have two strong majorities – Grisons' Swiss German speakers and Ticino's Italian speakers – to which they have to stand up. Pairing up with the Romansh-speaking community, however, increases their voices and weight in discussions and decision-making with the German-speaking part in Grisons. Interestingly, Roberto perceives there to be a more fruitful cooperation among the Italian-Romansh minority and the German majority within Grisons, in contrast to the Italian language group in Ticino. Questioned in their legitimacy as Italian speakers, they are not fully accepted as members of the same language group by Ticinese, which results in rivalries and a difficult positioning of belonging.

Finally, according to Gita, all of these language hierarchies, which should not exist following the *de jure* language policies, do not yet account for the increasing number of HLs at school and within society at large. Although her impression is that German is still the language imposed onto and expected by everyone, even though there are in fact many more immigrants, a greater plethora of languages, and a more successful integration thereof.

4.3.3 Students in Zurich

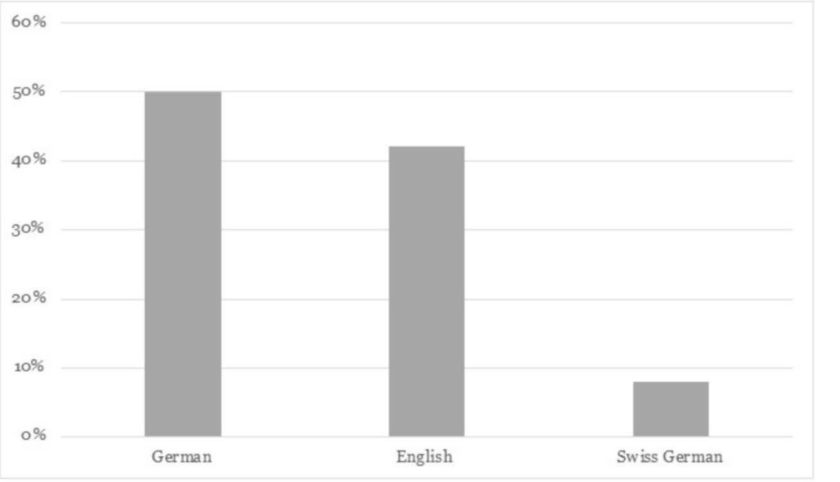
All students except for two who ranked Macedonian and Romansh as the most relevant chose Swiss German/German as their number one language in their personal lives. Twenty-five percent of the students considered 1–2 languages relevant for their personal lives, whereas four out of those 25% considered 'only' Swiss German/German to be relevant. The vast majority ranked English second after Swiss German/German; other HLs spoken at home or French, a language learned in school, came third in some of the students' answers. Furthermore, a few students who differentiated between Swiss German and German ranked the other variety second while they almost exclusively prioritized Swiss German over German.

Figure 16: Ranking the most significant language in their personal lives – ZH



The hierarchies changed when students ranked languages according to their relevance for their professional or academic lives. Fifty percent of the students consider German and 8% Swiss German most important while 42% ranked English number one. Those who chose Swiss German/German as the most relevant language opted for English as their number two. While it is not present in all students' rankings, more than 60% ranked French third place in professional or academic contexts. Students chose at least two languages in this context, whereas the vast majority selected three languages. Generally, all Zurich students consider English to be more important than any other language (except for German) for their (future) careers.

Figure 17: Ranking the most significant language in their professional lives – ZH



When asked whether they would prefer to first learn English or French in school as their L2, all except for 2 students answered that they prefer learning English before French. One answer was in favor of French and the other stated that it did not matter. Reasons for why they favored English were various; some even expressed their desire to stop learning French *tout court*, while others called for an earlier start of English at primary level. As succinctly summarized by Tobias: "English can be used for anything, anywhere, anytime." This is especially true for those in academic and scientific contexts in which they see their chances of succeeding greatly diminished without a proficient knowledge of English. In fact, English is no longer viewed as a specific skill, but is instead seen as a "basic requirement for anyone," as Mia reported. They perceive English as playing a major role in many spheres of Swiss society while French does not. The common attitude seems to be, as was stated by Peter: "The better you speak English, the better off you will be economically and personally." Finally, the reason why one student favored French over English was that French is a national language and is more difficult to learn than English.

Arthur, a speaker of Macedonian, is very well aware and exposed to language hierarchies and the ideologies associated therewith. According to him, most people to whom he speaks about his linguistic background are ignorant of different Slavic languages and naively group them together to simplify them. Although Macedonian is very important for his identity, he clearly prioritizes English: "I love English" (Arthur, 153). His passion for English is so great that he would like to move to the USA and have his future children grow up speaking English and not Macedonian. He feels this way due to the possibilities and prestige linked to English compared to Macedonian,

which is often not even considered to be a language of its own and is instead associated with migrants of low socioeconomic status. That said, he is also concerned that English might be taking over other smaller languages. According to him, he realized too late that he was prioritizing English too heavily in school while he could have benefited from learning French and Italian. Similarly, Yasmin, whose L1 is Turkish, clearly favors English. Even if Turkish classes were offered in school, she would have chosen English because she perceives it to be much more relevant. Much like Arthur, she would like her future children to grow up speaking English since she associates it with a better life. According to her, ELF would improve communication within Switzerland if it were accepted as the common *lingua franca* and was not artificially suppressed by policies on the pretext of promoting national languages. Adya classified Swiss German as the most relevant language for her personally and professionally in the questionnaire and then explained during the interview that it was in fact English. She confessed having put Swiss German down first, thinking that it was the expected classification to demonstrate her 'Swissness.' She further revealed that prioritizing Swiss German was a role she has adapted to in school contexts in which she has the impression that this is expected of and beneficial to her. Nicolas, who considers both Swiss German and English to be his most significant languages, does not see them as necessarily competing against each other. Rather, he believes that English is very useful and indispensable for professional communication, but it is insufficient to be fully integrated in Swiss social and work life. Describing daily life at an international company in Zurich, such as Google whose working language is officially English, he believes that: "Sure, there are many foreigners…who work [there]. But finally, you won't speak English 40 hours a week because of this. The whole environment is still shaped by Switzerland and through this also the language" (Nicolas, 188–190).

He also makes suggestions on how to flatten the existing language hierarchies within Swiss society. English could lose its importance and give its place back to the national languages if more people from the different language regions played their part in understanding the other and meeting them halfway. If the national languages are prioritized, then more people will have the chance to speak their language and are less dependent upon ELF. Furthermore, this would require 'only' a passive knowledge of the other language. As Adya pointed out, however, even in a scenario such as the one described by Nicolas, there are huge discrepancies among and between each of the four national languages. The privileged position of majority languages is exemplified in the following quote taken from the interview with Samira. Applying the concept of *lingua franca*, she believes that communication in Switzerland would function best if everyone adopted one common language, in this case, German. Samira says:

B: I think we should rather determine one of the four languages that we already have and not take on English in addition to this.
A: And which one would that be?
B: Well, since I don't speak Italian or Romansh, I think German or French. I also think that most people in Switzerland can speak German or French (120–126).

This example shows the extent to which monolingualism is still considered the norm and displays a homogeneous linguistic landscape that is more efficient for communication. Since she possesses language skills in German and French, she believes that one of those should be determined as the *lingua franca*. This simplistic deduction is made from a point of view that represents the privileged, majority language group's position.

4.3.4 Teachers in Zurich

Some teachers believe that multilingualism is not even necessarily a topic in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Carmen, for instance, argues that the primary requirement to participate actively in society is to speak Swiss German/German; this implies that the co-existence of multiple languages and cultures may not be such a strong Swiss identity marker after all. The existing language hierarchy is nonetheless clear: Professional as well as private life is essentially based on Swiss German/German. As Nesrin put it: "I believe you simply have a great advantage if you already know how to speak German, when that's already a given" (Nesrin, 416–417). While the first place in the socially existing hierarchies is, thus, occupied by Swiss German/German, all teachers agree that English has become indispensable in society, media, education, and particularly in virtual lifeworlds. When contrasted with French, English is simply more embedded in Zurich's social reality than other (national) languages that status and relevance of which are generally regarded as rather low. Patrick, having grown up close to the French-German language border, laments this situation, recalling daily practices immersed in two languages and cultures as an adolescent and the positive impact that they have had on his life. He witnesses that the value of multilingualism and multiculturalism within Switzerland has deteriorated. He considers it to be very essential to be aware of the different linguistic and cultural traditions in Switzerland and their impact on national cohesion. Monolingual cantons in particular, and in those further away from the French- or Italian-speaking parts, have devalued the national languages and virtually replaced those with English. Patrick also sees it as the school's responsibility to reduce the existing language hierarchies as well as the tensions exacerbated through the language learning debate:

I have the feeling that the Romandie registers this indifference of many German-speaking Swiss toward French with no small amount of indifference. I have the

> feeling that it's a bigger issue in the Romandie than vice versa because the German-speaking part of Switzerland is simply the majority. And I think the German-speaking part does have a certain responsibility to pay attention to other languages as well and not just look at these pragmatic arguments. And the school in particular has a central task, not only as a servant of the economy. I believe that schools should definitely be able to set other priorities as well. (287–294)

The choice to introduce English before another national language seems to be motivated economically, whereas Patrick sees a potential danger in internationally, market-oriented LEPs which ignore sociopolitical aspects on a national level. Additionally, schools face increasing accountability and have to justify their curriculum to more and more stakeholders. One of their primary concerns regarding upper secondary education in the German-speaking part of Switzerland is students' training in English as a preparation for international competition. Sabine argues that skills in ELF are most likely sufficient unless the company or institution has strong ties to the *Romandie* or France. This has become the new norm over the past decades, thereby inverting the prioritization of formerly national languages to ELF. Nesrin suggests that "we don't have to artificially counteract this [the dominance of English]" (Nesrin, 322), but cautions that in certain positions and contexts, these hierarchies exist and prioritize national languages over ELF, which can also prove problematic.

That said, although English is prioritized, FL teachers doubt that this has a significant impact on the majority of students' language skills. They unanimously agree that students learn English very quickly. The language hierarchy is, thus, rather ideology-laden since, as Sonja explains, the prioritization of English over French "is a bit of an insult to a part that also belongs to Switzerland" (Sonja, 239). Even from a competence-based point of view, more emphasis and resources would be needed in order to put another FL learned at school on the same level as English. Students seem to perceive the existing hierarchies but, as Patrick has experienced, are unable to first, deconstruct them and second, to see beyond English's utility and omnipresence. The educational policy decisions further reproduce these hierarchies and incorporate the neoliberal position that is oriented at international, economy-based exchanges in ELF. Given their majority status among the national languages, Swiss German/German speakers have the choice of which language they would like to prioritize, according to Sonja. A nation-wide solution that combines everyone's interest is, however, very complicated to find, as Sonja explained:

> 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).

This passage demonstrates that the question of language order almost automatically implies the teaching of English and French when in fact Italian (or other languages) could also qualify as a compulsory language subject. Since two FLs are taught mandatorily in Zurich, the choice is habitually made in favor of French and English. As Tina explained, French has a larger speech community than Italian, which serves as a sociopolitical and economic argument. The subjects taught and the hours allocated thereto can also impact upon teacher education and the choice of study programs for future teachers. For instance, given the fewer employment possibilities with a major in Italian, Tina chose to prioritize French herself although she would have preferred Italian. Second, given Swiss German/German's powerful position in Switzerland, it is in their students' best interest to invest in another "very dominant" language (Patrick, 241) to compete on an international level.

That said, Sonja would understand if other parts of Switzerland also prioritized English over German. In fact, if all Swiss students started learning English first, then they would have the same language order in school and, thus, would have the same first FL which they could use to communicate more easily. Sonja suggested that ELF can reduce power dynamics and linguistic insecurity: "…so at least they both speak a foreign language…and are on equal footing. This to me is somehow also an advantage" (Sonja, 106–109).

Few include Italian and even fewer Romansh when talking about national languages. According to Sabine, Romansh does not necessarily deserve to be treated equally to the others since the relevance outside of Grisons is very limited and the pressure to include as many languages as possible is already high with French and English. The same is true for HLs, which are situated at the lower end of the language hierarchies. Elisabeth, referring to a professional experience that she had with an Albanian family, believes that HLs are important and should be spoken at home. However, she stated that she tended to:

> …find it just as important that they, if they want to stay in Switzerland, necessarily also optimize German to the extent that they, as you were asking before, possibly (--) I have to formulate it differently, that German is not an obstacle for their professional career. (432–435)

Stressing the importance that Swiss German in particular has in all social spheres, Elisabeth believes that migrants coming to Switzerland and intending to stay need to classify Swiss German at least as importantly as their L1:

> I really think, one's own language identity, the one you are born into, that you grew up with, that is important. But when you live in a different country

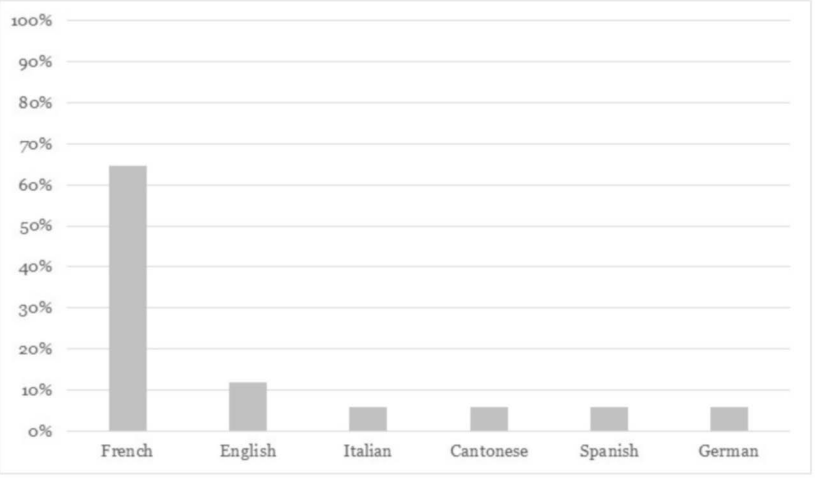
> you simply have to adopt a second language identity. That's my clear position. Otherwise, it doesn't work. (458–461)

This quote demonstrates that first different language hierarchies exist for private and public spaces and that they are accepted according to different criteria developed by each individual's stance and underlying ideology toward each language. Second, it shows that language ideologies, as in this case, by teachers and backed up by LEPs, can have a positive or negative impact on students' integration, well-being, and educational trajectory depending on what language they speak.

4.3.5 Students in Fribourg

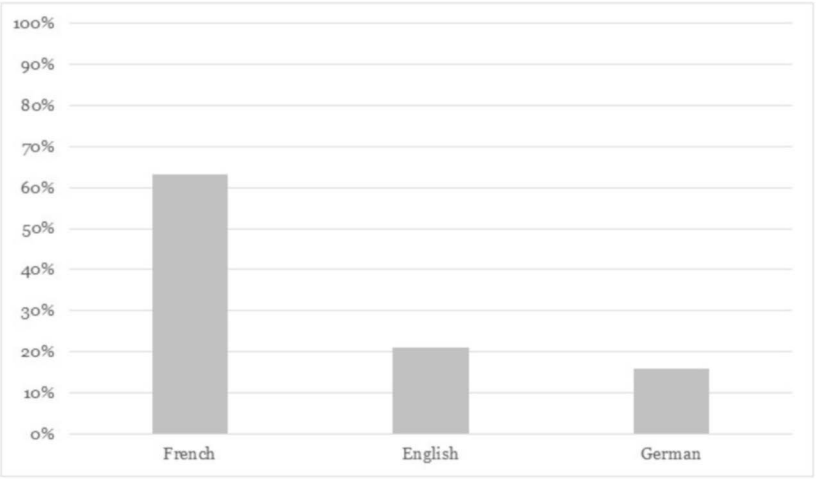
A slight majority of Fribourg students (55%) ranked French their number one language in their personal lives. Other languages that were ranked as most relevant were English, Italian, Cantonese, Spanish, and German. Japanese was ranked second and Portuguese third by two students respectively. All except for one considered (at least) one of the canton's official languages – German or French – to be very important to their personal lives in addition to other HLs. English was a top 3 language for 75% of the students. Unlike the students in Zurich, there were no single-language answers for their personal lives; all students chose at least two languages of importance for their personal lives.

Figure 18: Ranking the most significant language in their personal lives – FR



Professionally, 65% considered French to be the most relevant language. The rest ranked German or English as more relevant for their professional lives. More precisely, 65% prioritize German over English for their (future) careers. There was one single-language answer for students' professional/academic context, which was French.

Figure 19: Ranking the most significant language in their professional lives – FR



Unlike Zurich and Grisons, 70% of Fribourg students would *not* prioritize English over German if they could. They believe that English is easier to learn, which is why it should *not* be taught before German so that more time can be spent on learning the more difficult language. The main argument is based on the French-speaking part's dependency on German-speaking Switzerland economically and politically, however. Students express concerns that if German lost its place at school, that "it would separate us more from the German-speaking part of Switzerland." They further state that "without German, everything is pretty hard to achieve in Switzerland." For instance, they explained that if they wanted to become a teacher, then they would need a relatively high (B2) level of German to enter teacher education schools. They perceive German to be very important for almost any profession after graduating from upper secondary school. Many students do not feel the need to change anything because "it works well the way it is" and "the tradition has always been like this." They are less interested in changing the *status quo*, especially given the fact that German is Switzerland's majority language. Those students who would rather learn English before German, which make up 30% of the answers, argue that it is an in-

ternationally important language that can be used anywhere. While German is very specific to the Swiss context, they perceive English to be equivalent to globalization and life without borders. Its ostensible neutrality is appealing and makes it more interesting to learn.

4.3.6 Teachers in Fribourg

For teachers in Fribourg, language hierarchies are a social reality to which they are exposed daily when working in a space in which two otherwise geographically separate language groups come together and interact. These language hierarchies, as Jeanne believes, are shaped by underlying forces that partly result from the canton's linguistic composition. Contrary to Switzerland's overall linguistic landscape in which Swiss German/German dominates French, the latter is the majority language in the canton of Fribourg. Victoria deduces that the tense situation between the German- and French-speaking population is the result of historically evolving "German-French crises" (Victoria, 188). She explained that:

> [F]or instance, in Ticino, (-) so the Italian-speaking canton, the way of dealing (-), the natural way of dealing with the French and the German language is much more equitable, it's much more given than, for instance, in the French-speaking canton where German MUST be learned or in the German-speaking cantons where French is learned. There, such a friction becomes noticeable for me and I think it would be pretty good if you counteract this. To reduce prejudices, etc. and that you don't consider the other language as a competitor but as an enrichment (190–197).

These tensions are also noticeable even if, as Luisa summarized it, the *status quo* is French and is undoubtedly the school's most important language. That said, it is undeniable that German is crucial, especially in professional contexts, as Victoria pointed out: "Everyone who works in a reputable profession can speak both languages, well or very well. I believe that this is already almost a requirement" (Victoria, 139–141). Jeanne explained that the existing language ideologies, and some of the tensions, result from demonstratively taking advantage of the French majority position and intentionally treating Swiss German/German as inferior, possibly in response to the situation on a national level.

Language laws and other cantonal policies do not depict social reality, according to Etienne, even though both languages are *de jure* equal. He argued that first, the already existing laws for equal treatment are neither implemented nor controlled. Second, they discriminate against significant languages within society such as Portuguese, Turkish, or Serbian, thereby reproducing language hierarchies: "Of course, they are not indigenous languages, but even the word indigenous gets a new meaning in today's society" (Etienne, 124–125). That said, by excluding those languages

from his classes, he establishes a clear hierarchy himself, in which German not only has a privileged position but is in fact the only accepted language. As an experienced German teacher, he has witnessed the resistance and difficulties that some students have learning GFL, leading him to question its meaningfulness altogether. To him, it is much more sensible to accept ELF as the medium of communication within Switzerland, to overtly accept the language hierarchy that already exists covertly, and to reduce classes in national languages. He argued that it would be more efficient and less of a burden for students and teachers if English could be introduced before German. He further argued that German and higher levels of English should be made optional while ELF classes should be mandatory to guarantee (and possibly expand) communication with other language regions. Luisa is also rather skeptical when it comes to arguments presented by policy makers and politicians in favor of national languages, such as mutual understanding and social cohesion. According to her, these are used as a pretext to pursue romantic ideals of the so-called *Willensnation*, a well-functioning nation-state comprised of four different languages and cultures united by will. This is seemingly a necessary policy strategy to cover voices of dissent: "Actually, very little holds it [Switzerland] together and it's actually a miracle, the so-called special case Switzerland, really an exception. Very special. I also don't know what holds us together culturally" (Etienne, 276–279). As Luisa pointed out, as long as everyone is satisfied financially and the society is generally well off, then no more profound questions are asked which would challenge the *status quo*. The language learning debate, however, does exactly this and calls into question the public perception of the harmonious, solitary *Willensnation*.

Other teachers generally described ELF's omnipresence in Switzerland and the danger it represents for the national (minority) languages as a big loss. For Jeanne, it is very regrettable that certain Swiss cantons prioritize English over French, which would not be possible if LEP decisions were made federally. She is of the opinion that the 'language question' should be answered unanimously and should be implemented equally in every canton. David considers the language order in favor of the national languages to be an advantage for students, noting that is not at all acknowledged by them as such. Then again, Luisa believes that the language order is irrelevant since students' preference of English is becoming stronger, even despite the school's emphasis on the national languages. Nevertheless, Jeanne is pleased with both the canton's and the school's policies respecting Switzerland's linguistic composition. Contrarily, David perceives the 'over-emphasizing' of German and English or Spanish and the neglecting of some students' L1s as a huge problem. Without social or official recognition, students' L1s are further devalued within the school and by themselves. That is, on the one hand, students who happen to have English or Spanish as L1, are asked to integrate it actively into teaching and are praised for their language skills; on the other hand, though, speakers of Portuguese, Albanian, Czech, or Croatian are punished twice: Not only are their L1s undesired at school, thereby

making it impossible to showcase their AL skills, but their L1 also places a burden on them by depriving them of the status of 'true' (monolingual) native speakers of French. According to Victoria, these different values and perspectives on languages exist since they are always linked to spaces and people. She does not believe that ELF can ease the tensions between German and French or among their speakers since no language is neutral and those that already exist need more social and institutional recognition.

4.4 'Native-Speaker' and 'Standard-Speech' Ideologies

The concepts of '(non-)native speaker' and '(non-)standard language' express romantic and rationalist ideals and are reproduced and legitimized by the education system.

The study's data analysis revealed that participants almost equally aim at a native-like language proficiency when learning or teaching a language. This is illustrated by the fact that they (almost all) strongly agree to prefer AE or BE over a 'Swiss variety of English' in the classroom or in textbooks. The underlying standard speech ideology is, however, less explicit for Swiss German versus SSG. Many are torn between Swiss German as an important identity marker and SSG as a valuable language, both academically and professionally.

4.4.1 Students in Grisons

Sub-hierarchies including native speaker and standard speech ideologies exist among students in Grisons for German, English, and Romansh. SSG expectations in school can be challenging for Romansh speakers in specific, who are also exposed to Swiss German in Grisons' society in addition to their L1. For Jessica, these expectations and the lacking practice of SSG make her afraid of presentations in class. She is stressed about making grammatical mistakes or having to look for words that would delegitimize her German language skills and embarrass her in front of the class. The following extract, taken from the interview with André, illustrates this complex situation further:

B: …we always only speak Swiss German.
A: This is for you of higher value then than Schriftdeutsch [written German] or Schuldeutsch [school German] (-).
B: Yes, it's much more complicated to speak.
A: Because you never learned it except in school?

B: Yes, and in school, we never really spoke it. With a teacher or a presentation or two at most.
A: But you have it as a subject in school, right?
B: Yes, we have it in school, so, in school, you learn standard German, written standard German of course. You speak it a little but it's a written language.
A: And if you were to go to Germany, how would you speak?
B: Well, Swiss German. (85–104)

It is very clear from André's explanations that Swiss German is the more important language, and that SSG is almost entirely reduced to its written function. Furthermore, André does not consider SSG to be more valuable because it corresponds to the fixed standards. Instead, he would rather speak Swiss German even in Germany, a country often associated in Switzerland with dialect-free standard speech. Others confessed that they are ashamed and very self-conscious about their German skills, which often do not correspond to the prescriptive standard speech conventions, in their own assessment. Paradoxically, although they feel more at ease using Swiss German, they can still sometimes better express themselves in SSG since the vocabulary is more varied and also covers more formal registers. Most agree that it is, therefore, sensible to teach SSG and not Swiss German because otherwise they would not have any exposure at all and would lose out on an important skill. Others, however, would favor Swiss German in school instead, justifying it with the special status that it has within Switzerland.

Concerning students' sub-hierarchies of English, they seem heavily influenced by (social) media, the film industry, and sometimes by the reputation of the countries themselves, but also considerably by the varieties used by their English teachers. For instance, Jessica justifies her preferred English variety: "…because our English teacher only speaks AE with us and then you've internalized this" (Jessica, 144–145). Students also associate AE with an interesting and fascinating language that might lead to a new life far away and in a culture different from the one they know. Hanna, who has visited the US before, says: "I believe, I can identify more with them [Americans] because I've already been there and I've tried to adopt the language" (Hanna, 203–204). According to her, the best way to speak English is to make proper distinctions among the varieties and to stick to one. This is the experience that she has in school where the textbooks showcase BE, while her teacher speaks AE. Christine, conversely, chose BE since it is the variety used by her teacher and she thinks that it is the one that is expected to be used in school. Timo differentiates between English used in school and in his spare time. While he considers BE to be the standard variety for school, he prefers and uses ELF especially in online communication. As Timo explains, it was particularly due to his ELF practice that he improved his English, not the BE he was taught and learned in school:

> [F]or almost two years I played this game almost every night; there were Polish people, English people from all over the world people came together, a couple from India and you really had to communicate with them, make plans, really every day actually 2–3 hours, I spoke English. I then noticed my progress myself, I felt more confident. If you can use it a lot, *especially because we didn't have any native speakers with us*, so real English people, but a Polish person with his English and the Swiss person, then everyone is on the same level. Then you dare more easily to simply start talking…They [Indians] spoke English very well, but with a strong accent and that's why you also dared. In school it's BE; everyone is familiar with it, that's high level… (244–266 [emphasis added]).

While Timo approaches English from a rather pragmatic point of view, Jana and Melina disagree. For Jana: "…the goal would be to, when you graduate university, to be perfectly proficient. I mean, absolutely perfect" (Jana, 148–149). Melina, very aware of the difficulties that come with speaking English to native-like level, says that: "I actually try to speak BE as well as possible. It isn't all the distinct vowels that I use, rather in an attenuated way, but I just try [to speak] as well as possible" (Melina, 280–282). Generally, students were very aware of and adamant about the language levels, creating sub-sub-hierarchies based on their proficiency, such as classified in the CEFR within the sub-hierarchies of different varieties of English. A common goal for all of the students was achieving level C1 in a 'school-accepted' variety – AE or BE – while some even aimed for (and achieved) level C2 (described as 'native-like' by the CEFR).

Finally, the political decision to create a Romansh standard language out of three (but not all five) Romansh idioms causes systemic sub-hierarchies and controversy among their speakers. For instance, as Timo explained, educational policy makers decided to fund textbooks in the standardized language RG, but not in specific Romansh idioms. That said, many students are in favor of RG, support prioritizing a standard language for school, and use their own idiom as a family language. Unlike with German or English, where a historically established and ideology-laden distinction between the standard and non-standard variety exists, most students' concern was a different one. As mentioned previously, Romansh speakers are singled out at school due to their use of iPads and self-created teaching materials in the given idiom. Some argue that RG could unify Romansh-speaking students and end the special treatment, as a result of the absence of missing textbooks. Others say that RG should be limited to writing and that one's own idiom could still be used for verbal communication. This would be problematic for students enrolled in the Romansh-speaking program who do not speak it as their L1, however. For those, RG is often the only option to learn it since it has standardized grammatical rules and a dictionary.

4.4.2 Teachers in Grisons

The data collected in teachers' interviews revealed that the language sub-hierarchies that exist on a societal level are exacerbated and legitimized in the education system. Martin's experience, for instance, is a strong indicator of this. He explains that in order for his wife to become a teacher in a Swiss public school she first had to learn Swiss German, even though she was already a proficient speaker of both SSG and Romansh. While this was incomprehensible to Martin, Henri argued that many teachers in Grisons would in fact like to teach in Swiss German, not in SSG. Roberto, who teaches in the Italian-German bilingual program, agreed that emotions can be much better expressed through dialect. For him, as a native speaker of Italian and often surrounded by Swiss German in society, speaking a dialect also comes with less pressure. He feels less insecure when speaking Swiss German than when speaking SSG and, simultaneously, feels a stronger connection to his students. Within his native language Italian, he also differentiates between the standard language and the dialect. Growing up as a speaker of Italian dialect, he considers it "the language of the heart" (Roberto, 26). Whereas Roberto's perception of his dialect is both positive and emotionally enriching, Henri cautions that these native speaker and standard speech ideologies have a felt negative impact on individuals. The existing stereotypes and prejudices associated with certain accents influence how speakers are both viewed and valued in society. He believes that accents that deviate from a certain norm are responsible for why individuals themselves are devalued. He cites the example that somebody from upper Surselva, a valley region in Grisons, is said to be "a second category person" (Henri, 344). This is due to its former economically weaker position and strong focus on agriculture. That said, he witnesses a certain generational change that is impeding the reproduction of such stereotypes. Henri further believes that certain standard accents carry prestige, but those people who recognize certain varieties or accents as being more prestigious than others "out themselves as highly superficial" (Henri, 348). He argued that such sub-hierarchies and ideologies are inappropriate, particularly in Switzerland, a country heavily shaped by the dominant, non-standard Swiss German. On the contrary, "when somebody shows up with his *bühnendeutschen Akzent* [professionally trained standard German accent in actors], that's rather negative" (Henri, 357–358). According to him, standard language is not considered to be as important as it is in Germany. Generally, the comparison between the linguistic situation in Germany and Switzerland is a recurrent theme. It often results in a rather inferior, submissive positioning on the part of Swiss-German speakers having to justify themselves for being more proficient in Swiss German than SSG.

When asked about their linguistic repertoire, Martin, for instance, did not name English as part of it. At a later stage during the interview, he then revealed that he specifically did not mention English because he does not feel entirely comfortable

speaking it and would not feel competent enough to teach bilingually. The Cambridge First Certificate in English (B2 level), which he completed after a stay abroad, certifies an advanced level with which he feels at ease. Not only does it function as 'proof' of his English competency, but its issuer – Cambridge Assessment as part of the University of Cambridge – also attests to the knowledge of a prestigious variety. Nicole, already fascinated by the BE accent during her own schooltime, recalls feeling ashamed for trying to sound native-like. She explained that not many were able to imitate the accent 'correctly' and wanting to do so made her stand out. After her training to become an English teacher herself and after multiple stays abroad, she feels rather proud to be recognized by English native speakers as one of them. She explains that she has appropriated the language, which is inextricably linked to her own way of speaking and even her identity. Although it is important for her to speak a native-speaker English as a role model for her students, it is not a primary teaching objective to make them sound like her. That said, as the findings above suggest, students are influenced by the variety spoken by their teachers and sometimes even intentionally adopt it to achieve 'true native-like proficiency,' something about which teachers might be unaware.

4.4.3 Students in Zurich

Given its importance and omnipresence in the canton of Zurich, the uncontestably highest-ranked variety is Swiss German, or more precisely, the local variety thereof. That said, Adya, for instance, received compliments for her standard German accent in school, which for her was a very positive experience.

For Arthur, the native-speaker and standard speech ideologies to which he is exposed in Swiss German/German and Macedonian have had felt consequences on his identity and sense of belonging. As mentioned previously, he is not accepted either as a native speaker in Macedonia nor in Switzerland since his language skills are compared to a monolingual standard. In his case, it seems that Macedonian influences his German language skills and vice versa. His desire to be a native speaker of AE is so big that he learns expressions used by "Americans, be it Kanye West or Whitney Houston [or] Michael Jackson" off by heart (Arthur, 158–159). He believes that if somebody is really interested in a language, then they will learn how to speak it in a native-like fashion. Although his own goal is to be a full native speaker of AE, he doubts that he could ever lose his accent entirely. That said, he also believes that accents indicate someone's origins and can, therefore, be a legitimate accessory to a language. According to him, there are certain contexts which require a higher proficiency in the standard language: "When I see someone like Ueli Maurer [Swiss Federal Councilor] [in] the interview with CNN, where he embarrasses himself in English…this is how the international community simply sees us then" (Arthur, 350–352). Others are less focused on AE, but also list BE and Australian En-

glish as desirable, native-speaker varieties. According to Adya, other English varieties such as Indian English are discussed in class, but these have apparently not yet obtained the same legitimacy as the 'Inner Circle' varieties. Conversely, Nicolas has a more pragmatic opinion: "…proficiency is always good, there's nothing against being able to speak a language really well, but to expect this from every citizen in the world, no" (Nicolas, 161–163). For him, prioritizing a certain native-speaker variety, such as BE, would automatically endanger people's other L1s. The already existing predominance of English would only be exacerbated if individuals were expected to achieve native-like competency.

4.4.4 Teachers in Zurich

Similar to the teachers in Grisons, Zurich teachers generally do not view native-speaker proficiency as their primary teaching objective. Sonja witnesses an increasingly diverse linguistic landscape on a global scale and argued that "…they [students] have to deal with so many accents. Whether they muddle through with a Swiss German accent or not, I find, that's not such an important goal I pursue" (Sonja, 54–56). When it comes to her own English language skills, she considers it important to be proficient, alluding to a native-speaker competency. She would like her students to be exposed to a "hopefully good pronunciation…so that they pick it up automatically" (Sonja, 63–64). She believes that textbooks should primarily make use of native speakers. More precisely: "They don't have to necessarily always be speakers or AE, but I find it nice if they are native speakers. So that they [students] really have this as their primary goal, a certain accent will remain anyways" (Sonja, 65–67). While she does not attribute much importance to native-speaker varieties, arguing that this is more compatible with the diverse linguistic landscape at first, she then stated her preference for exactly those over non-standard English varieties. This contradiction illustrates the complex underlying ideology and how entrenched the native-speaker concept is in language teaching. Sabine further explains that the native-speaker ideology is inherently part of the education system. One of the most important admission conditions for Swiss teacher education in order to become a language teacher is a stay in a country in which the language is spoken as official L1. The idea is to acquire the language from those native speakers as proficiently as possible so that they can then transmit this linguistic resource to Swiss students. Sabine then also justified and legitimized her own English language skills with multiple stays abroad pointing out that she learned English with Australians, Americans, and Brits. Thus, while she speaks BE and explains that "native speaker is my goal but it's not my goal that the students copy this exactly from me," (Sabine, 33–34) she also accepts AE: "If they decide for various reasons to adopt or to train an American accent, due to stays abroad or watching films, then that's totally fine of course" (Sabine, 34–36). This passage shows once again that the two most commonly used English varieties – BE and

AE – are retained and reproduced through the education system. Other less common varieties are rather lacking in school and are not mentioned at all. Patrick, who has not had as much exposure to English, believes that language hierarchies exist in favor of prestigious varieties and do not play the same role in all social spheres. For instance, he perceives ELF to be widely accepted and sometimes even preferred on a professional basis in Switzerland. As he explains, this is true because English functions primarily as a transmitter of information in these contexts.

The social and emotional components of professional interactions still largely draw on Swiss German. That said, Patrick is very adamant about speaking SSG in class and that judging students' exposure thereto as very important. Sonja agreed, recognizing a potential problem in immersion programs since students might become less proficient in SSG, given that it is primarily associated with school and rarely used outside thereof. Swiss German, and more precisely the local variety and accent that its speakers have, is a means to identify oneself and to be identified as a legitimate member of a certain speech community. All teachers agree that Swiss German is by far the most common and natural way of communicating in the canton of Zurich and is a necessary condition to participate actively in social life. For Elisabeth, Swiss German gives her an additional voice in the classroom, one that has a more profound impact on students. Switching between Swiss German and SSG, she can emphasize content differently, ease tensions, make jokes, point out the seriousness, and create proximity or distance. When asked if everyone was able to follow classes if part of it was in Swiss German, she said that virtually everyone did with few exceptions. She recalled a Polish student who did not understand Swiss German "but she didn't resist. Then she would have been an outsider" (Elisabeth, 31).

Additionally, there are exchange students who are treated differently linguistically depending on where they come from. For Elisabeth, it goes without saying that she speaks SSG with *international* exchange students, who typically stay for one year and are only familiar with the standard variety, if at all. For exchange students from the *Romandie*, who stay three to six months, the expectation of their (advanced) SSG skills and social integration is higher. While Elisabeth and fellow students speak SSG at the beginning, they also speak Swiss German since "otherwise, social life in Switzerland simply doesn't work enough" (Elisabeth, 43).

Finally, Swiss German is not openly part of the curriculum, yet the sole focus on SSG is problematic for Elisabeth: "And the students who come from primary school, they are altogether extremely conditioned to speak standard German in school, also in group activities" (Elisabeth, 50–51). SSG is the state-imposed language and is perceived as such by almost all participants. Eleonore, a speaker of standard German, notices different behavior and expectations by both students and parents. First, she considers herself to be more tolerant toward students' academic language skills in German, taking the view that most students only really learn SSG when they enter school into consideration. Second, students, have the impression that, due to her

standard German background, she is stricter when it comes to mistakes and assessments. Third, parents' attitudes reveal the underlying language hierarchies vividly. Greatly satisfied with their children's exposure to 'authentic' and 'real' standard German, they believe that their children will benefit from it more in their future since it is the (more) prestigious, internationally used variety.

4.4.5 Teachers in Fribourg

The overall language learning objective does not seem to be native-like competency, but rather the completion of a certain proficiency level that is determined by the CEFR and by the curriculum. One of the recurrent challenges, which German teachers and learners face in particular, is Swiss German's high status and wide-spread use. It is a very controversial topic, so much so that not all teachers are ready to openly talk about it: "It's difficult for me to comment, I'm not a German teacher. I find it difficult. I don't have an opinion on this" (Jeanne, 180–181). For David, these ideologies are very hard to understand and impact his teaching. While he strives to promote the exchange among students across the language border, his experience shows that many French-speaking students would rather go to Germany than to the German-speaking part of Switzerland. For them, the language that they learn in school is more closely linked to the one spoken in Germany than the local dialects found in Switzerland and are often considered to be the 'real' German. Luisa even questioned the concept of *language* altogether. More precisely, given that Swiss German and SSG fulfil different functions and are used in different contexts, they might very well be defined as two different languages. Victoria's teaching experience reveals that, although many students have a migrant background, they are not used to seeing one in their teachers. Rather, they are typically accustomed to French-speaking or French-German bilingual teachers with a Swiss cultural background. Whenever she speaks French, students react to her accent and basic speaking skills exposing her as 'non-native' and view her as 'deviating' from the norm. Accents can, thus, create otherness and make people vulnerable if they do not meet the native-like standard. As mentioned previously, speaking a low-valued HL (such as Albanian or Czech) can also result in the devaluation of their proficiency in the local language for migrant students. That is, some teachers reported that some of their bilingual students considered themselves or are portrayed by others as less 'pure/legitimate' speakers of the local school language, which can result in questioning their language skills overall.

4.5 Symbolic Violence

Linguistic prejudices and discrimination result in symbolic violence to the detriment of speakers' well-being, self-confidence, the development of their linguistic repertoires, and successful language teaching in schools.

Some participants' lived experiences of language show that well established, discriminatory stereotypes, and prejudices can turn into symbolic violence and can stigmatize individuals. They are also a substantial barrier in language learning in schools, which could make a meaningful contribution to deconstructing and reducing them. Instead, they provide the institutional space for them to be reproduced, something that is detrimental to individuals' (linguistic) well-being and self-confidence and to Switzerland's intercantonal cohesion and understanding.

4.5.1 Students in Grisons

More Romansh speakers were confronted with linguistic prejudices and discrimination than Swiss German speakers among the students interviewed. The general tendency as reported by students, however, is that those are decreasing for the new generation of Romansh speakers with more equitable cantonal language policies and support positively eroding this negative trend. That said, certain ideologies and systemic inequities persist to the detriment of minority language speakers. Leonie, for instance, learned growing up that Romansh speakers are associated with "peasants" and "hillbillies" within Swiss society (Leonie, 33), even though she says that such terms have never been used with her personally. Jessica believes that Romansh speakers are mocked for speaking a minority language that is not valued to the same extent as the other national languages and for speaking Swiss German/SSG with potentially more mistakes than those who have it as their (sole) L1. This led her to speak more Swiss German, even though she notices that mainly Swiss German speakers do not know about Romansh or, if they do, that they do not accept it as a legitimate national language. Timo shares the same perspective:

> [T]hat's impressive for most that you do the *Matura* bilingually, that it's heavily promoted because it's not known at all that the language is still alive and that it's taught in school. For many it's just (-), in Zurich they think that only the old peasants in the mountains speak it… (66–69).

Others also mention that the ignorance *vis-à-vis* their L1 within Switzerland, or the arrogance perceived in the case of Zurich in specific, can be hurtful and illustrates that they feel rather powerless due to their speech community's small size. André and Sebastian regret that political discussions constantly exclude Romansh and its

speakers and that they would not even be able to follow those if it were not for their bilingual language skills in German. There are almost no translations into Romansh and this creates a dependency on learning German and disregards their legal status of equal languages on a cantonal level. As André describes it, he does not necessarily feel disadvantaged since he can follow the news and media thanks to German, but it makes him "a bit upset" (André, 306). He goes on to say that "every time it's German, French, Italian. The worst, I find, is rather a press release with the national languages and ENGLISH" (André, 306–308). He implies that English, despite not being an official language in Switzerland, is sometimes taken more seriously and put in a powerful position of news and information circulation. Addressing foreigners and/or those unable to speak one of the national languages, he finds it unfair that the local population is deprived of their right to information in their L1-national language. On an individual, personal basis, it makes them feel less valued than Swiss German speakers. That said, André specifically stressed that linguistic discrimination was much worse 20 years ago and has already been heavily reduced by activist groups for linguistic rights, policies, and by substantial financial support.

Although linguistic discrimination seems to be decreasing, the experiences Romansh-speaking students shared are still alarming. In addition to the sometimes already difficult status they have due to Romansh, they are also discriminated against for not speaking French. As mentioned previously, French is not a compulsory language to be learned in Grisons' upper secondary schools despite the wide-spread assumption that all Swiss students learn both German and French. This assumption then also leads to discriminatory experiences such as the one Hanna had with a French-speaking student during a national sports tournament:

> [O]ne time, somebody asked me, you can't speak French? No, I don't have French in school, which is actually a bit of a disadvantage because I just have Romansh. Then I said, no, I have Romansh instead and then he said, you can't make use of THAT language anyway (38–42).

Melina said that instead of taking such comments personally, "Romands don't like to speak German although they actually can. So then I don't know that we should accommodate them although they can speak German and that would be so much easier" (Melina, 233–235). Others who have barely any experience with learning French in school believe that the language was too complicated to learn, its pronunciation was impossible to acquire for German speakers, or simply stated that "I really don't like French anyways" (Jovin, 148). Leonie, for instance, has the impression that "it's almost easier if a French-speaking person learns German than the other way round" (Leonie, 176–177). Thus, not all students feel responsible for not speaking French and instead find reasons elsewhere. Leonie further talked about stereotypes that exist about the *Romandie*. A common one is likening the *Romands* to the French and believing that people in France "eat frogs and such things" (Leonie, 52).

4.5.2 Teachers in Grisons

As the only trilingual canton in Switzerland, Grisons holds a special position within the otherwise dominant, officially monolingual linguistic landscape. The participants argue that plurilinguals are discriminated against since this *de jure* monolingual habitus is still widely accepted as the norm outside of Grisons. The social expectation still seems to be, as some teachers suggest, that an individual must have *one* L1; being bi- or trilingual is considered abnormal. Gita herself experienced shame for also speaking Romansh, not just Swiss German like everyone else. That said, not speaking Swiss German implies a loss in value of the speakers themselves. Growing up, she was forced to speak Swiss German with her mother, arguing that speaking Swiss German like anyone else would save her from embarrassment and linguistic insecurity. This led her to appropriate Swiss German and to neglect Romansh. Similar to the students' accounts who perceive a general attitude change toward Romansh, younger teachers seem less affected by such symbolic violence.

4.5.3 Students in Zurich

Although migrants from the Balkan region are well represented in the canton of Zurich, Arthur reported that speakers of Slavic languages stand out since they have a more aggressive pronunciation in German and make many grammatical mistakes. In his opinion, the canton of Zurich is responsible for many existing linguistic prejudices within Switzerland since it holds a special position, both politically and economically, and claims to have the 'purest' variety of Swiss German: "I certainly think that especially in Zurich, that Zurich looks down a bit on other cantons, especially on the cantons with a different language" (Arthur, 372–374). This condescending behavior becomes visible through the treatment of the French- and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland as 'illegitimate.' More precisely, he explains that they are typically referred to simply as 'the French' or 'the Italians' respectively, alluding to the language they share with the neighboring countries. Arthur shared an experience that he had with his brother when watching Swiss news: "…'hey, look these French people.' They are actually not French. Or also in Ticino, 'haha the Italians with the Coronavirus', are not Italians in the end. We're not Germans either" (Arthur, 369–371). While his brother calls them 'French' and 'Italians' respectively, Arthur perceives this to be inappropriate and likens it to their situation and the wrongful comparison with Germans. He also noted that in the end, despite the common language with the neighboring countries, they are still Swiss and belong to the same country. For Samira, learning French is not only a burden, but is also linked to cultural miscommunication and misunderstandings. While she thinks that "French sounds a bit stupid" (Samira, 61), she is fed up with *Romands* who visibly do not make any effort to speak German when they come to the German-speaking part of Switzerland:

> We also had to learn French and the Romands almost force us to speak French. I've already met many people from the Romandie who came to Zurich and continued to speak in French. They should just speak German if they already learn it in school. (140–144)

One solution, according to Samira, would be to agree on one intercantonal language and to guarantee the teaching of it in school so that no extra effort or adaptation would be required of anyone in such encounters. Although this is a potential solution for intercantonal communication, the language for intra-cantonal communication in Zurich is undoubtedly Swiss German. Many participants from the German-speaking part show very little tolerance toward individuals who are not (yet) speakers of the local variety. In Adya's case, this resulted in discrimination against her lacking Swiss German skills and the forced learning thereof. During the interview, Adya spoke twice about an experience that she had at school when preparing for an internship, which is a mandatory part of the curriculum:

> A: With friends, in school, you speak Swiss German?
> B: Yes, but only since the second upper grade. Basically because my teacher forced me halfway because Swiss German would have been better for the applications when I was at job interviews or the introductory internship. Before, I had always understood it, in school, during the breaks, everyone speaks Swiss German all the time, of course. I never spoke it myself, I was used to speaking German and then I had to change my habits in the second upper grade and now I speak Swiss German with my friends and at home and at school (-). (61–69)

Later in the interview, when she spoke about her rankings within the questionnaire in which she classified Swiss German as her most important language both personally and professionally, Adya justified herself for so doing:

> Because I live here in Switzerland and with my friends and because of this application for the introductory internship. That's why it's relatively important, simply because I live here…So I think, it's simply good when people know that you (--) I've grown up here, you can't really tell when you see me for the first time. My hip-hop teacher was always confused and he always talked German with me and I talked to him in Swiss German…I think they've inculcated me with that, I shall simply speak Swiss German so that you also recognize that I'm completely integrated here (284–300).

Both passages depict that speaking Swiss German for Adya was not a result of her own free choice. It was (unconsciously) forced onto her, thereby also impacting her personal life since she completely switched from standard German to Swiss German in all social spheres thereafter.

4.5.4 Teachers in Zurich

Interviewing students and teachers in Zurich revealed that certain linguistic prejudices are well-established and span across generations. A commonly cited stereotype was that although *Romands* learned German in school, they did not make much effort to actually speak it with them. The common impression was that it was up to the German speakers to speak French and not vice versa. Eleonore's experience with today's students shows that the lack of knowledge about life in the *Romandie* is still prone to the reproduction of stereotypes. Students asking her: "Is there also TV in French in Switzerland?" (Eleonore, 247–248) is an example of such obliviousness and demonstrates the missing interaction, especially among young Swiss people from different language regions.

Other prejudices, mentioned previously in the students' interviews, regarded the value that was attributed to the many different Swiss German varieties. Similar to the stereotypes existing around the distinct Romansh idioms, the Swiss German varieties spoken in the more rural parts are typically associated with the remote lifestyle of the mountains. Sabine also explained that her dialect is often referred to as 'nice' or 'cute' implying a less serious language and potentially even speakers. In Zurich, she is often asked where she originally comes from, often alluding to her non-local way of speaking. At the same time, this very accent is seen as a legitimator by which to obtain access to the speech community in her home village. However, since she has lived and worked in the canton of Zurich, she has adopted certain linguistic features of the Zurich variety, which have not gone unnoticed by inhabitants of her home village: "…people I grew up with who confirm 'oh you now have adopted this Zurich dialect,' a bit like betrayal…they don't consider it so positively" (Sabine, 332–335). The feeling of betrayal is likely to be exacerbated by the fact that the linguistic features that Sabine integrated in her more rural variety are taken from a prestigious, more urban Swiss German variety; this, in itself, is another linguistic prejudice. These existing prejudices, and the way they are triggered through the different accents, delegitimize Sabine's belonging to a speech community and make her justify herself for her own idiolect in both spaces.

Eleonore, who grew up speaking a dialect-free, standard variety of German, conversely, has accepted to be 'detected' as 'German.' Having lived in Switzerland for many years and having attempted to learn Swiss German unsuccessfully, she perceives a certain lack of integration, which would usually be established through the local dialect. She thus feels rather foreign, even though she is not discriminated against for speaking German. Her children speak Swiss German and do not accept her as a legitimate speaker of 'their' language. Generally, the norm is to speak Swiss German, which is not only the most common way of communicating, as well as a very powerful marker of belonging, but it can also function as a tool to exacerbate linguistic prejudices.

4.5.5 Teachers in Fribourg

Living in a canton through which the French-German language border runs, participants have a much more direct exposure to the two national languages and cultures. Jeanne is, therefore, convinced that the canton of Fribourg is an excellent example of lived bilingualism much in contrast to other regions in Switzerland. Although confessing to never having spent much time there, she believes that those cantons close to the borders with Germany, Italy, Austria, and France neither take Swiss multilingualism very seriously nor practice it on a daily basis. While Jeanne has a rather positive attitude toward Fribourg's bilingualism and biculturalism, other colleagues are more concerned, with some even considering the underlying reason for unsuccessful FL learning being linguistic prejudices. According to David, there are many historically established prejudices against German as a language but also its speakers, which makes GFL classes much more difficult than, for instance, EFL classes. A deconstruction of such prejudices would be necessary and helpful to improve motivation for and interest in language and culture. His French-speaking students are convinced that their fellow students in the German-speaking part do not like them, that they cannot communicate due to the dialect with which the *Romands* are unfamiliar and that they would be lost if they were to participate in an exchange, for instance. Other common stereotypes found among Romands are "that the German-speaking Swiss are boring, very narrow-minded, somehow very efficient, in a positive sense, but somehow no fun, boring and especially I think, the language is the border" (David, 184–186). While these are superficial and general stereotypes, they are continuously reproduced and negatively impact language learning in which a certain openness toward, and an interest in other, languages and cultures is key. David perceives there to be a mental border that students do not want to cross, making use of the argument that they would need to speak Swiss German to be understood and accepted, which they do not learn in school. However, he notes that it is used more as a justification than an actual reason to keep interaction going among different language groups at the lowest level possible. Similarly, he believes that such prejudices also exist within other parts of Switzerland while there is no comparable 'language problem' since French is spoken in the standard variety only.

Although David perceives the prejudices as less developed against the German variety spoken in Germany, Luisa sees the origin of the existing stereotypes exactly there and as something that is inextricably linked to its political history. She experiences very negative attitudes toward German on the part of students and their parents and believes that this is due to the reproduction of negative attitudes toward the German language and culture within the family setting. The unquestioned reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices is exacerbated by the lacking interaction and, according to Luisa, results in fear of otherness. The following passage illustrates her own lived experiences of language supporting her perceptions:

> When I used to commute to Neuchâtel, Romand students refused to sit next to Swiss German students, they prefer standing. Parents who wrest the *20-Minuten* [Swiss newspaper freely available at train stations] from their children because it's in the other language, in the sense of "you don't understand that anyway" (202–205).

This example shows that although interaction between French- and German-speaking Swiss students would be possible, due to the cohabitation in the same canton, these underlying, deeply rooted stereotypes prevent them from doing so. As Luisa explained, socialization processes, influenced by parents' negative attitudes toward GFL and the culture and people more generally, are detrimental to students' learning and might cause (or reinforce) segregation between the people of the two languages and cultures in the long run. Despite German's mainly negative perception, Luisa estimates that a little minority of students is nevertheless interested in GFL classes. Although she does not know exactly why this is the case, she speculates that they might link German to their future professional opportunities and better understand the learning thereof as a benefit for them than others might prove. A positive teaching experience that she had, which helped to reduce some of the students' stereotypes already, was an exchange day with Swiss German-speaking students. Her French-speaking students concluded after the encounter that they were nice and that they had a great time together. It is surprising then that the connection between learning German and using it within the Swiss German context is barely visible in the GFL classes. Other participants perceived learning German to be an imposition on *Romand* students. The language classes cannot be neutral since they seem to be strongly linked to stereotypes and prejudices against Swiss German/German speakers based on the political history that is primarily associated with Germany. Not only do they influence cohabitation, mutual understanding, and cantonal or social cohesion, but even on a school level, as teachers argued, there is very little exchange and communication between the two language sections. Some suggested that change should start at the school level before attempting to reduce tensions among Switzerland as a whole.