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Swiss Multilingualism and Global English: Bourdieusian Capitals in Contestation

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a small-scale research study into the beliefs of teenagers in Switzerland on Swiss national languages and their status relative to English. High school students ($n = 232$) in the French-speaking city of Lausanne completed a questionnaire about the economic, social, cultural and symbolic value of German, Italian and English. The data was then analysed quantitatively by computing the means, standard deviations, significance, and effect sizes, and interpreted in relation to the capitals of Bourdieu. The findings corroborate previous studies on the widespread and shared high value ascribed to English for economic, social, cultural and symbolic purposes. They also reveal, however, a solid respect and support for Swiss multilingualism. The study thus suggests that the students' high estimation of English is not at the expense of the national languages, German and Italian. Even though students value Swiss multilingualism, they nevertheless rank the economic capital of German higher than Italian. Finally, the apparent accommodation of English beside national languages is explained in regard to the Swiss multilingual tradition.

KEYWORDS

Capital; global English;
identity; ideology;
multilingualism; Switzerland

Switzerland's successful experience of multilingualism has intrigued and interested sociolinguists over many years and the possible reasons behind its success have been explored at length. For instance, scholars have looked at Switzerland and wondered if Europe could learn from its particularities (Lacey, 2014), or studied the equation of one language and one nation using Switzerland as a counter-example (Dardanelli, 2011; Ipperciel, 2007). Many others have also challenged the apparent ideal quality of Swiss multilingualism and denounced its imperfections pointing, among other things, at its mythical character and the dangers posed by the spread of English (e.g., Demont-Heinrich, 2005; Giudici et al., 2020; Stevenson, 1990; Stotz, 2006). Indeed, the worldwide presence—and ideological acceptance—of English as a “global language” seems indisputable (Lemberg, 2018; Phillipson, 1992) and presents an interesting challenge to the country's linguistic landscape, as well as a test to its foundational multilingual nature. The debate around Global English in Switzerland covers a wide range of fields: Some have looked at its economic value (Grin, 2001) or the economic value of multilingualism more generally (Del Percio, 2015), others at its social functions (Stepkowska, 2016) as well as its cultural and political aspects such as the actual use of English within the public sphere (Berthele, 2016; Demont-Heinrich, 2005; Dürmüller, 2002; Kuzelewska, 2016), and the place given to English—vs. national languages—in education policies (Meyer et al., 2013; Stevenson, 1990). The potential damage the rise of English could do to Switzerland's cohesion, which is believed to function at least partially through Swiss citizens' willingness to learn national languages, is also repeatedly raised (Demont-Heinrich, 2005; Grin, 2014; Stepkowska, 2016). Finally, the high symbolic value of English presents another critical facet of the debate because it creates strong incentives to learn English, potentially at the expense of national languages (Cheshire & Moser, 1994; Demont-Heinrich, 2005).

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The study, conducted in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 2017, investigated Swiss high school students' beliefs about Global English and national languages. It sought to discover to what extent students ascribed economic, social, cultural and symbolic value (as distinguished by Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1991) to additional languages learnt in school (namely German, Italian and English). In addition, it sought to compare the relative levels of importance they ascribed to Global English in comparison with their understanding of Swiss multilingualism. This paper reports on the main findings of this study and its implications for the health of Swiss multilingualism, albeit from the local perspective of young people in Lausanne. It takes a quantitative approach to the data, utilising a questionnaire approach in conjunction with SPSS as an analytical tool. It also brings interpretative insights to bear which are derived from the theoretical discussion in the first part of this paper.

Ideologies, discourses, and beliefs

High school students' beliefs about multilingualism were a central component of the study on which this paper is based. In Switzerland, and in other multilingual contexts, such beliefs help constitute an individual's identity and can lead to concrete actions. According to Borg (2001), "a *belief* is a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour" (p. 186). Beliefs of this kind almost certainly influence Swiss students' motivations to learn and use a specific language. More generally, they serve to define young people's Swiss sense of national identity through the ideologies and discourses which inform their beliefs. As has been suggested, beliefs about Swiss multilingualism and about Global English are both ideological and discursive. Ideologies can broadly be defined as "a particular set of beliefs that individuals or groups of individuals have about the way society works, similar to the notion of worldview" (Swann et al., 2004, p. 141). From a Marxist perspective, an ideology may also refer to "the systems of ideas, beliefs, speech and cultural practices that operate to the advantage of a particular social group" (Mesthrie et al., 2011, p. 313). Ideologies may thus control as well as distort relations between people, so organising social arrangements in such a way that "fixes" the capitalist status quo in favour of particular dominant groups.

The most powerful ideologies are usually those which exercise their influence through the subtle imposition of their principles, so leading to hegemony and the manufacture of consent (Gramsci, 1971). What individuals consciously or unconsciously consent to has the effect of defining their behaviour and their beliefs. Global English and Swiss multilingualism are ideologies in the sense that they form part of Swiss national self-identity in a global linguistic order, and are imposed upon Swiss people in the interests of the nation within what is assumed to be a largely given capitalist world-system and status quo (Wallerstein, 2000). To some extent, the Swiss government and local elites also capitalize on Swiss multilingualism and thus need it to remain an ideologically prevalent facet of the Swiss model of capitalism (Del Percio, 2015; Duchêne & Del Percio, 2014). However, while ideologies can and do legitimate social stratification and class distinctions, it would be a mistake to see them as intrinsically Machiavellian, as from a liberal democratic perspective they may also be said to operate in the interests of social cohesion and inclusion, so binding society together and creating common purpose within the socially constructed terrain (Heller, 2011). In order to create distance from the often-negative association of ideology with oppression and false consciousness, we have also opted to use the term *discourse* for discussing these processes (Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1980). In this article we use the terms interchangeably, with the distinction that when we refer to perceptions which seem to further Swiss political national identity and cohesion, we use ideology, and when we refer to the formation of knowledge and practices in the regulatory order of things, we use discourse. Inasmuch as discourses "systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1969, p. 54), so Swiss multilingualism in its relation to Global English is constituted and governed by this kind of formation (Georgiou, 2017). This article is thus

an attempt to map how ideologies about language are enmeshed with discourses about identity, and how the two come together in the construction of beliefs about the value of languages, including English, in the local context of Lausanne in Switzerland.

Global English, Swiss multilingualism and high school students' beliefs

Multilingualism has been an integral part of Swiss national identity since 1848 when the first Swiss constitution was promulgated. Under the constitution, Switzerland is comprised of 26 cantons, with three principal linguistic regions and four officially recognized languages. German is used as a first language by approximately 63% percent of the population in the north and east. The French-speaking cantons are in the west, and these represent about 23% of the country's population. In the south, there is one Italian-speaking canton. In this canton people speaking Italian as a first language account for eight percent of the Swiss population. While Italian is a minority language in Switzerland, it is still more significant than the fourth language, Romansch, which is spoken by fewer than one percent of the Swiss population. Romansch is not considered in the present study since its use is limited to a mountainous region in the east, and it is not formally taught or recognized as an additional language in the Swiss education system. More significantly, views of French are not considered either. This is because the aim of the study was to gain insight into the value of additional languages in Switzerland—i.e., German, Italian, English—other than the one in which participants were being schooled and which for nearly all of them was also a first language.

The penetration of English into Switzerland is a quite recent phenomenon, dating principally from 1945. Today though, the ubiquity of English in Switzerland is highly noticeable. It can be found for instance in official government documentation, in academic English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and publishing, and in many business as well as private domains. By the 1990s, some were claiming that English in Switzerland was so widespread that it could no longer be considered a foreign language (Cheshire & Moser, 1994). On the other hand, many do not see it as an integral or 'bonded' part of the Swiss linguistic landscape. It therefore appears to have an intermediary, unclear and even disconcerting status within Switzerland.

Interviewing 12 Swiss opinion leaders, Dürmüller (1994) reports that they each valued personal multilingualism and perceived it as a necessity in a multilingual society; all of them included English in the useful and profitable toolkit of a Swiss multilingual speaker, but they did not agree on the potential threat English could present if used widely for intra-national communication. In his study, Dürmüller argues that the use of English as a lingua franca within Switzerland is simpler and more accessible to the majority than the "partner-model," in which interlocutors use distinct languages but maintain comprehension because they each understand the other's language. He perceives this practice in Switzerland to be limited to a narrow elite. Grin et al. (2015) comes to a similar conclusion in a more recent national study and has argued elsewhere in favour of the recognition of the economic value of English at a national level (Grin, 2001, 2007), so confirming a widespread Swiss perception. For others, English is an outright threat. Stevenson (1990), for example, warned some time ago that Switzerland was "vulnerable to the insidious challenge of a non-indigenous language that is in a position to usurp some of the functions of native languages" (p. 242). Whether this remains so, or whether there appear to be grounds for thinking this, is illuminated in the data analysis below.

The place of English in Swiss education policies is central to this debate and is often heatedly discussed. As Grin and Korth (2005) note, if public opinion is clearly in favour of an access to English for all Swiss children, the place national languages should have in relation to it is highly controversial. Moreover, they regret a lack of sufficient data to be able to have a fuller understanding of the situation. The Swiss national languages are nevertheless often strongly defended because they are also seen as essential to Switzerland's identity and cohesion. As Grin (2014) explains:

If it is a fact that English is useful, it does not mean that it is useful everywhere. If it is a fact that it plays certain roles, it does not mean that it plays all roles. Particularly, it cannot, by definition, play the cementing role in the maintenance of our national project. (Grin, 2014, p. 13; translation supplied)

Demont-Heinrich (2005) agrees. He and others (e.g., Meyer et al., 2013; Stepkowska, 2016) seem confident in Switzerland's capacity to resist, or rather accommodate, English within its borders. The argument which highlights the importance of national languages to develop national cohesion is the one which is most widely shared. This is tempered on occasion by criticism of national education policies, which have tended to follow a market logic, viewing schoolchildren and their parents as customers (Dieu, 2016; Muji, 2007; Ronan, 2016).

Against the notion of multilingualism in Switzerland being under threat, some have argued that in reality very few Swiss people are multilingual (Arquint, 2014; Demont-Heinrich, 2005). However, as Grin (2014) notes, even if Swiss multilingualism remains a "myth," it serves a function, by constituting the people of Switzerland as "nation." Thus, although a belief in the need to know the Swiss national languages may be sufficient for the maintenance of national purpose and "nationhood," it does not necessarily have to equate with being competent in them. Using data from the same project (www.chx.ch), Lurin and Schwob (2016) focus on Geneva and the French-speaking part of Switzerland and reach similar conclusions as to the predominant position of English over other languages in young people's interests and motivations. Italian consistently ranks lower than other Swiss languages as a language that is deemed useful for personal development and professional utility, except amongst speakers of Italian as a first language.

Deluigi (2015), in a not dissimilar replication of the present study but with Swiss-Italian high school students in Lugano, looks at students' attitudes towards English and compares these with their attitudes to French and German as Swiss national languages. As a widely-acknowledged peripheral linguistic group in Switzerland, Swiss Italians arguably confront the discourse of multilingualism more directly than the French and German speakers of the other language cantons due to the internal dominance of these competing languages and their associated language ideologies. Although the students reported communication difficulties with people from other cantons, they also did not wish to change the specific Swiss linguistic situation, which for them positively distinguished the nation from others (Deluigi, 2015, p. 120). They were also not willing to accept English as a national language because it could not effectively represent Switzerland's cultural diversity (Deluigi, 2015, p. 122). Some of the responses in Deluigi's study seemed to show that they were positively disposed towards the discourse of Swiss multilingualism. However, as this was not the main question Deluigi sought to answer, it is still an issue that needs to be examined. Accordingly, the present article aims to contribute further specific insight on the question of Swiss multilingualism, but this time from the perspective of Swiss high school students in French-speaking Lausanne.

Theoretical framework and research questions

The capitals of Bourdieusian sociology were adopted in the present study as they provide a referential frame readily interpretable by the student participants, while also giving the study a firmer theoretical base (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 1991). Bourdieu distinguishes capital as having three fundamental guises:

as *economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 242).

All three types of capital can exist in a material *objectified* form; for example, as "goods" that are economically exchangeable for money (e.g., economic products, rights in private property, other "saleable" objects), as the cultural indices of a society's modernity (e.g., works of art and literature, mechanical technologies, medical instruments), or as the "credentialed" membership of a social group (honorifics, academic qualifications, having a Facebook or Instagram account, etc.). When capitals are

“appropriated” on a private or exclusive basis, this also makes possible their *embodiment*. In Bourdieu’s words, embodiment enables agents or groups of agents “to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241) and so to internalize the capitals as part of one’s *symbolic* being. Together, the capitals have social value and prestige which can be summed up under the heading of *symbolic capital*. In this study symbolic capital is included as a fourth capital so that it is possible to capture participants’ views on this aspect of the languages that they use.

In the present study, the four capitals were envisaged solely in relation to perceptions of the potential benefits to the participants of learning English, German or Italian. The aim of the questionnaire was first to establish the perceived relative values of the different national languages, seeking to know to what extent, in the view of the participants, a specific language conferred or conveyed the following:

- (1) *economic capital*, i.e., to what extent the language appeared to be remuneratively convertible, through a well-paid job for example;
- (2) *cultural capital*, i.e., to what extent the popular cultural associations of the language, or the “objects” representing the language, were culturally desirable, and to what extent students’ final B2 certification from high school—or any language degree certification—had cultural value in this sense;
- (3) *social capital*, i.e., to what extent the language was understood as enabling access to specific social networks and the breadth of the connections it allowed, and
- (4) *symbolic capital*, i.e., to what extent Swiss society in general, such as dominant social group(s) or different social circles, recognized the language’s social value and prestige.

Second, the questionnaire compared Global English to Swiss national languages by looking at students’ perception of languages within the social, cultural, and economic context of Switzerland only. The following overarching questions guide the analysis:

- (1) To what extent do French-speaking Swiss students view additional languages in Switzerland—i.e., German, Italian and English—as economically, socially, culturally, and symbolically valuable?
- (2) Is there a predominant perspective concerning conceptions of Global English and Swiss multilingualism among students?

It is hypothesized that (1) students would rate English as having the highest capital value overall, but that (2), within the context of Switzerland, German would yield the highest score. If hypothesis 1 were confirmed, it would indicate that the ideological dominance of Global English was widely prevalent among high school students in the city of Lausanne. If hypothesis 2 were confirmed as well, it would suggest that the ideology of Swiss multilingualism was also present, thus deflecting the concerns of those who fear for the Swiss nation’s cultural cohesion. While this study focuses on just one canton, and within that, on one high school in one city in that canton, we believe its findings complement other local and regional studies which have been done previously (Arquint, 2014; Cheshire & Moser, 1994; Deluigi, 2015; Demont-Heinrich, 2005; Dürmüller, 1994; Grin & Korth, 2005; Grin et al., 2015; Grin, 2001, 2007; Lurin & Schwob, 2016). It also provides additional local insight on the complexity of multilingual language identities and their associated ideologies in Switzerland, especially as these exist amongst young adults.

Methods

Participants

The participants of this study were 232 high school students in the second year of their Maturité at the *Gymnase du Bugnon* in Lausanne, the main city of the French-speaking Canton de Vaud in Switzerland. Of these, 145 were female and 87 were male, and all were aged between 16 and 18. All

of the participants were required to study a second national language, German or Italian, as well as English. The Swiss education system offers different professional or school-based training options for young adults. A high school Maturité is the most demanding and selective option that can be obtained. In 2018, 21.8% of the young adults in Switzerland achieved this level (Office fédéral de la statistique (OFS), 2018). This specific population was chosen for practical reasons first, as one of the authors worked as an English teacher in the school where it took place and second, because these students are likely to be highly qualified and will therefore belong to that part of the population that will shape policy.

Instrument

For the purposes of this study, a questionnaire was developed which was constructed around the four categories of capital (economic, social, cultural, and symbolic) and the three additional languages (German, Italian and English) that were predominant for students. French was excluded since this was not an additional language for any of the participants. The questionnaire consisted of 35 five-point Likert-scale questions, organized randomly, which students answered in relation to the three languages. It contained two sets of questions addressing each of the overarching research questions. Table 1 shows the details of the two sets of questions.

An internal consistency reliability was computed for each additional language and for each of the sets of 8 questions related to the different capitals by using Cronbach's Alpha (Table 2). The same was done for the set of 14 questions which were focused on Switzerland (Table 3).

Although most alpha scores indicated an acceptable reliability, some were slightly below the desired level. Whenever the reliability coefficient was below .70, the data were reinspected in order to determine whether particular questions were responsible for the low value, but this identified no problematic items. The lowest scores systematically concerned English and this was probably due to the double intention of the questionnaire with regard to the perceived value of languages in Switzerland and that of languages in general. Mixing questions in this way certainly did produce apparently contradictory responses when it came to English, although maybe a little less so for German and Italian. The scores on cultural capital were also systematically below .70, and this may possibly be explained by the fact that cultural capital encompassed rather different dimensions, from the cultural associations of a language to the value of a language degree.

Procedure

The data collection took place in June 2017. A questionnaire was piloted with 55 students from alternative high schools and was, as a result of this, amended so as to allow for fewer questions and repetitions, and greater precision. Once ready, local EFL teachers administered the questionnaire in their classes. Although for practical reasons the questionnaire was administered during an English class, the questionnaire was completely independent from the teachers' regular teaching

Table 1. Details of the instrument: Content of the questionnaire and 2 sets of questions.

All questionnaire	1st set of questions	2nd set of questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 35 5-point Likert-scale questions ● Randomly organized ● Each question answered in relation to three languages, German, Italian and English 	<p><i>Do students see additional languages—i.e., German, Italian and English—as economically, socially, culturally and symbolically valuable?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 32 questions in total ● Economic capital: 8 ● Social capital: 8 ● Cultural capital: 8 ● Symbolic capital: 8 	<p><i>Is there a predominant perspective concerning conceptions of Global English and Swiss multilingualism among students?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 14 questions in total ● Economic capital: 4 ● Social capital: 2 ● Cultural capital: 3 ● Symbolic capital: 2 ● Cohesion and identity: 3

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha: sets of questions on economic, social, cultural and symbolic capitals.

		Score
Economic capital	German	.67
	Italian	.76
	English	.65
Social capital	German	.70
	Italian	.71
	English	.52
Cultural capital	German	.66
	Italian	.65
	English	.55
Symbolic capital	German	.59
	Italian	.70
	English	.53

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha: set of questions on the value of languages in Switzerland.

		Score
Switzerland and languages	German	.76
	Italian	.82
	English	.80

and assessment and was presented as such in order to avoid any untoward influence on students' responses regarding the value of English. The questionnaire was composed in French, the primary language of the students, in order to avoid misunderstanding, and so as to be able to use a language which would, from the students' perspective, appear relatively neutral and ideologically unmarked. The data collected was then made subject to a quantitative analysis, the results of which follow.

Results

The value of additional languages: French-speaking Swiss students' beliefs

To determine the perceived relative economic and social values of the different languages (German, Italian and English), the means and standard deviations (SDs) for each set of questions on capitals and for each of the languages were computed (see Figure 1 and Table 4). Subsequent to this, a series of repeated measures ANOVA were conducted to test whether specific languages made a difference for the different capitals, as well as whether capitals made a difference within a specific language. When the overall ANOVA yielded a significant effect, post-hoc dependent sample *t*-tests were carried out. As many tests were run, a conservative alpha of .01 was used. To measure effect sizes for the ANOVAs and *t*-tests, partial eta-squared values and Cohen's *d* were computed respectively. Field-specific measurement guidelines were followed (Plonsky & Oswald, 2014), such as small (.60), medium (1.00) and large (1.40) to interpret the effect size of a relation. The repeated measures ANOVA to test whether specific languages made a difference for the four capitals yielded a significant main effect for language (see Table 5), and post-hoc dependent samples revealed a significant difference between each language group (see Table 6). The calculation of Cohen's *d* for dependent samples showed large effect sizes for most pairs. In addition, the repeated measures ANOVA to test whether capitals showed a difference within a language were run and generated a significant main effect (see Table 7); post-hoc dependent samples revealed a significant difference for almost all the capital groups (see Table 8). Cohen's *d* was also calculated and yielded mainly small effect sizes with the exception of the economic capital of German which showed large effect sizes in relation to social and cultural capitals.

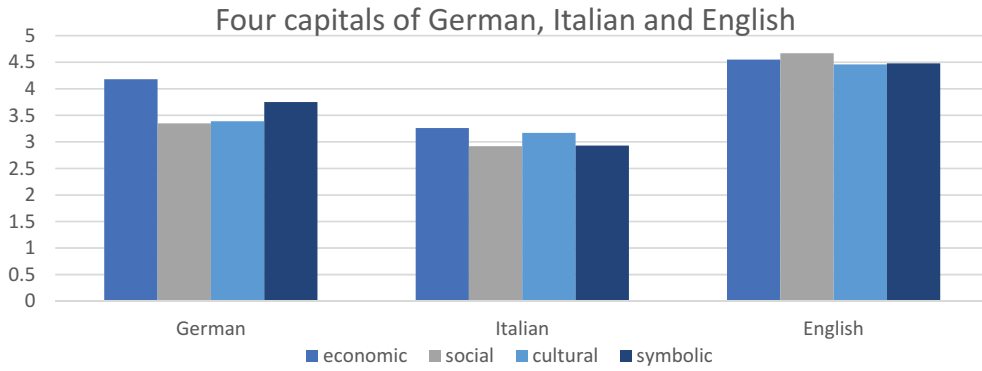


Figure 1. Means of four capitals for German, Italian and English.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations (SDs) of the four capitals of German, Italian and English (n = 232).

	German		Italian		English	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Economic	4.18	.45	3.26	.58	4.55	.36
Social	3.35	.58	2.92	.60	4.67	.32
Cultural	3.39	.54	3.17	.55	4.46	.37
Symbolic	3.75	.56	2.93	.62	4.48	.40

Table 5. Repeated measures ANOVA for languages across capitals.

	F	p	Partial eta-squared
Economic capital	2, 444	<.01	.74
Social capital	2, 438	<.01	.84
Cultural capital	2, 444	<.01	.72
Symbolic capital	2, 452	<.01	.77

Table 6. Dependent T-test and Cohen's d for languages across capitals.

		t	p	Degree of freedom	Cohen's d
Economic capital	German-Italian	(222) = -23.44	<.01	221	1.57
	German-English	(222) = -12.05	<.01	221	0.81
	Italian-English	(222) = -30.68	<.01	221	2.06
Social capital	German-Italian	(219) = 13.10	<.01	218	0.88
	German-English	(221) = -33.60	<.01	220	2.26
	Italian-English	(222) = -41.58	<.01	221	2.79
Cultural capital	German-Italian	(223) = 5.89	<.01	222	0.39
	German-English	(222) = -25.84	<.01	221	1.73
	Italian-English	(223) = -29.35	<.01	222	1.96
Symbolic capital	German-Italian	(226) = 20.37	<.01	225	1.35
	German-English	(226) = -20.19	<.01	225	1.34
	Italian-English	(226) = -34.78	<.01	225	2.31

Table 7. Repeated measures ANOVA for capitals within a specific language.

	F	p	Partial eta-squared
German	3, 630	<.01	.57
Italian	3, 636	<.01	.21
English	3, 642	<.01	.12

Table 8. Dependent T-test and Cohen's d for capitals within a specific language.

		t	p	Degree of freedom	Cohen's d
German	Eco-Social	(216) = 24.92	<.01	215	1.69
	Eco-Cultural	(217) = 24.62	<.01	216	1.67
	Eco-Symbolic	(220) = 13.37	<.01	219	0.90
	Social-Cultural	(217) = -1.51	NS (.13)	216	-
	Social-Symbolic	(219) = -10.52	<.01	218	0.71
	Cultural-Symbolic	(220) = -9.75	<.01	219	0.66
Italian	Eco-Social	(217) = 10.65	<.01	216	0.72
	Eco-Cultural	(218) = 2.92	<.01	217	0.20
	Eco-Symbolic	(221) = 10.03	<.01	220	0.67
	Social-Cultural	(218) = -8.32	<.01	217	0.56
	Social-Symbolic	(221) = -.294	NS (.77)	220	-
	Cultural-Symbolic	(222) = 7.29	<.01	221	0.49
English	Eco-Social	(221) = -5.30	<.01	220	0.36
	Eco-Cultural	(218) = 3.48	<.01	217	0.24
	Eco-Symbolic	(221) = 2.71	<.01	220	0.18
	Social-Cultural	(220) = 8.57	<.01	219	0.58
	Social-Symbolic	(223) = 7.64	<.01	222	0.51
	Cultural-Symbolic	(220) = -.704	NS (.48)	219	-

The most striking result was the perceived overall dominance of the English language in comparison with German and Italian. All capitals of English—economic, social, cultural, and symbolic—shared a high score, which demonstrates that the students of this study valued English for a wide range of reasons and purposes. Looking at its economic capital ($M = 4.55/SD = .36$), students perceived English to be fundamental for an international career, but its value for all types of careers, within Switzerland as well, was also highly marked. In relation to social capital, English received another high score ($M = 4.67/SD = .32$) and, in comparison with German and Italian the difference was considerable (Cohen's d value was 2.26 for English and German, and 2.79 for English and Italian). English appeared to open many doors and was perceived as useful in a wide range of social circles. The cultural capital score for English was also markedly higher than for German or Italian. Generally speaking, the popularity of the Anglophone culture(s) and its almost inescapable nature when it came to pursuing higher studies was highly marked ($M = .46/SD = .37$). However, the two questions focusing on English within Swiss culture registered a comparatively much lower score than the other languages ($M = 3.92/SD = 1.00$; $M = 3.71/SD = 1.20$), which tended to show that students did not perceive Anglophone culture as 'invading' Switzerland and overwhelming local Swiss culture. Finally, the results of the questions related to the symbolic capital value of English were consistently high in general ($M = 4.48/SD = .40$), and demonstrated the very positive reputation and prestige attributed to English.

For German, in contrast to English, the different capitals received different ranges of scores. Indeed, the economic capital of German was perceived as quite high ($M = 4.18/SD = .45$), or at least clearly higher than for its social and cultural capitals ($M = 3.35/SD = .58$ and $M = 3.39/SD = .54$; Cohen's d for economic and social capital was 1.69; and 1.67 for economic and cultural capital) whereas its symbolic capital stood in between ($M = 3.75/SD = .56$; Cohen's d = 0.89). Thus, students clearly perceived an economic value in knowing German, and although the two questions that specifically focused on an international career received a lower score ($M = 3.49/SD = 1.00$; $M = 3.37/SD = 1.01$), generally speaking, German still appeared to be worth learning. On the other hand, its social capital value was perceived as more limited, and apart from its utility to communicate within Switzerland and its necessity for becoming a political leader in Switzerland, students did not think German could open doors to many different social networks or groups. The results were to some extent similar for estimations of the cultural capital value of German. Whereas students recognised the important place German and Germanic culture had in Switzerland and the necessity to reach a certain level in this language certified by a degree, they did not perceive Germanic culture as attractive and influential. The way students rated the symbolic capital of German was consistent with the previous results.

Students again acknowledged the prestige German confers in Switzerland and how German was well-esteemed by their parents and by their friends as well to some extent. However, the good reputation of German did not seem to be shared in all fields as students thought the media did not always give much importance to it.

The situation for Italian was quite distinct as none of the capitals ascribed to it registered a score above 3.5. The most valued capital was, as for German, the economic capital, but its score was only of 3.26 ($SD = .58$). Even the questions with a clear focus on Switzerland did not register a score of 4. On an international and professional level, students rated Italian below 3, which basically indicated that they did not see it as useful for such purposes. The social capital of Italian was also quite low ($M = 2.92/SD = .60$) as only on the two questions concerning its utility within Switzerland did its score exceed 3, and then only by a very small margin. For its perceived value as cultural capital, its score remained low ($M = 3.17/SD = .35$), consistent with the previous responses. Both the imagined possible higher value of Italianate culture and its perceived usefulness for education and higher studies were clearly invalidated. However, its importance for Switzerland's cultural landscape was still acknowledged. Concerning its perceived symbolic capital, knowing Italian was not recognised as having prestigious value by students, who clearly disagreed with all the marked items. The only exception to this was the possible good impression the students could make on their friends if they were seen to be fluent in Italian. Consistent with the lack of economic, social and cultural capital bestowed upon Italian, it also did not benefit from an improved symbolic capital value either ($M = 2.93/SD = .62$), leaving Italian far behind English and German by comparison.

The value of Swiss multilingualism

The second research question which guided this study was whether students believed in the ideological notion of Swiss multilingualism, and therefore in the necessity or importance of learning additional national languages. To answer this question, 14 questions were specifically focused on languages in Switzerland and their mean calculated (see Figure 2 and Table 9). The repeated measures ANOVA to test whether knowledge of different languages made a difference in the specific context of Switzerland yielded a significant main effect: this gave a calculation of $F(2, 438), p < .01$, and a partial eta-squared of .59. Post-hoc dependent samples revealed significant differences between each language group. The effect size was calculated with Cohen's d for dependent samples and it was slightly below the *small* threshold for German in relation to English, *medium* for Italian in relation to English, and *large* for Italian in relation to German (see Table 10). The results show that when "Swiss" or "in Switzerland" was mentioned in a question, students tended to give more value to German—not only economic value, but all kinds of values as represented by the different capitals—than to English or Italian. Indeed, German received a score of 4.39 ($SD = .41$), English 4.1 ($SD = .48$) and Italian 3.43 ($SD = .55$).

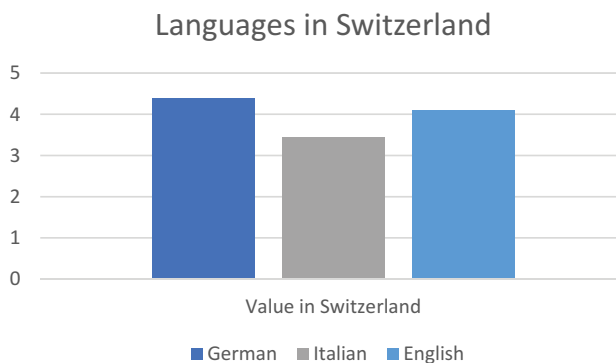


Figure 2. Value of the different languages in Switzerland: means for each language.

Table 9. Means and standard deviations of the languages in Switzerland.

	M	SD
German	4.39	.41
Italian	3.43	.55
English	4.1	.48

Table 10. T-Test for dependent samples and Cohen's d to compare languages in Switzerland.

		t	p	Degree of freedom	Cohen's d
Value in Switzerland	German-Italian	(221) = 26.77	$p < .01$	220	1.80
	German-English	(219) = 7.93	$p < .01$	218	0.53
	Italian-English	(219) = -15.22	$p < .01$	218	1.03

Focusing on German and English only, the calculation of Cohen's d shows a result close to a small effect size (0.53); therefore the difference between the two languages was of little significance. Looking at the individual questions, German scored higher in many questions, but English was rarely far behind and even received higher results for some questions. English was thus perceived as enabling French-speaking people in Switzerland to earn more money than German-speaking people. Thus, students logically believed that more people would seek to get a language degree in English than in German. Moreover, the Anglophone culture was perceived as more dominant in French-speaking Switzerland than Germanic culture. However, for all other questions related to (i) the progression of a career in Switzerland, (ii) the language needs for communication within the country, (iii) the economic and cultural wealth brought by a language, (iv) the social recognition that knowing a language entails, and (v) its importance for Swiss identity and cohesion, German remained ahead of English. Italian on the other hand, was far behind German and also behind English as the calculation of Cohen's d revealed a large size effect in relation to German and a medium one for English. With the exception of three questions which focused on the cultural value attached to the presence of Italian in Switzerland and its importance for Swiss collective identity and cohesion, the scores for Italian were consistently below English, and therefore below German as well, whose scores are the highest in the context of Switzerland.

Discussion

The four capitals and German, Italian and English

The results of the study of the different language capitals demonstrate the significant dominance of English over German and Italian in the students' ideological beliefs. They perceived English as useful in the economic, social, and cultural domains as well as being very popular and prestigious at a symbolic level. In today's hyper-interconnected and—at least for now—U.S.-dominated world, this comes as no surprise. These students have grown up in an era where the world seems just a “click” away, and even though they do not neglect the languages physically close to them, they clearly acknowledge the apparent current necessity of mastering English for diverse economic and social purposes. They were also positively influenced by “Anglophone cultures” showing a clear appreciation of them.

On the other hand, German presents an interesting counter-profile as on its perceived economic value it achieved a rather high score in comparison with its social and cultural aspects. This tends to show that students distinguished between what they deemed the unquestionable necessity of learning German in Switzerland for professional purposes, and their personal interest—or lack thereof—for the German language and its associated culture. These results confirm Lurin and Schwob (2016) findings which also displayed a difference between the need of learning German for professional reasons—

which was acknowledged by 47% of their youth respondents—and its benefits for personal development—which only 31.5% recognized. This may indeed present an undesirable situation in a country where German is the first language of 63% of the population.

Italian capitals, for their part, all scored equally low reflecting the perceived marginalised presence of Italian in Switzerland. The scores for the Italian economic and cultural capitals were nevertheless moderately higher than their social and symbolic counterparts. This suggests a better recognition of the value of Italian for professional reasons as well as the attractiveness of its culture compared to its social value and prestige. In sum, students' responses show a widely-shared positive opinion on the utility and popularity of Global English in Switzerland, and a somehow unwanted but almost inescapable acknowledgement of the importance of German. In addition, the data seem to confirm the marginal position which is occupied by Italian in the Swiss national consciousness.

German, Italian and English in Switzerland

Comprehending the ideology of Swiss multilingualism as necessary for national cohesion, the results for Switzerland are both reassuring and concerning at the same time. First, it is reassuring that students ranked German at the top. It shows that students are aware of its fundamental place in Switzerland and also realise the importance of learning it. Even if the questionnaire did not really ask if students were ready to make the necessary efforts to learn German—as no question focused on their motivations per se—they at least acknowledged its dominant presence and therefore indicated how this might act as an incentive (Borg, 2001). Again, whether they perceived German as imposed on them and unwanted, or part of the country's richness and therefore desirable is hard to say, but the first perception does not necessarily preclude the second. On the one hand, the low results found earlier about the attractiveness of Germanic culture could mean that students were not very happy about German domination. On the other, the high scores for the questions on the cultural wealth brought by the presence of German in Switzerland and its importance in Swiss collective identity, show that multilingualism is intrinsically linked to Switzerland; it is, to some extent, a natural and claimed part of these students' Swiss identity and sense of national belonging, an aspect also clearly present in Deluigi's study (Deluigi, 2015).

Of interest is that English received a good score as well, and its value within Switzerland was also clearly acknowledged. Therefore, we can reasonably say that the concept of "Global English" is also very present in students' beliefs and plays an important ideological role in Switzerland. However, the important presence of one language does not seem to lead to the insignificance of others. Living in a country where discourses about languages have never been about "either or," but rather about "and," probably influenced students' responses. Indeed, even though students acknowledged the presence and importance of English, both for intra-national and international purposes, the discourse around Global English did not seem, in their view, to be displacing Swiss multilingualism's role in producing a sense of national cohesion; rather, it was taking its own place next to it. Both English and Swiss multilingualism were recognised for their specific uses—many of these being shared by both—and even though the range of uses for English in Switzerland is wide, it is still low or even almost non-existent when it comes to Swiss cultural wealth and identity ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.21$ / $M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.14$). Also of note, was that English was not considered useful for communicating between the different linguistic regions, although the relatively high standard deviation recorded indicates highly divergent opinions among the students about this ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.10$). Although many studies show that English is actually increasingly used as a lingua franca in Switzerland (Durham, 2016), in the students' minds, English used as a lingua franca—i.e., as a tool for communicating with the rest of the world—seemed to exclude the "rest of Switzerland," at least to some extent. Though people in Switzerland have different first languages, the students did not think people were searching for an external tool for internal communication; they still believed that knowing the other Swiss regional languages should be privileged. This is a clear sign of the continued significance of Swiss multilingualism as an ideological conception: It may not be based on a linguistic reality, but it is still a pervasive belief.

These optimistic conclusions for Swiss multilingualism are however tempered by the low results for Italian. Indeed, although these low scores are to be expected, they do raise the question as to whether Switzerland's multilingualism has not in fact been transformed into Switzerland's bilingualism, or as Stepkowska (2016) perhaps more accurately puts it, whether quadrilingual Switzerland is in fact "moving towards a country of 'two-and-a-half languages'" (p. 79). But even if so, somehow the myth and ideology of Swiss multilingualism seems very much alive, as an interpellation and crystallisation of Swiss nationhood (Grin et al., 2015). If one purpose of an ideology is for it to "work," if not to be true, then in terms of a Swiss national identity, it would seem that Swiss multilingualism is probably working, at least so long as the unequal reality proves itself unable to dismantle the myth.

Concluding comments

The study was centred upon two initial hypotheses: that students would rate English with the highest capital values overall (hypothesis 1), but that within the context of Switzerland, German would yield the highest score (hypothesis 2). Hypothesis 1 was largely confirmed: Generally speaking, students rated English highest, addressing both the opportunities they believed it creates and the great popularity it enjoys in Switzerland. This is in keeping with previous studies (Deluigi, 2015; Grin, 2007; Lurin & Schwob, 2016). Based on these findings from the French-speaking canton of Vaud, the perceived high importance of English in Switzerland is highly evident, which is why some have viewed it as a threat to Swiss national cohesion. However, the present study has shown that in this high school population, a belief in Swiss multilingualism very much persists, as the French-speaking students are strong adherents to the idea of the importance of learning German. In the context of Switzerland as a whole, they even go so far as to acknowledge German's apparent superiority over English, reflecting what appears to be a national self-awareness and the ideological sense of there being something that can be called a collective Swiss identity.

Whether real or mythical, discursive, or ideological, Swiss multilingualism still seems to play an important role in many young Swiss peoples' lives and in ways that have implications for identity formation and development that other studies of multilingual contexts in diverse regions of the world may wish to pursue. But in the case of Switzerland, we assume that the persistence of a concern for multilingualism in the country is at least partially due to the apparent strength of the economy and the stability of its political institutions, which engenders a sense of emotional security as well as popular legitimacy. This makes it possible for many young people, such as the participants in this study, to have a sense of optimism about Swiss society, even when for many in the population the reality does not necessarily accord with this imaginary.

Second, to explain the resilience of Swiss multilingualism when confronted by other languages, Switzerland's discourses around multilingualism have always been concerned with the promotion of plurality and diversity. Therefore, the language of "the other"—whether it is a Swiss language or not—is not always perceived as a threat; and privileging one does not mean that others are to be dismissed. Swiss people have experienced the "peaceful coexistence" of different languages for almost two centuries—despite whatever real unevenness still exists—and this has left a permanent mark on Swiss people's way of perceiving languages. Contrary to Stevenson (1990) argument about a multilingual country being more fragile when faced with the arrival of a new language, we would argue that due to the relatively successful popular dissemination of the importance of multilingualism, whether genuinely democratising or not, Switzerland as a political and cultural entity has made itself more linguistically resilient, as well as ideologically better equipped to deal with perceived threats to its national cohesion. This is with the acknowledgement that this study was confined to one high school in one French-speaking city, Lausanne. Further comparable studies are needed from the German-, Italian- and Romansch-speaking regions of Switzerland to be able to develop a more rounded view.

With this limitation in mind, it seems that although the propensity to oppose the two ideological conceptions of Global English and Swiss multilingualism is great among these students, the findings show that they need to be explored as two coexisting and intermingled discourses. Global English is

something of a new arrival in the Swiss linguistic landscape, and even if its rapid expansion is disconcerting, a complete reversal of Swiss multilingualism is unlikely. On the other hand, an upcoming decline of the global importance of English is not to be expected in the near future either (O'Regan, 2021), and therefore at least for now these two conceptions shall have to cohabit in a dialectical relation of *hybridity* or *hybridisation* (Bhabha, 1994; Pieterse, 1994). For it seems to be a fact in Switzerland—or at least in French-speaking Lausanne—that the introduction of a Global English ideology can only be done through the prism of Swiss multilingualism, although the latter is certainly undergoing transformation as a result of this process.

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