

Between the plurilingual paradigm and monolingual ideologies in the compulsory education system of multilingual Switzerland

Martina Zimmermann  | University of Teacher Education Lucerne (Suiza)

martina.zimmermann@phlu.ch

Anna Häfliger  | University of Teacher Education Lucerne (Suiza)

ahaefliger53@gmail.com

This paper discusses contradictions in discourses and practices in connection with plurilingualism in the public education system of multilingual Switzerland. First, a historical review presents under what conditions the plurilingual paradigm has found its way into Swiss curricula. Second, some examples are taken from L2 course books to illustrate how curricular ideas have been translated into practical material. Third, it is shown what contradictory ideologies persist despite these efforts to incorporate plurilingual ideas into teaching practice. This is done on the basis of a recent case, which was about banning all languages but the official (German) during recess times at a primary school. The analysis reveals what kind of normative monolingual discourses remain strong. Shedding light on these contradictions allows the illustration of tensions between the plurilingual paradigm and monolingual norms, with which the educational context is confronted.

Key words: *compulsory education, discourse analysis, course books, multilingualism, curriculum.*

Entre el paradigma plurilingüe y las ideologías monolingües en el sistema de educación público multilingüe de Suiza

Este artículo discute las contradicciones respecto al plurilingüismo de los discursos y las prácticas en el sistema educativo público de la Suiza multilingüe. En primer lugar, un repaso histórico presenta las condiciones bajo las cuales el paradigma plurilingüe ha encontrado su lugar en los currículos suizos. En segundo lugar, a partir de algunos ejemplos escogidos de libros de texto de L2 se ilustra la manera como las ideas curriculares se han materializado. En tercer lugar, se muestran las contradicciones que persisten a pesar de los esfuerzos para incorporar ideas plurilingües a la práctica docente. Se parte de un caso reciente que tuvo que ver con la prohibición de todas las lenguas excepto la oficial (el alemán) durante los periodos de recreo en la escuela primaria. El análisis revela qué tipo de discursos normativos monolingües permanecen. El hecho de sacar a la luz estas contradicciones permite ilustrar las tensiones entre el paradigma plurilingüe y las normas monolingües con las que se confronta el contexto educacional.

Palabras clave: *educación obligatoria, análisis del discurso, libros de texto, multilingüismo, currículum.*



1. Introduction

When approaching the topic of plurilingualism in Switzerland, one of the first things that comes to mind is the obvious cliché of the Swiss tourist who – in many countries she/he travels – is highly regarded for speaking four languages. And yes, especially public figures on special occasions like politicians speaking in opening ceremonies often like to demonstrate and celebrate “Swiss quadrilingual competence” by greeting the audience in all four languages. But most of the time it ends right there, and the following speech is held in the speaker’s first language.

When looking into the legal situation documented in the Swiss constitution (www.admin.ch) the estimation of the four national languages is evident: The “Federal Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities” formulated by the Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation (based on Articles 4, 18 and 70 of the Swiss Constitution) decrees:

Art. 2 Aim

By means of this Act, the Confederation intends:

- a. to strengthen quadrilingualism as one of Switzerland’s fundamental characteristics;
- b. to consolidate the internal cohesion of the country;
- c. to encourage individual and institutional plurilingualism in the national languages;
- d. to preserve and promote Romansh and Italian as national languages.

ART. 3 PRINCIPLES

In fulfilling its tasks, the Confederation shall observe the following principles in particular:

- a. It shall ensure that it treats the four national Swiss languages equally.
- b. It shall guarantee and apply linguistic freedom in all its areas of activity.
- c. It shall take account of the traditional linguistic composition of Switzerland’s regions.
- d. It shall promote understanding between the linguistic communities.

Art. 5 Official languages

The official languages of the Confederation are German, French and Italian. Romansh is an official language in dealings with persons who speak this language.

The federal authorities shall use the official languages in their standard forms.

Art. 6 Choice of Language

- 1 Any person dealing with a federal authority may do so in the official language of their own choice.
- 2 The federal authorities shall answer in the official language in which they are addressed. They may agree with persons who contact them to use a different official language.
- 3 Persons who speak Romansh may address the federal authorities in its idioms or in Rumantsch Grischun. The authorities answer in Rumantsch Grischun.
- 4 The Federal Council may restrict the free choice of official language for dealings with authorities whose activities are limited to a specific region.
- 5 In dealings with persons who have no command of an official language, the federal authorities shall if possible use a language that these persons understand.

Figure 1, taken from the website of the Federal Statistical Office, shows the

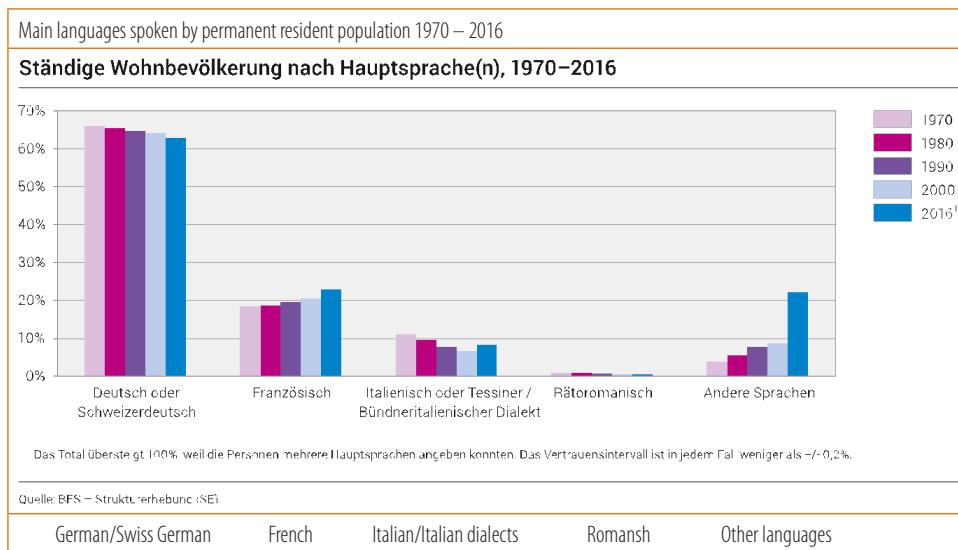


Figure 1. Development of national and minority languages in Switzerland 1970 – 2016 (Source: Federal Statistical Office, our translation; <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/bevoelkerung/sprachen-religionen/sprachen.assetdetail.4542473.html>, retrieved 01-24-2019).

development of the four national languages (German/Swiss German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romance) and other minority languages from 1970 – 2016. As the visualisation illustrates, the number of people speaking a minority language other than one of the four national ones is the one showing the highest growth, especially since 2000.

As Switzerland adheres to the territoriality principle, it is standard to use ‘only one of the official languages in each of the language regions of the country with the exception of a few overlap areas’ (Lüdi, 2007, p.160) (e.g. Bienne, Fribourg or the federal capital Berne). The country can thus be compared to a mosaic combining a few mainly monolingual regions (cf. Lüdi, 2007, p.160).

In an attempt to foster Swiss citizen’s plurilingualism, foreign language teaching

was introduced at primary level between 2004 and 2009. This political decision must be seen in the wider European context (Blondin *et al.*, 1998) where at the time in many of the countries second/foreign language learning was shifted from secondary into primary level public school.

Wondering about the origin of this shift requires taking history into account. The 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall seems crucial in the context of these concurrent changes in the education system. Though the foundation of the Council of Europe dates further back to 1949, in direct reaction to World War II, with the purpose of upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe, in the late 1950’s the Council became active in the field of language education, history and civilization of other member states as well as their own. In 1964 a modern language

section was established, but by around 1980 its activities had come close to a standstill. The 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of Central and Eastern Europe gave the European project new life again (Bond, 2012). The historic incident being estimated as a decisive moment for the continent started raising awareness that the thinking in left vs. right political blocks was crumbling, and that the many European countries and peoples needed to start interacting and communicating in a new way with each other (cf. ECML¹). ‘Learn the language of your neighbour’ was the slogan of the time that even materialised in politically supported exchange programmes e.g. sending kindergarden teachers for a year from Germany to France and vice versa (*Orientierungshilfe für den Einsatz französischer Fachkräfte im Kindergarten, Beschluss des Landesjugendhilfeausschusses Rheinland-Pfalz vom 19. Mai 2003*²) and in approaches such as *EOLE (Education et ouverture aux langues à l'école)*.

Another decisive milestone that also had its implications in Switzerland was the European Council's creation of the “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” (Council of Europe, 2001), its overall goal being the empowerment to global citizenship by not only describing levels of linguistic communicative competences but also developing further linguistic descriptors for democratic competence and intercultural dialogue (cf. FREPA, Candelier *et al.*, 2007).

In order to allow and establish mutual understanding, the *CEFR*, elaborated by members of the European Language Council, defined on the one hand the differing levels of language competence in the linguistic skills listening, reading, speaking writing and mediating in scales from A1 to C2. On the other hand, it strongly promoted multilingual competence (defined by the formula L1 + 2 neighbouring/foreign languages) to be attained by every European citizen. Swiss curricula as well as the federal document describing the overall concept for the teaching of language(s) in the Swiss public school system took this stipulation into account (*Gesamtsprachenkonzept* 1998; Lüdi, 2018).

This multilingual competence defined as *functional plurilingualism* implicitly carries a significant paradigm shift, a move away from the traditional conception of native-like and normative correctness in a foreign language towards a functioning communication in and across more than two languages.

Peter Sieber, University Zurich professor for German language and literature studies called for the loosening of the often-criticised monolingual habitus of the public school.

Die Bemühungen um Sprachförderung orientieren sich am Ziel der funktionalen Mehrsprachigkeit und nicht am Mythos einer perfekten Zweisprachigkeit.

Funktionale Mehrsprachigkeit strebt ein vielfältiges, dynamisches Repertoire an mit

¹ <https://www.ecml.at/Aboutus/ECMLintheCouncilofEurope/tabid/121/language/en-GB/Default.aspx> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

² https://lsjv.rlp.de/fileadmin/lsjv/Dateien/Aufgaben/Kinder_Jugend_Familie/Arbeitshilfen/Kita/Kita_Lerne_Sprache_des_Nachbarn_Orientierungshilfe.pdf (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

unterschiedlich weit fortgeschrittenen Teilkompetenzen in verschiedenen Sprachen. Sie baut auf bestimmten, unmittelbar verwendbaren Grundkenntnissen auf, welche durch die Lernenden bei Bedarf zunehmend autonom ausgebaut werden können....So wird der zu Recht kritisierte ‚monolinguale Habitus‘ unserer Schule aufgeweicht – einerseits in Richtung des Aufbaus von funktionaler Mehrsprachigkeit, andererseits durch Einbezug und Förderung der vielfältigen Herkunftssprachen der Schülerinnen und Schüler, die nicht mehr einfach als Handicap, sondern als wichtiges Potenzial und Lernchance für unsere Gesellschaft wahrgenommen werden. (Sieber, 2006)

Efforts in language teaching and learning are oriented towards functional multilingualism and no longer hold on to the myth of native-like perfectness in the foreign language. Functional multilingualism implies a dynamic repertoire of partial linguistic competences at differing levels in various languages. It builds on basic skills of immediately usable language that can be extended and developed further if needed. It is in this way that the rightly criticized ‘monolingual habitus’ in schools can be loosened on the one hand in the direction of establishing functional multilingualism and, on the other hand by integrating and promoting the various original languages in the classroom as no longer a handicap but rather an essential potential and opportunity for society. (our translation)

With the CEFR being disseminated, 2000’s discussions led to the political decision of introducing foreign language teaching at primary level. Demonstrating the federalist nature of the country, German-speaking Switzerland’s 13 central and north eastern cantons (the word ‘canton’ stands for districts that function as political entities) opted for English first (3rd grade) and French second (5th grade) whereas the six cantons neighbouring the French-speaking part of the country decided for French first (3rd grade) and English second (5th grade). In the Italian-speaking region French is taught from 3rd grade on and the five French-speaking cantons start with teaching German (3rd grade) before starting with English in 5th grade.

In order to prepare for the introduction of foreign language teaching at primary level in Swiss public schools, new curricula (Primary English, *Lehrplangruppe Englisch der Bildungsregion Zentralschweiz*, 2004; and Primary French, *Passepartout* 2009 [2015]) were written that from the beginning stated the paradigm of communicative competence and functional multilingualism as their core concepts³.

In the newest curriculum 21 (cf. *Lehrplan 21* approved in 2016) English and French are combined as the languages to be learned in public school of German speaking Switzerland. Two new domains entitled ‘Language(s) at the focus’ and ‘Cultures at the focus’ have been added to the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). Language(s) at the focus consists of the sub-domains ‘Language awareness’,

³ When comparing the 1987 version of the curriculum for French at secondary level in the canton of Lucerne to the version of 2016 it is apparent that already the older version refers to other languages (e.g. German) but mostly in an attempt to contrast grammar.

'Vocabulary', 'Grammar', 'Pronunciation', 'Spelling' and 'Reflection of language learning.' (cf. www.lehrplan.ch).

Each of the six domains is given equal amounts of teaching time which implies, interestingly enough, a defined reduction of the teaching of form (approx. 16%) ('language(s) at the focus') in favour of the communicative skills and cultural awareness (approx. 83%). What also adds to the multilingual perspective of the 2016 version of the new curriculum are the links to the other school languages accentuating the emphasis on multiple languages (instead of one single language) set up for each descriptor in the electronic version of the document.

However, as both authors are/were mandated as supporting consultants for practising teachers, the insight into foreign language teaching practise often results in a perception of classroom realities where high correctness in spelling and grammar are the top priorities, which strongly contradicts the descriptors to be found in the curriculum. It is thus questionable if modern approaches displayed in the curriculum have really reached classroom practice so far (cf. Singh & Elmiger, 2016). This is insofar not astonishing as the course books in Switzerland are of high importance due to many cantons not only prescribing specific course books but even defining the progression according to the curriculum. Thus, it is often not the curriculum that is used as a guideline by teachers but the course books, which are not only used as a 'hidden curriculum' (Finkbeiner, 1998) but as *the* curriculum (Oelkers, 2004; Schär, 2007).

2. Course books

Considering the importance attributed to course books, the question is whether or

not they entail the multilingual paradigm. It would go beyond the scope of this contribution to provide an analysis of all course books used in Switzerland to teach (foreign) languages. A glimpse at some course books, however, illustrates that there are some which are compatible with the given curriculum, whereas others are not.

An activity replicating the objective 'aiming at raising multilingual awareness' (*'Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können sprachliche Vielfalt in Europa und in der Welt erkennen.'*; the pupils can recognize linguistic diversity in Europe and the world) taken from the newest curriculum is offered by *Die Sprachstarken 4* (Lötscher, Lindauer, & Senn, 2012), the compulsory German course book currently used at primary school level in several German-speaking cantons. One activity (p. 62) encourages children to study tongue twisters in different languages and another allows for a discussion of multiple scripts (p. 30). The two examples do thus include languages/scripts other than just the Swiss national languages.

Looking at other course books, however, e.g. *Here comes super bus* (Lobo, Subirà, & Salaberri, 2001) and *New inspiration* (Garton-Sprenger & Prowse, 2011) currently used in the foreign English classroom at primary and secondary school level, multilingual activities are not included at all. This surely has also to do with the fact that both course books have been designed by a publishing house in the UK, i.e. reaching an international market is more important than the Swiss curriculum and its multilingual perspectives.

If some course books encourage teachers to look into multilingual topics and to develop multilingual repertoires, it still depends on many factors (teachers,

their teams, their convictions, political climate, etc.) if the activities provided are put into practice. But at least, there seems to be some accordance between the current curriculum and some of the course books presently used, and multilingualism seems to have gained a certain legitimacy at compulsory school.

3. Banning multilingual practices at school?

Despite the integration of the multilingual paradigm into some course books in line with the current curriculum, contradictory ideas persist on what multilingualism means and what kind of multilingualism is acceptable in the educational context of Switzerland. To illustrate this point, we draw on the case of *Egerkingen*, which is a small village (approx. 3500 inhabitants, of which approx. 1000 do not have the Swiss passport) situated in the German-speaking canton of Solothurn. *Egerkingen's* commune president, Johanna Bartholdi, belonging to the Radical Free Democratic party (*Freisinnige Demokratische Partei*), suggested in 2015 to ban all languages but German from the area of primary school. She argued – with the support of the village's council – that Swiss children would at times feel excluded amongst their non-German-speaking peers, therefore she wanted to impose German even during break times (*Solothurner Zeitung*, 02.02.2016⁴). In order to achieve this policy, she put the following measures

forward: At school and on the school grounds, (Swiss) German is the only accepted language. When caught not speaking German for the first time, a child would get an oral, the second time a written reprimand. Should it not stick to the rules the third time, the child would have to take some German classes for which it (or rather its parents) would have to pay (ten lessons at the cost of 550 CHF, i.e. approximately 480 Euros). Bartholdi further explained her initiative by saying '*Ich habe Angst, dass unsere Gesellschaft auseinanderdriftet*' ('I am afraid of our society drifting apart') and that she hoped the measures planned would help erasing inequalities (*Solothurner Zeitung*, 03.02.2016; *Blick*, 06.02.2016)⁵.

The case was well documented in the media (newspapers, TV, radio) and is insofar interesting as different (unwritten) language policies and ideologies were subject to discussion and different authorities were involved.

The teachers were not enthusiastic about these measures to become effective in 2016/2017 as they would be the ones to enforce the new regulations. However, they were reassured by Bartholdi, that the new rule would be handled pragmatically and that teachers would not have to act as "sheriffs" during break times (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 29.01.2016⁶). Asked if these measures would not be in conflict with the legal situation in Switzerland, Bartholdi replied that according to her neither the national,

⁴ <https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/solothurn/thal-gaeu/neue-regeln-wer-kein-deutsch-spricht-wird-bestaft-130022171> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

⁵ <https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/solothurn/thal-gaeu/wir-beharren-darauf-dass-auf-dem-schulareal-deutsch-gesprochen-wird-130035583>; <https://www.blick.ch/news/schweiz/volksschule-sprachenstreit-aufsichtsbeschwerde-gegen-gemeinde-egerkingen-so-id4654665.html> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

⁶ <https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/aktuelle-themen/keine-fremdsprachen-auf-dem-pausenplatz-deutschbefehl-an-der-primarschule-ld.4630> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

international nor the local law would be contravened (*Solothurner Zeitung*, 03.02.2016⁷). Some colleagues (e.g. Walter Wobmann, a member from the SVP, the Swiss People's Party, a party on the right) was even motivated to adopt her proposition and implement it in all schools in Switzerland (*Tele M1*, 02.02.2016⁸).

Due to the wide media coverage and the missing support from the teaching staff and school director, Bartholdi and her crew were ready to modify the proposal and to discuss it with *Egerkingen's* school director (*Solothurner Zeitung*, 02.02.2016⁹). This readiness, though, did not come without reason. A modification of the school's regulations would need the consent of the cantonal department of education and culture. When asked, what sort of modifications Bartholdi could envisage, she presented the idea of replacing the German classes with classes of conduct.

Franziska Roth, a member of the social party, criticized Bartholdi's initiative and lodged an official complaint which was then taken to the local council. The local council decided that an obligation to speak German on the school court was not legal (*Der Landbote*, 06.02.2016; *Bote der Urschweiz*, 06.02.2016¹⁰). They justified their

decision by stating that even if this was considered as a small intervention in the fundamental right of linguistic freedom, it cannot be done without legal authorization. Further, fundamental rights should not be the subject of negotiation because of spontaneous and arbitrary ideas of single authorities. The cantonal government concluded that the legal basis in the situation was not sufficient to put the measures suggested into practice (*Solothurner Zeitung*, 07.07.2016¹¹).

In the context of the debate about a potential monolingual policy, other school directors were asked if they had also specific regulations with respect to linguistic practices. In Spreitenbach, a small town with twice as many non-Swiss people, the school director, replied that it was important to them that the communicative behavior in school and on school grounds was friendly, the language chosen, however, did not matter (*Regionaljournal Aargau Solothurn*, 26.01.2016¹²).

The media also asked local citizens how they thought about the "German only" policy at *Egerkingen's* primary schools. The following statements either stem from interviews broadcast by the national and local TV or are taken from newspapers. For this

⁷ <https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/solothurn/thal-gaeu/wir-beharen-darauf-dass-auf-dem-schulereal-deutsch-gesprochen-wird-130035583> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

⁸ <https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/solothurn/thal-gaeu/deutsch-pflicht-auf-dem-pausenhof-zwaenge-bringen-in-diesem-fall-nichts-130029379> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

⁹ <https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/solothurn/thal-gaeu/bartholdi-krebst-bei-sanktionen-gegen-deutsch-regel-brecher-zurueck-130033462> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

¹⁰ <https://www.landbote.ch/schweiz/Sprachenstreit-Aufsichtsbeschwerde-gegen-Gemeinde-Egerkingen-SO/story/29486983>; <https://www.bote.ch/nachrichten/schweiz/Beschwerde-gegen-Deutschpflicht-fuer-Schueler;art46447,678958> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

¹¹ <https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/solothurn/kanton-solothurn/deutschpflicht-auf-dem-pausenplatz-regierungsrat-pfeift-johanna-bartholdi-zurueck-130410603> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

¹² <https://www.srf.ch/news/regional/aargau-solothurn/egerkingen-sprachregeln-kein-modell-fuer-andere-schulen> (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

contribution, the verbal statements uttered in Swiss German – the variety dominating oral communication in German-speaking Switzerland (cf. Watts, 1999) – were transcribed and translated into English. They do not give a representative picture of the citizens' opinion, however, they illustrate that the opinions polarized (see A. for statements supporting the German ban and B. for statements disagreeing with the German ban) and, that different language ideologies were made use of.

A.

Das ist eine gute Sache, denn viele Kinder können doch schon lange nicht mehr richtig Deutsch – leider auch Schweizer. Zudem müssten wir uns im Ausland ja auch anpassen und deren Sprache sprechen.

[That's a good thing because many children are not able to speak proper German anymore – unfortunately this goes for Swiss people as well. Furthermore, we have to adapt as well when we go abroad und speak the local language.]

Fing i super ((lacht)) aso hm ich bi zGerlafingä id Schue und döt hets jo recht viu usländisch gredät und me hät wirklich nüt verstangä

[I find it great ((laughs)), ehm, I went to school in Gerlafingen and there they often talked foreign (languages) and we did not understand anything]

B.

Jo, das das fing i nid so gerecht eigentlich. Jedä cha sini Sproch redä.

[Well, I don't find this quite right, actually. Everyone can speak his/her language.]

Im Schuüzimmer isch klar, do wird Dütsch gredt, aber so uf em Pauseplatz cha eigentlich jedä das redä, won er wott, i mine Auge.

[In the classroom it is clear that German is spoken, but during the breaks in the school yard everyone can speak the way they want, in my opinion] (Solothurner Zeitung; Tele M1, 02.02.2019¹³)

Despite being situated in multilingual Switzerland and in the educational context in which a curriculum is implemented emphasizing communicative competence in different languages, the statements in section A. focus on normative aspects (e.g. proper German is important), on the force to adapt (e.g. when going abroad) and on the fact that the locals did not understand anything (because of other languages than German being spoken). What these statements highlight is the dominance of monolingual ideologies. The statements in section B. highlight the choice to speak his/her language thus also denying the fact that one could speak several languages (to “survive” at school, the pupils in *Egerkingen* must be able to speak German besides other languages they use e.g. at home) or stress the German only policy in the classroom but not on the school yard (cf. Berthele, 2016).

Nobody accentuated that *Egerkingen* is a village with a very multilingual population situated in multilingual Switzerland or that becoming multilingual is one of the goals formulated in the local curriculum or in the *CEFR*. Interestingly, nowhere the diglossic situation was discussed either

¹³ <https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/solothurn/thal-gaeu/bartholdi-krebst-bei-sanktionen-gegen-deutsch-regel-brecher-zurueck-130033462>; https://www.solothurnerzeitung.ch/mediathek/videos/1_e6ktlgj (Retrieved February 18, 2019)

which is paradigmatic for German-speaking Switzerland. As discussed by several colleagues (c.f. Watts, 1999; Werlen, 2005), using Swiss German dialects for verbal communications in daily life is clearly a marker of “localness”, whereas spoken Standard German mostly marks the “foreignness” of speakers (unless used in a formal situation, e.g. a lecture). When they refer to *Deutsch* (German) in the case of *Egerkingen*, one is thus not sure what is meant.

4. Concluding remarks and open questions

As shown, Switzerland is a country with a legal foundation highlighting the importance of multilingualism. However, the definition of multilingualism seems to vary depending on the situation. Whereas a certain multilingualism is occasionally Switzerland’s flagship, especially in promotional activities (cf. Del Percio, 2013; Duchêne & Del Percio, 2014), other kinds of multilingualism do sometimes not get acknowledged but are rather negotiated as the inexistent competence of the language locally required.

In this contribution, we tried to offer a partial but realistic picture of the linguistic situation in the Switzerland. We have referred to the tension between the weight attributed to multilingualism in the constitution and monolingual practices. Further, we have shown that multilingual perspectives got integrated into curricula, that language learning got implemented into primary schools, that some course books have adopted multilingual activities in line with the curriculum. By drawing on a recent debate pleading for a German-only policy on the school yard, we have however demonstrated that the multilingual paradigm – despite the legal foundation in Switzerland,

the modified curricula and course books, is subject to discussion, which raises questions on multilingualism and its differing interpretations in Switzerland.

In our field, the educational context, in which at least one of the two authors (Anna Häfliger) has been involved in the process of implementation of multilingual learning in public education for two decades, several questions arise, e.g. ‘where are we with respect to multilingualism?’ and ‘who is (not) included when we speak of multilingualism?’. We believe to perceive a climate of uncertainty and confusion in the current context of Swiss education.

The initial euphoria has faded and over the years critical voices were raised. Amongst others, researchers have nuanced declarations of positive effects of multilingualism (e.g. Meyer, 2018) and teachers have overtly communicated the challenges they are confronted with when dealing with multilingual classrooms. It is the teachers who are caught between a curriculum encouraging them to promote multilingual perspectives and monolingual testing practices. Moreover, they are expected to e.g. raise language awareness and value, evaluate and foster the multilingual bricolage of their learners, and at the same time, they should be able reach high standards of accuracy in one language.

One would need to be able to tell fortunes to know if a century after the fall of the Berlin Wall, an event retrospectively interpreted as responsible for boosting language learning and importance of languages into compulsory education, multilingual objectives and activities are still to be found in curricula and course books or if monolingual norms – which as shown have never disappeared – will have a revival at school as well.

References

- BERTHELE, R. (2016). Demography vs. Legitimacy: Current issues in Swiss language policy. In M. P. RONAN (Ed.), *Perspectives on English in Switzerland* (pp. 27–51). Lausanne: Institut de Linguistique et des Sciences du Langage.
- BLONDIN, C., CANDELIER, M., EDELENBOS, P., JOHNSTONE, R., KUBANECK, A., and TAESCHNER, T. (1998). *Fremdsprachen für die Kinder Europas*. Ergebnisse und Empfehlungen der Forschung. Berlin: Cornelsen.
- BOND, M. (2012). *The Council of Europe: Structure, History and Issues in European Politics*. New York: Routledge.
- CANDELIER, M., CAMILLIERI-GRIMA, A., CASTELLOTTI, V., DE PIETRO, J.-F., LÖRINCZ, I., MEISSNER, F.-J., SCHRÖDER-SURA, A., and NOGUEROL, A. (2007). FREPA. *Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe and Graz: ECML.
- COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge, U.K: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- DEL PERCIO, A. (2013). *Capitalizing on national diversity. Modern Ideologies of Multilingual Switzerland and the Regimentation of the Nation's Promotion under Late Capitalism*. Unpublizierte Dissertation. Hochschule St. Gallen: St. Gallen.
- DUCHÊNE, A., and DEL PERCIO, A. (2014). Economic Capitalization on Linguistic Diversity: Swiss Multilingualism as a National Profit? In UNGER, J. KRYZANOWSKI, M., & WODAK, R. (Eds). *Multilingual Encounters in Europe's Institutional Spaces*. New York: Bloomsbury, 75-10.
- FINKBEINER, C. (1998). Lehrplan – Lehrwerk – Stoffverteilungsplan – Unterricht. In J.-P. Timm (Ed.), *Englisch lernen und lehren – Didaktik des Englischunterrichts* (S. 36–44). Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag.
- GARTON-SPRENGER, J., and PROWSE, P. (2011). *New inspiration*. Macmillan Education.
- KONFERENZ DER INNERSCHWEIZER ERZIEHUNGSDIREKTOREN (1987). *Lehrplan Französisch Realschule*. Luzern: Zentralschweizer Beratungsdienst für Schulfragen ZBS.
- LEHRPLANGRUPPE ENGLISCH DER BILDUNGSREGION ZENTRALSCHWEIZ (2004). *Lehrplan Englisch – Luzern, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Zug*. Bildungsplanung Zentralschweiz.
- LOBO, M. J., SUBIRÀ, P., and SALABERRI, S. (2001-). *Here comes super bus*. Macmillan Education.
- LÖTSCHER, G., LINDAUER, T., and SENN, W. (2012). *Die Sprachstarken 4*. Klett und Balmer.
- LÜDI, G. (2007). The Swiss model of plurilingual communication. In J. D. Thijs, & L. Zeevaert (Eds.), *Receptive multilingualism: Linguistic analyses, language policies and didactic concepts* (pp. 159–178). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/hsm.6.10lud>
- LÜDI, G. (2018). Das Gesamtsprachenkonzept von 1998 – 20 Jahre danach. *Babylonia*, 3, 14–20.
- MEYER, M. (2018). "Je früher desto besser?" – Zur Neuroplastizität des Spracherwerbs, *Babylonia*, 3, 74–79.
- OELKERS, J. (2004). *Lehrmittel als Rückgrat des Unterrichts*. Vortrag vom 15.09.2004 in Zürich. Retrieved from http://www.paed-work.unizh.ch/ap/downloads/oelkers/Vortraege/148_LehrmittelVortragII.pdf
- PROJEKT PASSEPARTOUT (Hrsg.). (2009) [2015]. *Lehrplan Französisch und Englisch*. Passepartout.
- SCHÄR, U. (2007). Source books rather than course books – Die Bildungsreform im Fremdsprachenunterricht und die neue Rolle für die Lehrmittel. *Beiträge zur Lehrerbildung*, 25(2), 255–267.
- SCHWEIZERISCHE KONFERENZ DER KANTONALEN ERZIEHUNGSDIREKTOREN (1998). *Gesamtsprachenkonzept*. Retrieved from <https://edudoc.ch/record/25519/files/19990826GSKd.pdf> Last access: June 2019.
- SIEBER, P. (2006). *Funktionale Mehrsprachigkeit statt perfekte Zweisprachigkeit*. NZZ. Retrieved from <https://www.nzz.ch/articleE7KWZ-1.40885> Last access: June 2019.

- SINGH, L. and ELMIGER, D. (Eds.) (2016). *Externe Evaluierung der Pilotphase des Französisch- und Englischunterrichts nach Passepartout. Schuljahre 2009-2016*. Neuchâtel: IRDP. Retrieved from <http://doc.rero.ch/record/288807/files/171.pdf> Last access: June 2019.
- WERLEN, I. (2005). Mundarten und Identitäten. In P. BARBLAN, & A. KOLLER (Eds.), *Dialekt in der (Deutsch)Schweiz – zwischen lokaler Identität und nationaler Kohäsion* (pp. 26–32). Lenzburg: Forum Helveticum.
- WATTS, R. J. (1999). The ideology of dialect in Switzerland. In J. BLOMMAERT (Ed.), *Language ideological debates* (pp. 68-103). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.