Discussion

The findings presented in this study's previous sections indicate that multilingualism is a majorly important phenomenon within Swiss society that both impacts upon and is impacted by individuals' experiences, interests, positioning, recognition, and opportunities as well as LPP-, LEP-decisions, strategies, and laws. This study has demonstrated how multilingualism has become instrumentalized through neoliberal forces that promote English's popularity and necessity, through the romantic forces keen on maintaining a traditional focus on the four national languages, and through social justice forces advocating for the amplification of HLs. The study has offered a deepened understanding of how linguistic practices and their embeddedness in overt and covert policy decisions and speakers' ideologies about languages can ameliorate social relations and might increase linguistic and cultural equity.

This section will discuss the study's results in concert with its underlying theoretical framework. It addresses the lived experiences of language and identity, the monolingual habitus in multilingual education practices, language hierarchies and symbolic power, as well as native-speaker ideologies in four sub-sections. The findings sub-section on symbolic violence (4.5) is subsumed under 5.4.

5.1 Sameness and Difference in Identity Expression through Language

> "Even after 18 years…even when I only say two sentences…this origin, this identity is somehow very strongly expressed through language."

The study's analysis of participants' lived experiences of language and linguistic repertoires has shown that languages, experiences, and identities are inextricably linked and are interdependent. Individuals' linguistic identities are (de)stabilized and transformed through experiences and social interaction, in which speakers position themselves through language(s) *vis-à-vis* and are positioned by their interlocutor(s) and a given linguascape. This positioning is often especially challenging and disadvantageous for plurilinguals who can rarely employ their entire linguistic

repertoires and, therefore, are constantly forced to suppress parts of their identity in order to assimilate to or accommodate the local speech community (Hu, 2003b). Adapting one's own way of expression, thereby adopting a different role in a given social context, can also have an impact on one's norms, habits, values, and actions and thus can deeply affect individuals' self-perception and self-esteem (Lahire, 2011). According to Foucault (1982), this positioning process of discovering who we are is a

> form of power…which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to (p. 781).

Thus, existing power and hegemony mechanisms dictate how individuals' identities are shaped or 'subjectivated' (Foucault, 1982), rendering it extremely difficult, if not outright impossible, to follow Gramsci's (1971) call for truly and consciously 'knowing thyself' in such conditions. The continuing, unquestioned acceptance and reproduction of Switzerland's restrictive monolingual and standard speech norms, despite the official multilingual language policies and practices, further pressures plurilinguals to construct certain hierarchies within their linguistic repertoire. Forcing individuals to determine one language – and only one – as their L1, for instance, also results in inner conflicts and dissatisfaction when their reality is much more accurately described as a more complex, "translingual continuum" (Anderson, 2018). This is the case for Swiss German speakers who are constantly pressured to adapt their way of speaking to speakers of other dialects or languages and social contexts in which they are confronted with feelings of insecurity and inferiority. It is also particularly detrimental to individuals with a migration background who are (unconsciously) coerced into adopting local linguistic and cultural norms to fully integrate while their "attachment to multiple sociocultural spaces" (Zakharia, 2016, p. 141) is ignored or, worse, actively punished. Full integration, implying individuals' assimilation to Swiss language and culture and the (partial) suppression of their own, is embodied in policies at the federal, cantonal, and municipal levels and is expected as such from the society. As the results indicate, however, being able to apply the entirety of one's linguistic repertoire and one's ability to live one's cultural heritage is indispensable to knowing oneself, one's home, and origins, and is hugely important for identity construction.

Swiss language practices and policies exemplify the view that languages and cultures continue to be associated with a fixed (albeit imagined) geographical region or nation-state (Anderson, 2006; Becker, 2022). That is, despite Switzerland's official

status as a quadrilingual country, it can be argued that it is much better described as monolingual or restrictively multilingual in certain social contexts since languages are tied to cantonal policies and geographical spaces, and usually do not transgress historically established borders (see for instance the 'Röstigraben'). The French and German language groups are usually separated, even within the bilingual cantons, and multilingual encounters are therefore rather rare. The 'imaginary' link between language and space has yet further consequences for HL speakers in Switzerland. First, speaking a HL in the new country of *residence* legitimizes one's 'true' roots and compensates for the fact of not living in one's country of *origin*. However, this can result in a great amount of pressure and conflict when expectations and cultural attachments differ among first- and second-generation migrants, for instance, as Adya's lived experiences of language illustrated. Second, being constantly torn between two (or more) linguistic and cultural identities complicates the sense of 'true' belonging. HL speakers typically experience difficulties feeling and being accepted as a 'true' local (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007) when identifying with multiple languages, cultures, and spaces. Arthur's lived experiences of language, for instance, incorporate a constant negotiation of his self-perception and sense of belonging, which is based on how others perceive and position him through his way of speaking. Measured against a hypothetical monolingual native-speaker standard, Arthur's linguistic repertoire neither fulfills the requirements for Macedonian nor for Swiss German, since it is always in flux and adapting to communicative contexts. The inextricable link between authentic language and belonging causes linguistic insecurity and restrictions for individuals' personal and professional trajectories. As Blommaert (2010, p. 6) noted: "Mobility, sociolinguistically speaking, is therefore a trajectory through different stratified, controlled and monitored spaces in which language 'gives you away.'" Oftentimes, people have to justify their additional linguistic and cultural resources (sometimes perceived as 'deviant' from the locally expected standard) with which other monolingual and monocultural individuals are unfamiliar. Whenever the participating minority language speakers had the opportunity to employ their linguistic repertoires, outside their accustomed monolingual barriers, they experienced it as very enriching and beneficial for their well-being and self-esteem, something that was also observed by Abendroth-Timmer and Hennig (2014). In fact, using hitherto censored resources within their linguistic repertoires from public settings helped us to perceive the minority language speakers – and their skills in multiple languages in particular – as intercultural mediators who are able to deconstruct borders and connect people and spaces, as described by Byram (2009). This quality is primarily attributed to ELF, which is crucial in bringing people with diverse backgrounds together. Some participants identified so strongly with (certain) BE or AE speakers that they would have liked to *pass* as them (Motha, 2014) and to exchange their own linguistic repertoires, provided that they could be perfectly proficient in English. Yet, English is often simplistically considered a *neutral*

language, something that is very compatible with Switzerland's traditionally perceived, ostensible *neutral* geopolitical position; this necessitates ignoring the fact that neither are, of course, and that English hegemonizes the local linguistic landscape and participants' perspectives. Nevertheless, despite English's lack of neutrality and its impact on national and heritage languages in Switzerland, it still provides a pragmatic alternative to emotionally charged and often inefficient communication strategies and practices in (two) national languages. All of the participants were very familiar with and already actively employed English in leisure, fun, and real-life activities; as many participants reported, this also indicates that it is becoming a language of identity for them. This is increasingly the case for younger generations whose lived experiences of language are much more significantly shaped by English and less so by Switzerland's non-L1 national languages. Some younger people are less aware of the rich linguistic diversity and identify less as plurilinguals in the sense that is promoted by Swiss LEPs or the CoE.

This development is particularly consequential for Switzerland's minority language groups such as Romansh speakers who identify with their L1 very strongly and are more dependent upon a common linguistic awareness and promotion at a national level. In fact, condescension, mockery, or disrespect toward their "language of the heart" (Nicole, 453) due to its perceived low prestige and minority status, as some have experienced, negatively impact speakers' (linguistic) identity, self-confidence, and bodily well-being (Abendroth-Timmer & Hennig, 2014; Kramsch, 2009). As the CoE suggests, such "a diversified experience of otherness" (CoE, 2001, p. 34) also contributes to identity construction and is in line with the poststructuralist approach of individuals forming themselves and being formed in discourses. Another consequence is that group identity among Romansh speakers can be so strong that it creates a certain dependence or fixation. While it is reinforced by common traditional activities, such as parades and village fairs celebrating Romansh language and culture, it is felt even more strongly outside of Romansh-speaking territory. This can go so far as to limit one's social interactions to Romansh speakers only and can result in isolation; conversely, though, Romansh in such cases serves as a common ground and connector among its speakers. In Bourdieu's (1991) terms, Romansh, like any other language, has the ability "to *make and unmake groups*" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 221 [emphasis in original]) and to produce sameness and difference, which in return contributes to the construction of individuals' identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005a; 2005b).

Finally, this is particularly true in the German-speaking part of Switzerland where Swiss German is directly linked to participants' identities and a crucial requirement to participate in social life. Speaking (a local variety of) Swiss German, thus, determines whether individuals are accepted members of the majority language group or whether they might be marginalized. The latter are thereby marked, while the former "gain a special, default status that contrasts with the identities

of other groups, which are usually highly recognizable" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005a, p. 372). Conversely, without Swiss German, its speakers feel deprived of the possibility (and right) to fully express and to *distinguish* themselves in settings which impose SSG by law (such as schools, for instance). Distinction refers to "the mechanism whereby salient difference is produced" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005a, p. 384), here between SSG and Swiss German (speakers) to indicate legitimate group membership, which "involves the pursuit of socially recognized sameness" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005a, p. 383). As Bucholtz and Hall (2005a) also note, however, the mechanism of sameness and difference "most often operates in a binary fashion, establishing a dichotomy between social identities constructed as oppositional or contrastive. It thus tends to reduce complex social variability to a single dimension: us versus them" (p. 384).

5.2 Pressure toward Monolingualism

> "Ten out of 20 students will probably be plurilingual…but they will be virtually made into monolinguals through submersion."

Switzerland's education system simultaneously reproduces and legitimizes the monolingual habitus and celebrates a selective, prestigious linguistic diversity based on language ideologies (Berthele, 2020), even despite efforts and resources put into language teaching at the upper secondary level. Institutional structures, LEPs, and existing language ideologies impede an equitable approach to language learning by homogenizing students' (and teachers') diverse linguistic and cultural resources and imposing upon them objectives that are unsuitable for many students' identities and lifeworlds (Delpit, 2006). The priority given to and the policies promoting the school language (French, German, or Romansh), English, and a second national language exclude HLs and restrict the linguistic offer and attribute valuable linguistic capital to a few chosen, prestigious languages (Bourdieu, 1991). As Henri put it succinctly: "[T]hey tried to make the system equal for everyone, [but] they created inequality" (Henri, 427–428).

Problematically, not only are most HLs censored from institutional settings, but so are many HL speakers *tout court*, thereby resulting in a 'selective and elitist student body' (Apple, 2012; 2019). That is, while the upper secondary schools only allow a few chosen languages in specified educational settings, they sadly (but realistically) account for the underrepresentation of students with more diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This situation is due to the generally low number of students with migrant backgrounds in post-compulsory education, even though the number has been steadily increasing at a societal and at primary and lower secondary level.

Typically, those students with a migrant background who enroll in upper secondary education schools are proficient in the school language with many of them having been born in Switzerland to migrant parents. Nevertheless, they are submerged into and assimilated through the local language and culture under the pretext of equalizing socioeconomic opportunities and full integration, by which some of the participants in this study were also deceived. For instance, some associated the languages used and taught at school with universal prestige, professional benefits, and important (and expected) markers of their 'Swissness.' Others considered their HL inappropriate in official school contexts or believed that it was not worth spending time on their L1, which indicates that 'curricularizing heritage languages' (Valdés, 2017) is not simply just a matter of a well-intended policy framework. Although the majority of HL-speaking students superficially fulfill the linguistic requirements, in actuality they typically lack academic language, self-esteem, and parental and financial support compared to majority language-speaking students as numerous studies and participating teachers in this study have shown (Cummins, 2018; Delpit, 2006; Bankston & Zhou, 2002).

The admission requirements in the official school language have an impact on students' academic performance in all subjects, so that those who have more exposure are also advantaged in other areas. Swiss national and commonly taught FLs are a substantial part of the mandatory upper secondary admission exam and this indicates that multilingual education is key in (post-)compulsory schooling and is hardly compensable for newcomers without these linguistic competences. Put more plainly, students can be denied access to upper secondary, and thus university education, if they lack (high-level) language skills in two national languages plus English. Evidently, as some teachers' experiences exemplify, there is a huge discrepancy between the policy documents and their implementation. To wit: Even if migrant students pass the admission exam, many continue to be disadvantaged since they often come from a low socioeconomic background with less financial and emotional support.

While the selective emphasis on national languages is detrimental to plurilingual students' more diverse linguistic repertoires, it does raise the status and recognition of minority languages such as Romansh at an institutional and societal level. The fact that Romansh is used at upper secondary level and for the completion of the *Matura*, which is in itself viewed as rather prestigious and elitist, reinforces its appreciation particularly among non-Romansh speakers. Yet, despite the extensive offers made in Romansh, students are still envied and discriminated against by others because they lack basic (printed) teaching material and are provided with iPads instead. As García and Lin (2017, p. 12) observe, this seems to be a general problem for education in minority languages since "it does not make economic sense to publish material in small languages." Romansh-speaking students are aware of and appreciate the institutional effort made to teach their L1 at upper secondary level. Further-

more, many of them are grateful, like many Zurich students, that they can also use SSG in an academic context. Given that it is rarely spoken outside of school, but remains required and evaluated in written exams and presentations, students in fact rely on standard language policies and their implementation by teachers to improve their SSG language skills. Delpit (2006) believes it to be the teachers' task to familiarize students whose L1 is a 'non-standard' variety with the standard language and to give them the opportunity to learn and practice it since it continues to be an important requirement for academic and professional development.

In Grisons, a remarkable balance between L1 (Romansh) and L2 (German) is established through intensive bilingual programs aiming at an equal promotion of two cantonal languages while French, "the second most important national language," as one student reported, is consequently reduced to an optional subject. As a result, many Romansh-speaking students who wish to learn it, do not have the chance to do so (successfully) and seem disadvantaged if their career choice is not already made and they might only realize after graduating that they would have needed French. In case optional French classes take place, that is if enough students inscribe, the time allocated to it is very low with 1–2 lessons per week and hence is likely to be insufficient to learning a new language. As Stotz (2006) cautions:

> [W]e need a discourse of persuasion which allows individuals themselves to see more clearly the choices they have and the sorts of resources they would like to build up in order to be able to do the things they want in the spaces they will occupy professionally and privately (p. 262).

Students hardly have the time to *use* the language individually or with fellow students, even in their compulsory language classes that have more lessons per week. In fact, this is one of the reasons students are against including multiple languages into the classroom and, thus, are against inclusive approaches in which several languages (or linguistic features across those) are learned together as a whole. They fear that if more of students' HLs were integrated, then even less time would be spent learning and actively using the target language.

However, a certain shared understanding among students and teachers seems to be that (academic) competences in one's L1 are crucial to acquiring any AL, which is why their adequate integration into teaching is justified. According to Benson (2009), these transitional models in which the use of L1 in educational settings prepares the transition into the use of the L2 are "most successful when a good foundation of language and literacy is developed in the mother tongue" (p. 67). While a few HLs are indeed promoted until lower secondary level, although this depends on the organization and subventions primarily by the country of origin and the parent, there are no LCO classes at upper secondary level in the form of external classes. In support of the EDK (2004) recommendations, this study argues that LCO classes should first be institutionalized within public schools and then also expanded to up-

per secondary level. This would allow for a greater independence from external subsidies and a greater customized offer of HLs spoken by the school's students.

The lack of qualified LCO teachers at the specific schools was often cited as one of the main reasons for the limited offer, which sheds light on a more profound issue regarding (Swiss) teacher education and in-service teachers. As Makarova and Birman (2016) point out convincingly, given that schools are crucial sites for minority students' acculturation, teachers are key actors and can facilitate this process by officially recognizing heritage linguistic and cultural backgrounds and identifying special needs. However, as they also show, many teachers are ill-equipped to teach in increasingly diverse classrooms. In fact, the majority of the participating teachers in this study have a Swiss background, and therefore represent a homogeneous, institutional force to which students with migrant backgrounds can hardly relate. That said, some teachers had more diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and could more easily identify with a more heterogeneous student population. As several of the participants (Henri, Luisa, Victoria, and Nesrin, for instance) and Kubota (2010) importantly observe: "In order to truly embrace racial, cultural, and linguistic pluralism and to make the campus a societal role model for students, schools…should make an effort to hire more non-White teachers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds" (p. 109).

Innovative ideas such as virtual LCO courses were generated during the interviews, which could serve as a (temporary) solution until such a time as the policy framework for teacher education is modified accordingly. Although the idea evolved out of the discussion about how to raise awareness of Romansh and how to enable its teaching across Switzerland, it is as well applicable to the context of HLs. Given that some HLs are less common than others for which on-site classes can be more easily organized, offering those online for minority languages within a network of participating schools seems a timely and exciting alternative; this is especially so considering that students, teachers, and institutional structures alike have become more flexible and open to blended learning solutions, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Importantly, such (online) LCO classes should also attract non-HL speakers whenever possible in an effort to sensitize students to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their fellow students. LCO projects or lessons can also be integrated into regular language classes and given the possibility to conduct those virtually, they can reach a wider audience and can optimize limited human and financial resources. This could also contribute to a more holistic and equitable understanding of language teaching in schools and might reduce students' concerns that if HLs were more present in the classroom, then they would automatically learn or practice less the target language.

This is particularly true regarding students' fear of missing out on opportunities to improve their English, which trumps both the development of diversity-engagement and intercultural competences. For many, one of the primary objectives of upper secondary education is increasing proficiency in English for future aca-

demic and professional opportunities. Yet, for others, English plays such a crucial role in their private lives already that they no longer see English classes in school as being the key context to learn and practice the language authentically. This is much more commonly achieved in virtual, English-dominated worlds of e-gaming, social media, or when watching (American) series and films within a global online community. Importantly, many students simplistically legitimize their digital exposure to (native-speaker) English as the sole true, authentic variety (for a critical response to the connection between authenticity and native speakers see Myhill, 2003). Consequently, this defines and raises students' expectations *vis-à-vis* teachers' language competences and use within the classroom and their own level to be reached at the end of upper secondary education. At the same time, as teachers reported, there is an increasing tendency to focus on informal, oral communication, in which less attention is paid to accuracy, thereby leading students to adopt the same (informal) register even in more formal, academic contexts. This creates tensions between students and teachers since they are (also) evaluated for their academic language skills, incorporated through standard speech and prescriptive grammatical rules and that are often flagrantly violated by 'true native speakers,' and students consider these people to be the legitimate model speaker(s). Problematically, many participants in this study were often unaware that the concept of a *model native speaker* is socially constructed and that all speakers of any variety speak their very own idiolect more or less similarly to the prevalent standard, as already observed by Davies (2003) almost 20 years ago.

An important common objective for both students and teachers is the CAE exam that, as part of the University of Cambridge, certifies that students possess a high competence level in (British) English; it also exemplifies the pressure to prepare for and to pass such an exam. As the results of this study demonstrate, this can lead to students feeling guilty for not using their spare time to watch films in English as a form of exam preparation. Problematically, students failing the CAE exam can have a negative impact on teachers' professional identity, for instance, when they associate 'insufficient' exam results with their 'insufficient' pedagogical or language competences. While many students are only interested in obtaining such a certificate in the hope of fulfilling requirements imposed by future employers in well-paid jobs or (prestigious, international) universities, schools contribute to the reproduction of the native-speaker ideology and sustain an industry based on exactly those same expectations. That said, public upper secondary schools are faced with increasingly more competitive and accessible private schools, the curricula of which are based on native-speaker English instruction and exams, university preparation, and bilingual programs. Certain public schools have adopted market-oriented mechanisms and teaching offers such as CAE exams in order not to widen the gap between public and private schooling, but to provide equal opportunities to all students. However, as pointed out by Ricento (2015a), by the time English as a desirable skill is made

accessible to the greater public through schooling, its value already decreases and needs to be compensated with other (elitist) qualities and competences.

Similarly and according to Ricento (2015b), English-based CLIL is heavily linked and contributes to the knowledge economy. Nevertheless, it is (in GR and FR) or would be (in ZH) highly appreciated by students since it combines non-language subjects with the learning of an FL and is seen as a perfectly suitable preparation for university. As they indicated, the language, or more precisely, the register, acquired through CLIL also differs enormously from the more informal one to which they are already regularly exposed. Students, therefore, feel more motivated to learn academic English through content, similar to what they expect from university teaching. Typical language classes at upper secondary level should also focus less on teaching grammar, vocabulary, and literature, and more on intercultural competences and the hands-on application of languages in culturally diverse contexts, as advocated by some teachers and students. The emphasis should be put even more heavily on communication and interaction and less strongly on following the structure dictated by the teaching material and curriculum. Learning about and familiarizing oneself with cultural aspects of daily life in other (Swiss) language regions (Delpit, 2006) is essential for successful, meaningful intercultural encounters as an ideal supplement to, but not a replacement of, linguistic exchanges. In such encounters, not only is the knowledge about, but the culture itself is co-produced, which can result in "'friction': the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (Tsing, 2005, p. 4). It can also lead to a more profound understanding and appreciation of the existing cultural and linguistic diversity within Switzerland, given that, as Nesrin reported, "it's apparently not always so clear that in Switzerland there exist also other languages" (Nesrin, 158–159).

One suggestion made by Sebastian was to devote a specific class to Switzerland's (national) languages and cultures in order to promote and raise awareness of the locally existing diversity. Many participants indeed pointed out the lack of interaction and communication among the language regions, which could thus be improved, and the negative impact of existing stereotypes on language teaching, which could be addressed and deconstructed in class. Kubota (2010) cautions that "it is thus important for teachers to acknowledge the complexity and fluidity of racial, cultural, and linguistic categories, and liberate themselves from a fixed worldview conditioned by stereotypes" (p. 106) and calls for a non-essentialist understanding of race, culture, and language. Adopting a critical multicultural perspective, teachers can likewise raise awareness of the social field's underlying power dynamics in which individuals position themselves and are positioned thereby. According to her, "relying on a color/difference-blind approach of equal treatment for everyone would merely perpetuate the existing relations of power" (Kubota, 2010, p. 106). Being (made) aware of these power dynamics can turn the feeling of otherness and marginalization into 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak, 1993) which intends to capital-

ize on difference as a valuable shared identity marker for historically disadvantaged social groups and to increase their political representation. Critical examination is required to guarantee equitable expression of individuals' 'multi-voicedness' (Bakhtin, 1981), given that a strategic essentialist approach might create a forced and artificial homogeneity within each social, cultural or language group. This is crucial since, as Bakhtin (1981) argues, "all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values" (pp. 291–292).

In the case of Switzerland, as Stotz (2006) argues, stereotypes and associated power hierarchies are part of Switzerland's self-constructed political identity. As he put it: "Squaring political power and evening out perceived or real grudges among the German-, French-, Italian- and Romansh-speaking groups has occupied the agenda for a century and a half" (Stotz, 2006, p. 249). Importantly, although many were aware that multiple stereotypes existed and were used among the four language regions, they – some consciously – continued to employ the same narrative to describe their interactions, relationships, and 'the others' in general. The situation was particularly tense regarding the teaching of French in German-speaking Switzerland and the teaching of German in the *Romandie* and among their speakers respectively. Motivation decreases and tension increases here, given that some students view these classes as an obligation without any concrete benefits (compared to English) and some teachers choose French or German (merely) because of the job security based on political incentives to promote national language learning. That said, language teachers were worried about imposed reallocations of German and French hours to informatics and science subjects.

The language debate has revealed power issues among the different language groups which had long been ignored by incorporating globalizing and localizing forces through the learning of English and a second national language. As Stotz (2006) summarizes it succinctly:

> The discourse of communicative globalization has exposed the traditional scarcity of interaction between compatriots and the use of additional languages by a few, tendentially elite groups or bilingual families. The tense relationship between national languages locked into their territories, evoking a condition of isolation and separateness, and a language, English, which many people see as offering economic and symbolic advantage gets played out by the cultural and educational politics of language, with schools having to bear the brunt of the struggle (p. 261).

Raising awareness of intranational linguistic and cultural diversity in specific classes could reduce historically established tensions and prejudices, might open the way to a more tolerant and diversity-engaged teaching, and could increase

students' motivation to learn another national language. Arguably, the decision to prioritize English over French in some German-speaking cantons exacerbated the tensions further, rather than alleviating them, and is paradoxical if mutual understanding and social cohesion on a national level are key objectives in Swiss language teaching. As Stotz (2006) suitably observes: "In a country with firm linguistic borders and a territorial notion of language, school language learning appeared to be, speaking with Foucault…a disciplining exercise in the service of national cohesion" (p. 252).

Importantly, a class on Switzerland's linguistic and cultural diversity could provide a *holistic* picture of the social reality, including HLs, and should not simply reproduce the already existing emphasis on the national languages as dictated by cantonal and educational authorities. Such an inclusive approach would also be supported by some students and teachers, even while others remain critical. However, equity can only be achieved when *all* languages and cultures are recognized as Delpit (2006) cautions, and the culture of power is shared by everyone. Translanguaging as an inclusive teaching approach aiming at social justice and the recognition of all languages and linguistic practices should serve as a model to prepare schools for the increasing diversity of the 21st and indeed the 22nd century. As García and Lin (2017) summarize it succinctly: "The continuous hierarchization of people who speak different languages means that bilingual educators have to *be vigilant to work against the power and hierarchization* of the language practices of dominant groups" (p. 11 [emphasis in original]).

5.3 Language Hierarchies within the Hegemonic *Willensnation*

> "[The prioritization of English over French] is a bit of an insult to a part that also belongs to Switzerland."

Multiple language hierarchies exist within the Swiss linguascape, thereby leading to advantages for the majority language group in the form of the effortless accumulation of linguistic capital and disadvantages for minority language groups through discrimination and exclusion (Bourdieu, 1991). Importantly, majority and minority language groups differ at national and cantonal level, due to the territoriality principle and the historically established geographical dispersion. That is, while SSG is the official majority language, it is the minority language within the canton of Fribourg and which, as this study's findings suggest, sometimes result in an act of defiance by demonstrating reversed superiority and power. As Altermatt (2005) summarizes his research on bilingualism in the city of Fribourg: "The German language, the German-speaking minority and bilingualism…are not duly taken into account by the author-

ities, not really recognized, and not specifically promoted") (p. 79 [my translation]). Conversely, SSG is also the dominant language at a cantonal level in the trilingual canton of Grisons, with Romansh and Italian sharing the language minority positions, resulting in additive multilingualism (Benson, 2009) particularly for Romansh speakers who grow up bilingually.

Romansh speakers cannot choose *not* to learn SSG, due to their L1's minority status, even though this results in high-level language competences in two languages. Rather, as this study has shown, the majority of Grisons students prioritizes SSG over their L1, Romansh, in a professional context. There are also teachers who, by believing that the *status quo* stands for "German is simply everything" (Gita, 312), reproduce the language hierarchy in favor of SSG and its speakers.

Many do not consider their linguistic rights endangered or disrespected because this situation has been normalized by social practices and ingrained as such in people's minds. In fact, in Gramsci's (1971) terms, the non-dominant groups have adopted the dominant group's worldviews, thereby leading to incoherent actions and beliefs to the detriment of their own linguistic and cultural repertoires. Thus, although language policies establish *de jure* linguistic equality among the three cantonal languages in Grisons, Romansh speakers have learned through discriminatory lived experiences to be submissive and to adapt their language practices in official spaces or to majority language speakers. For instance, as reported by Christine: "when there are German speakers then you automatically speak German. Also with people who…would be able to speak Romansh. (-) Because it would somehow be impolite" (Christine, 37–39). That said, there are voices of concern about a potential "Germanization" of Romansh-speaking Grisons (Jana, 194) to the detriment of minority languages. These circumstances indicate that the language law, aiming at equality among the three cantonal languages, has not been successfully implemented, is not controlled, and its misuse has not been sanctioned (Spolsky, 2009). Contrarily, as argued by Coray (2009), the "Germanization" is positively associated with socioeconomic progress by many in a historically rural and underdeveloped area of Switzerland. Learning the languages of one's 'neighbors within the same country' is also presented as a crucial requirement for social cohesion and ought to be prioritized "out of respect for the nation" or justified by participants themselves "…because you have to be able to communicate with our own people first," as advocated by some participants. Problematically, many minority speakers have come to accept and recognize the symbolic power as legitimate through a seemingly invisible process, thereby giving up their chance of *de facto* equality and restricting their L1 to informal contexts, apparently voluntarily (Bourdieu, 1991).

French and German are rather strictly separated in bilingual Fribourg, not only by geographical boundaries but also by mental ones (Becker & Magno, 2022) resulting in a tense and ideology-laden co-existence of two monolingual language groups on a societal level. On an individual level, participants' personal language hierar-

chies depict a more plurilingual reality and include many different HLs. At the same time, French-speaking students are coerced into learning German, otherwise they would be even more isolated from the national majority language group and the socioeconomic opportunities linked thereto. In fact, all Fribourg students (except for one) believe that their competences in the local national language (French) are not enough to be competitive in the Swiss job market. As one student formulated it concisely: "Without German, everything is pretty hard to achieve in Switzerland." As a result, the majority of Fribourg students and teachers report being satisfied with the current LEPs that introduce German before English and do not want to prioritize the latter as other German-speaking cantons have done. Moreover, there are students and teachers who take pride in the (traditional) LEPs and the respect these are believed to demonstrate toward Swiss traditions and the other language regions, ignoring that Italian and Romansh are hardly ever involved in these discussions, thereby reproducing language hierarchies themselves. As some non-Romansh-speaking participants explicitly stated, Romansh does not qualify as relevant enough to be integrated into language teaching outside of Grisons and other HLs would only overwhelm students with their (already dense) curriculum.

Nevertheless, some call for a federally binding, homogeneous policy decision in response to the language learning debate. It has been argued that a national LEP should make the learning of the two dominant national languages mandatory for all Swiss students, although it is highly doubtful that such (forced) LEPs can completely erase underlying power mechanisms and even have the potential to establish equitable language learning. This is particularly so considering that it was through an almost autonomous initiative by Zurich's former Minister of Education, Ernst Buschor, that the traditional language order was reversed. This study's findings also indicate that many students (and some teachers) perceive GFL classes as a tedious obligation, justifying them almost solely with neoliberal arguments such as better socioeconomic opportunities. The findings further suggest that these arguments are insufficient for successful language learning and result in low motivation and academic achievements. Hegemonized by the majority language group and their historically established dependence on it, their own will and understandings have become obfuscated and uncritical (Gramsci, 1971). Thus, given the French-speaking part's financial, political, and economic dependence on the dominant German-speaking part, they also cannot choose *not* to learn German. In fact, many of the French-speaking participants were against expressing dissent regarding LEPs since it would involve questioning the *status quo*, with which many are satisfied since "it works well the way it is" and "the tradition has always been like this," as one participant stated. Caught in a *culture of silence* (Freire, 2005), minority language speakers uphold the *status quo* in the hope of socioeconomic advantages than (re-)discovering, claiming, and expressing their own voices as active and legitimate participants in social decision-making processes. Importantly, this demonstrates that ac-

tors from bottom-up (minority language speakers) also prioritize upholding the *status quo*, rather than becoming 'agents of change' as a way of practicing democracy (Ayers et al., 2017).

That said, there are participants who are against romanticizing the national languages of a quadrilingual *Willensnation*, which problematically contributes to a glorification of traditions and homogeneity while ignoring the increasing *de facto* influences of linguistic and cultural diversity through global flows (Hardt & Negri, 2000). Alternatively, as Heller and Duchêne (2012) observe sharply: "[W]e seem to be nearing the limits of linguistic national…regimes to organize our lives, finding systems breaking up into circulating flows, local agentivity poking holes into institutional reproduction and the boundary between authenticity and artifice breaking down" (p. 19).

LEPs prioritizing the national languages merely do so to reinforce the *status quo*, almost without any real-world purpose for their learners given the separation of the language regions and the lacking interaction at a federal level. As summarized by one participant: "Actually, very little holds it [Switzerland] together…it's actually a miracle…" (Etienne, 276–277), although disagreements among the four language groups are rarely openly expressed or debated. As long as the country can rely on a thriving economy, and provided its traditions and social practices are respected and unquestioned, there is no need to breach the (artificial) peace. As Stotz (2006) argues convincingly drawing on Giddens (1991):

> The failure of language policy and the confederate discourse on multilingualism in Switzerland to create a clear mission and a rationale for action is not the result of bad intentions or sheer neglect, but it is the outcome of a reliance on traditional values and hegemonies. The territoriality principle, the ostensible care for autochthonous minorities, the shared history of half a millennium of relatively peaceful bi- and multilingualism and the division of power into even smaller relations due to subsidiarity: all of these factors have worked together to form a complacency liable to underestimate the dynamism of late modernity (p. 261).

The situation is particularly challenging for HL speakers in the *Romandie* (and the Italian-speaking parts) who have to learn both French and SSG for private and professional reasons and who cannot benefit from their rich linguistic and cultural repertoires, given their L1's exclusion from LEPs and laws. Thus, although language laws and policies provide a legal basis for linguistic equality among the national languages, they also discriminate against 'less prestigious' HLs spoken by a substantial proportion of the Swiss population, thereby reinforcing language hierarchies. That said, hierarchical discrepancies among students' HLs also exist. While students whose L1s are Spanish or English can in fact benefit from and showcase those in school since they are considered prestigious; speakers of Albanian, Croatian,

Czech or Portuguese are silenced due to the perceived low linguistic capital.[1] The lacking social recognition that is mirrored in the language hierarchies is reproduced through institutional structures within language teaching, since English and Spanish are actively included while others are 'locked out' (Becker & Knoll, 2021; Abendroth-Timmer & Fäcke, 2011).

English's high linguistic capital is promoted through LEPs and embraced by many stakeholders, even though English as a non-national language may not (yet) be included in language laws. In fact, Swiss-based multinational organizations and companies, as well as their employees, would benefit if their voices and concerns could be represented through ELF as an official language. That said, participants adhering to romantic ideals of Switzerland's *quadri*lingualism and more conservative traditions also expressed their vehement disagreement with ELF as "absolutely out of question" (Gita, 409–410). Even internationally oriented students shared this opinion, believing that the national language still determined the (*de facto*) language practices dominating (*de jure*) English language policies in Swiss-based multinational companies. The reasoning is justified by attributing higher legitimacy to historically "indigenous languages" (Etienne, 124), upholding the problematic modernist agenda of national identity construction through the *one language, one culture, one nation paradigm* (Pujolar, 2007). Similarly, migrants who happen to speak one of the national languages are attributed different (better) statuses than those who do not. This, as Fraser (2003) argues convincingly, "institutionalizes patterns of cultural value that pervasively deny some members the recognition they need in order to be full, participating partners in social interaction…constitutes an obstacle to parity of participation and thus an injustice" (p. 49).

Consequently, following the 'logic' of language ideologies and hierarchies, HLs and their speakers, who rarely have the same privileges as elitist expats in high-income positions, have even less of a chance of integration into existing LEPs and laws (Moyer & Martín Rojo, 2007). This study supports Brown, Koreinik, and Siiner's (2017) call for a reconceptualization of state-imposed LPPs as "a more diverse, democratic agent" (p. 3) to minority language communities and other (international) stakeholders that extend historically established (nation-)state borders and programs developed by majority language speakers. This can contribute to amplifying HL speakers' agency and voices in the LPP decision-making processes, given the restrictive national language policy framework and the high expectations from the local population regarding their linguistic competences. That is, HL-speaking migrants depending on the local job market are imposed stricter

1 The prestige and linguistic capital that is linked to a certain language is always context-dependent. While Spanish is considered a prestigious and popular language in Switzerland, for instance, certain Spanish varieties associated with HL speakers can be stigmatized in the USA (García & Lin, 2017).

(linguistic) requirements for integration given their intentions (or need) to stay more permanently compared to (English-speaking) expats, who typically live in Switzerland only temporarily. Put otherwise, personal ideologies and intolerance toward diversity are hidden behind superficially 'well-intended' advice for migrants' better integration and socioeconomic success by expecting migrants to acquire and to employ the new local language just like (or better than) the dominant language speaker group. For instance, Elisabeth formulated it like this when talking about a potential promotion of an employee with a migration background: "if he does not urgently push his Albanian language identity a bit into the background and speaks more German, he will never become her successor" (Elisabeth, 452–453). As Heller and Duchêne (2012) put it more sharply:

> If you don't speak the language of the nation, and speak it properly, you show that you lack the ability to reason and the strength to prevail that citizenship requires; you therefore can't claim access to political and economic power. If you haven't learned it, it is because you lack the competence to do so, for either moral or physical reasons…If you have, you still need to constantly prove yourself against the measure developed by the dominant group, who use agencies of the state…to describe what counts as linguistic competence and the means to identify it (p. 5).

Such perspectives on migration, and the expected behavior of migrants, illustrate that these individuals and their life trajectories are often misunderstood and pressured to assimilate, judging the local language and culture as more relevant and powerful than the ones with which they are already equipped. As Levitt and Jaworsky (2007) caution convincingly, however:

> Migration has never been a one-way process of assimilation…but one in which migrants, to varying degrees, are simultaneously embedded in the multiple sites and layers of the transnational social fields in which they live. More and more aspects of social life take place across borders, even as the political and cultural salience of nation-state boundaries remains clear (p. 130).

Interestingly, language hierarchies are not detrimental *per se*, as evidenced by participants' heteroglossic language repertoires and their lived experiences as individuals with migration backgrounds. Rather, the fact that languages are ranked according to their perceived prestige and linguistic capital within a hierarchical social construct provides the basis for minority language speakers to challenge their position and to engage in advocacy. For instance, Arthur is very proud of his Macedonian roots, yet he experiences condescension when his HL is not differentiated from other Slavic languages, making him believe it is not worth the effort. This illustrates that, although the underlying idea of deconstructing languages as mere social 'inventions' to critically reconstitute their social, cultural, and political implications and power

dynamics (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) is intriguing, disadvantaged HL speakers rely heavily on the concept of *languages*. More precisely, by critically assessing their HL's position within the society, they can raise awareness of inequitable treatment. Social justice, thus, becomes much more achievable if their HL can be named and pinpointed than if all named languages were to be dissolved into languaging practices (García, 2009), 'disinvented' or 'deconstructed' (Makoni & Pennycook, 2007), which would obfuscate underlying power issues (Grin, 2018; Marácz, 2018).

In these circumstances, ELF should (and does) act as a mediator and leverages individuals' voices that are hindered from learning or using the local language(s) and silenced by restrictive, discriminatory language laws, policies, and practices (Shohamy, 2006; Tollefson, 2006). Similarly, many participants support the prioritization of English over national languages in an effort to increase equitable participation in and exchange among all national language groups and to decrease the German dominance. As Sonja formulated it poignantly, "…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). Furthermore, some cantons' decision to introduce English before French is seen as an overt acknowledgement of the covert language hierarchy that has been developing over the last three decades.

Importantly, the language order in which national languages (primarily German and French) are prioritized over English represent just as much of a language hierarchy; however, this is legitimized by the national, (restrictively) multilingual discourse on traditions, hegemonies, and the nation-state. Thus, despite ELF's handy function of acting as a mediator among diverse language and cultural groups, it might more closely resemble a superficial communication solution than actually resolving intercultural misunderstandings and ideology-laden power issues. Yet, only by openly and intentionally promoting differences instead of suppressing, denying or artificially tolerating them can ideologies, prejudices, and inequitable power relations be reduced.

ELF's uncritical glorification as *the* stepping-stone to bright socioeconomic opportunities, a key to accessing social media and virtual lifeworlds, or viewing it as 'a panacea' (Phillipson, 2009) *tout court* is detrimental for HLs. Problematically, many HL-speaking participants are deceived by English's popularity and alleged necessity and consider it a more important asset than their own linguistic and cultural heritage. Similar to the French-speaking minority and their dependence on the German-speaking part of Switzerland, the latter are mesmerized by an Anglo-American hegemony that is infiltrating the local language ecology and causing the linguistic capital dispossession of national languages (Phillipson, 2009). Hence, schools should adopt a critical multiculturalist stance and question, instead of reproducing, neoliberal mechanisms and undergirding hegemonial, economic interests and requirements (Kubota, 2010). As Motha (2014) argues, the aim is to avoid

> becoming socialized into a public school system in which adults teach children to unquestioningly accept associations spun between English and opportunity, cosmopolitanism, and wealth in the social imaginary and to develop deep-seated desires for English and all that it has come to represent, and in which adults purport to be teaching neutral worlds, structures, and processes (p. 133).

Finally, if the existing language hierarchies were transparently analyzed and deconstructed, then students would be more aware of their choices and associated power dynamics regarding linguistic capital and diversity in a restrictively multilingual society. This could contribute to a much-needed paradigm shift from 'ignored bilingualism' (Hélot, 2007) of individuals' non-dominant HLs to the normalization of a 'multilingual habitus' (Benson, 2013) with fewer discriminatory language hierarchies and ideologies or at least higher awareness and a better understanding thereof. Such a paradigm shift should imperatively also encompass legal protection and the social recognition of sign languages as well as easy languages in an effort to include as many underprivileged individuals as possible and to broaden everyone's understanding of inclusion.

5.4 Symbolic Power and Legitimacy in the 'Native-Speaker' and 'Standard-Speech Ideology'

"I felt more confident…especially because we didn't have any native speakers with us, so real English people."

Similar to the findings discussed in the previous section, language sub-hierarchies rank linguistic varieties and their speakers according to their prestige, legitimacy, and 'native-speakerness' and are reinforced by the education system. These language sub-hierarchies also position linguistic varieties on a continuum of romantic and rationalist ideals (Geeraerts, 2003). The 'romantic' pole, which showcases identity expression and 'pride of membership' (Heller & Duchêne, 2012), represents participants' HLs, personal ways of speaking (idiolects), and local/dialectal varieties. The adjacent 'rationalist' pole stands for official, standard(ized) languages such as German, French, Rumantsch Grischun, or internationally dominant ones such as AE or BE, which provide their speakers with access to official, public spaces, sociopolitical, economic opportunities and power from which primarily dominant groups can 'profit' (Heller & Duchêne, 2012). These two poles of 'romantic' and 'rationalist' ideals or 'pride' and 'profit' are necessarily linked and, as Heller and Duchêne (2012) argue, their interwovenness is increasing: "'Pride' no longer works as well as the sole trope

of nation-state legitimization; rather, the state's ability to facilitate the growth of the new economy depends on its ability to legitimize the discourse of 'profit'" (p. 10).

The study's findings revealed that participants are constantly torn between these two poles or societal forces, having to negotiate between their (linguistic) identity, the expression of their own voice, and a sense of belonging on the one hand and emancipation, participation, and socioeconomic opportunities on the other. Put differently, they are caught in a positionality struggle between tradition and globalization (Hua & Li, 2016). Great tensions exist regarding Swiss German, its questioned legitimate status due to language policies and laws prioritizing SSG, and its discriminatory nature *vis-à-vis* other (national) language groups, given Switzerland's diglossic situation. The situation is particularly challenging for Romansh speakers in Grisons who also grow up speaking Swiss German in contrast to Swiss German speakers who typically do not acquire Romansh in return. Exposed to Romansh and Swiss German in society primarily, they are required to employ SSG in educational settings in which their language skills are often assessed based on a dichotomous distinction between 'standardness' and 'non-standardness' (Delpit, 2006). Importantly, the same goes for minority language-speaking *teachers* who might be less familiar with the standard form, yet experience even more pressure to speak 'correctly' and to represent the state's authority and policies appropriately (Foucault, 1982; 1991; 2007). As the study's findings suggest, this leads to embarrassment and shame for some participants when, as Delpit (2006) has pointed out, the classroom should provide a safe space and "the opportunity to practice [standard language] *in contexts that are nonthreatening, have a real purpose, and are intrinsically enjoyable*" (p. 54 [emphasis in original]).

Contrarily, as one participant's experience exemplifies, making Swiss German an (unofficial) employment requirement for German-Romansh bilingual teachers is just as discriminatory and potentially even less comprehensible since, according to the language laws, it is not even a legitimate language in official, institutional contexts. Such protectionist behavior fosters the symbolic representation of a regional identity and cohesion through the "ideology of dialect" (Watts, 1999) and increases certain individuals' authenticity over others, based on arbitrary linguistic markers. Changing the school's LEPs to also allow Swiss German as a medium of instruction, which some teachers would in fact prefer, would correspond better to the local linguistic landscape and to many individuals' language repertoires, but is officially unauthorized given the language laws' restrictive nature. This study argues that the feeling of inferiority and deficiency that many Swiss German speakers unnecessarily experience regarding their own constant comparison with standard German norms and speakers could be reduced if Swiss German and SSG were viewed more as a continuum and less like a dichotomy. As the findings indicate, the participants' language practices are far more complex and do not neatly fit into the categories of standard versus non-standard speech. More precisely, speakers switch

between SSG and Swiss German depending on the context and their communicative needs, thereby maximizing their linguistic repertoires and drawing on different registers, vocabulary, and grammar (Petkova, 2016).

In addition to the hierarchies that exist in Grisons regarding Swiss German, language ideologies also impact how Romansh's different idioms are socially perceived and ranked regarding their prestige and power. As the results indicate, one's position in the language hierarchy seems to correlate with one's socioeconomic and family background. Moreover, language ideologies also reproduce historically established stereotypes of rural versus urban population and corresponding speech varieties, automatically categorizing individuals living in rural Grisons as "a second category person" (Henri, 344). Convincingly, Henri argued that the act of recognizing different values in local varieties is in itself "highly superficial" (Henri, 348) and, thus, contributes to an illegitimate legitimization. This process was appropriately described by Bourdieu (1991) as 'misrecognizing' symbolic power and, in so doing, 'recognizing' it "as legitimate…[while]…fail[ing] to see that the hierarchy is, after all, an arbitrary social construction which serves the interests of some groups more than others" (p. 23). Problematically, such a hierarchy is not only created by speakers' ideologies, but is also institutionalized in language status planning (Hornberger, 2006) to officialize RG as a standardized language of the three (but not all five) Romansh idioms, thereby (de)legitimizing idioms and their speakers.

Züritüütsch ['Zurich German'] is often perceived to be the most prestigious one and it is commonly promoted as such by its speakers. As Siebenhaar and Wyler (1997) caution, however, while this may contribute to popularity and to a feeling of dominance, particularly within their own speech community, it is often interpreted as arrogance and presumption outside of Zurich. Postulating that "social life in Switzerland simply doesn't work enough [without Swiss German]" (Elisabeth, 43), Swiss German speakers exacerbate the figure of the native speaker and those standard speech ideologies predominant in society and educational settings that are detrimental to many. The complexity is well captured in Adya's lived experiences of language. She is complimented for her standard German accent in school, which is a result of exposure to speakers from Germany and causes an inner conflict of feelings of pride and betrayal since it makes her stand out. Problematically, it also puts her fellow students, who do not have the same German accent, in a position of inferiority since their German exposure is mostly based on a Swiss accent. Moreover, not only is the language hierarchy reproduced in an educational setting, and thus officialized, but the study's findings also revealed that certain students and parents in fact favor a standard German accent in teachers and that exposure is needed to the even more 'authentic' and 'prestigious' variety than Zurich German or even SSG. At the same time, students, teachers, and other stakeholders advocate English-based CLIL, which would in fact reduce the hours of SSG exposure, which is typically seen as one of the main responsibilities of schooling and which is thought to be essentially

necessary for almost all other school subjects, university, and professional contexts (Grütz, 2018; Sieber, 2013).

Conversely, some teachers ignore the standard language-LEPs and rely on Swiss German in their classes instead; this, consequently, creates in- and outgroups between those who share the same linguistic and cultural background and those who do not (Bourdieu, 1991). Furthermore, in addition to those ignoring such LEPs, there is a certain activism among some participants to counteract and defy standard language-LEPs, calling one's adherence to the state-imposed language "conditioning" (Elisabeth, 50). Importantly, not all teachers were aware of their actions, especially when students were regularly enrolled local students and were not part of a school exchange, for instance; some in fact became aware of discriminatory practices during the interview itself. Similar to what has been stated above, not distinguishing between students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and adopting a colorblind approach might appear well-intended on the surface, but it neither recognizes nor fosters diversity (May & Sleeter, 2010). Instead, it is an attempt to homogenize the classroom's diversity and to impose the same requirements for everyone, thereby ignoring the crucial difference between equality and equity. Intriguingly, a distinction is made between international and national exchange students. While standard German is spoken with the former, given that they are believed to have no exposure to Swiss dialects whatsoever, expectations differ with exchange students from the French- or Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland. Swiss German is also spoken with the latter, again under the pretext of well-meant intentions of more authentic integration, during their stay in the canton of Zurich.

However, both scenarios face a dilemma. On the one hand, it seems as if integration without Swiss German is virtually impossible and teachers and fellow students alike almost artificially adjust themselves to the international students. Their special treatment, while considerate and well-intentioned, might not lead to the same degree of inclusion, acceptance, and well-being of the foreign students. On the other hand, French- and Italian-speaking Swiss students are most likely to be just as unfamiliar with the Swiss German dialects as the international students. They are exposed to Swiss German sporadically at most (with some exceptions) and learn GFL often with Germany-centered teaching material.

The study's findings further revealed that for some participants from the *Romandie*, Swiss German, and the perceived negative impact it has on intercantonal communication with different language groups, is a very controversial, emotional, and partly taboo issue. The use of Swiss German in interactions with *Romands* is largely considered condescending since they learn standard German in school and are typically not exposed to it otherwise. Participants' teaching experiences have shown that individuals are not willing to talk about it openly and express their dissatisfaction, partly because it is a taboo issue and because it has developed into a fear of even coming into contact with Swiss German speakers. Students' preference of

going to Germany, instead of the German-speaking part of Switzerland, to conduct school projects and the unquestioned reproduction of stereotypes to support their arguments are typical examples of this gridlocked situation. The prestige and authenticity incorporated by the variety spoken in Germany is also much more promising in a context in which the language is learned primarily for socioeconomic purposes. Arguably, *Romand* students' familiarity with Swiss German varieties and their significance for their speakers is at least just as important since it can contribute to a better understanding among Swiss citizens – literally and figuratively.

Interestingly, ELF has been suggested as providing a neutral medium of communication, particularly among different Swiss national language groups (Durham, 2014), which is much complicated by the use of the different local varieties of Swiss German that are mostly incomprehensible to and often interpreted as an insult by the French- and Italian-speaking parts (Ribeaud, 2010). As this study's findings suggest, however, the native-speaker ideologies are reinforced by how much prestige and power is attributed to 'Inner Circle' varieties by students, teachers, and by other stakeholders. These ideologies (re)produce sub-hierarchies of languages, typically ranking AE/BE at the top, given that prestigious, standard varieties continue to be an (unreachable) objective for many English learners (Cook, 2007). The findings further indicate that students are susceptible to these varieties because they attribute authority and (linguistic) legitimacy to their role-model speakers, who are either English-speaking actors, musicians, Internet celebrities, or their English teachers with a native-like AE or BE accent. As Jana summarized her perspective on the native-speaker ideology: "[T]he goal would be to, when you graduate university to be perfectly proficient. I mean, absolutely perfect [in AE]" (Jana, 148–149).

Influenced by neoliberal ideology, proficient linguistic competences in English are considered indispensable human capital to qualify as a successful participant in the knowledge economy and to take advantage of the associated economic benefits (Ricento, 2015b). The Swiss education system, including the organization of national teacher education, contributes to a systemic reproduction of the native-speaker ideologies in language teaching. The (teacher) education system incentivizes its applicants to completely adopt the target language in order to pass as native-speaker role models for Swiss students by making stays in countries in which the language is spoken as a first/official language and/or C2 (highest CEFR proficiency level) certificates a mandatory requirement to even start teacher education in language subjects. As the study's findings demonstrate, teachers in fact appropriate the English language. They further move from passing as a native speaker to developing agency and a strong connection to their own experiences and linguistic identity (Norton & McKinney, 2011). This is particularly the case for Swiss German-speaking teachers who discover another (perceived to be) legitimate voice in their linguistic repertoire through English, which is often impacted by feelings of inferiority due to standard speech ideologies in SSG. The need to justify the proficiency of their own language

skills by those stays abroad, by the exposure with local native speakers persists, however, thereby also reproducing the problematic static connection between a certain nation-state, e.g., England, and the locally spoken legitimate variety, e.g., BE.

Similarly, the CEFR applied in schools to foster and evaluate students' linguistic competences "by promoting methodological innovations and new approaches to designing teaching programmes, notably the development of a communicative approach" (CoE, 2021, n.p.) can be said to pursue the same neoliberal objectives (Kubota, 2015). Although hidden within an ostensible innovative and communication-oriented language policy framework, in order to normalize plurilingualism and to foster linguistic exchanges among speakers of different L1s, it reproduces native-speaker ideologies and fixed measurements by ranking one's competences on a scale from A1 (Basic User) to C2 (Proficient User) (McNamara, 2011). Textbooks also heavily rely on 'UK models of English' (Syrbe & Rose, 2018) which, as a general guidance in terms of pronunciation in specific, is largely appreciated by the participants. This is paradoxically the case for some teachers who claim that they reject such native-speaker ideology, thereby contradicting themselves. Although the pressure is already high among participants to pass the CAE (C1) exam, the admiration for those students who attempt to pass the C2 exam, which officially certifies near-native-like English proficiency, is even greater. As it is advertised on the Cambridge Assessment's website: "A C2 Proficiency qualification shows the world that you have mastered English to an exceptional level" (Cambridge Assessment, 2021). This not only creates in- and outgroups among students (Bourdieu, 1991) who obtain the Cambridge C1 or C2 certificate – although the actual difference in competence is probably negligible in the study's context – it also attests to many participants' strong desire to pass as an English native-speaker, which in itself is a mythical concept (Davies, 2003). As Motha (2014) argues convincingly:

> The wish to pass or necessity (or perceived necessity) of passing can be connected to the meanings and degree of undesirability associated with the category 'nonnative'…[it] can be read as denial or even loathing of one's own linguistic identity, intertwined as it is with one's racial and colonial identity, processes of passing simultaneously represent a challenge to linguistic essentialism and ideologies surrounding meanings of English and nativeness. Just as the concept of racial passing is reliant on Black and White being conceived of as completely distinguishable, fixed, and concretely defined, linguistic passing requires a separability and fixity of the categories 'native' and 'nonnative' (p. 94).

Adya's problematical lived experiences of language, for instance, incorporate the phenomenon of (perceived) necessity of passing that is embedded in what Hua and Li (2016) have coined 'nationality and ethnicity talk.' According to them, this kind of discourse "is essentially an act of identity calibration and involves categorization and positioning of self and others and stance-making" (Hua & Li, 2016, p. 450) in an

effort to answer the question 'Where are you really from?' (Hua & Li, 2016). Although she receives compliments for her standard German accent (see above), she is also categorized as 'non-native' in terms of her (lacking) Swiss German competencies in both school and private contexts. Importantly, although the passing is imposed onto her, she portrays it as only "halfway forced" (Adya 63–64), having already internalized the 'native-speaker logic' and defending the perceived 'well-intended advice' from her teacher and dance instructor. Arguably, her linguistic passing is also linked to racial passing for her to 'fit in' better into Swiss society. As a Pakistani person, her physical appearance does not match the stereotypical 'average Swiss' person. To compensate for this, and to prove her 'localness' and legitimacy as a Swiss national, she now speaks 'Zurich German' and suppresses the German variety that she used growing up. This discriminatory behavior is justified by her teacher by claiming that it is beneficial for her professional future and successful integration. The same ignorance could hold true for her dance instructor who, considering her to be 'foreign,' speaks German although she uses Swiss German not to stand out (even more). Describing her experience as an "inculcation" (Adya, 299), it becomes clear that she was not free to choose her linguistic repertoire/identity and that she was discriminated against due to her physical appearance and her way of speaking. She felt like she had no other choice than to assimilate and to acquiesce to the existing (language) ideologies because she was forced into this position by her teacher, a representative of the education system in a position of power, and by her dance instructor, a role model and authority figure as well.

The native speaker ideology is not only reproduced in the form of institutionalized symbolic power and violence, but also (unconsciously) in participants' leisure activities and interests. As the example from Arthur's lived experiences shows, native speakers are personified in "Kanye West or Whitney Houston [or] Michael Jackson" (Arthur, 158–159), for instance, and their way of speaking is used to deduce authentic expressions and accents. Such simplistic categorizations of native speakers ignore the wide range of different levels of linguistic competencies among speakers and the question of (formal, informal, academic, etc.) register and contextual appropriateness (Agha, 2005). Conversely, there are participants who draw a line between professional and private contexts that require different English varieties with different standards. Timo's lived experiences of language indicate such a distinction which, although still problematical, increases tolerance and participants' exposure to a broader variety of accents and ways of speaking:

> [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…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 true 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 very well English, 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])

ELF applied in a translanguaging framework, with influences of many speakers' L1s, is an equitable communication tool in online gaming settings which reduces pressure and linguistic insecurity in non-native English speakers who rely on it to engage in innovative meaning-making language practices (García & Li, 2014). That said, Timo's quote also reveals that Indian English, for instance, which is the official language and L1 of many, is considered to have a strong (that is deviant) accent from the 'Inner Circle' varieties, which nevertheless triggered a feeling of equality and membership among non-native speakers of English.

Finally, ELF is considered to be inappropriate in official educational settings where the *status quo* is BE, a prestigious, elite variety transmitting value of authority, tradition, and order. For many other participants, ELF and other translanguaging practices also qualified as empowering mechanisms, providing an almost value- and judgment-free space with as few linguistic norms and rules as possible, but still retaining the maximum of interpersonal encounters. This should be the objective of inclusive multilingual education, in which awareness and promotion of diversity finally replaces monocultural and monolingual superiority and hegemonization. As Mohanty (2009) summarized it sharply:

> MLE [Multilingual education] is not just about building a bridge or many bridges; it is about developing a mindset to overcome the barriers between 'monolingual stupidity' and 'multilingual promise', barriers between a legislated and contrived unity and a naturally flourishing diversity. It is about building a better world, a world of diversity. It is about our survival (p. 14–15).

To conclude, this section's intention was not to provide a definite answer to the rather provocative question of English as a *mediator* or *troublemaker* since languages, the interactions among those, their speakers, and situational contexts are always in flux and are renegotiated so that they should always be seen as resources, not as fixed entities that can take over others. It is up to us to maximize the potential of the entire linguistic and cultural diversity that exists around us and not to limit it to ostensibly prestigious and powerful languages. We must also be careful not to neglect the symbolic power and opportunities often linked to those. Just as every individual is unique, so too are their linguistic repertoires, which makes any attempt to homogenize diversity superfluous.