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Establishing multiple languages in early childhood. Heritage languages and language hierarchies in German-English daycare centers in Switzerland.

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ABSTRACT

The number of conceptually bilingual daycare centers has been steadily increasing in Switzerland, a traditionally multilingual country. Yet, the focus on the languages introduced in these institutions has largely remained on one national language – and English. We look at how English and – in our case – German are employed in daycare centers and how their prioritization leads to a reproduction and legitimization of language hierarchies. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of translanguaging, code-switching, and language hierarchies as well as data from an ethnographic study in three daycare centers, we investigate how teachers and children employ different languages in the light of restrictions imposed by the daycare centers' language policy. Although these are implemented differently in each institution, the overall commonality is the juxtaposition of the prestigious and official languages used, German and English, and the virtual exclusion of children's heritage languages.

1. Introduction

Switzerland, unlike many other monolingual European states, is officially a *quadrilingual* country, with the national languages German, French, Italian, and Romansh largely separated into four different linguistic (and geographical) regions. Within these languages, a plethora of dialects and idioms exists, which are typically associated with natural everyday language transmitting familiarity and closeness between speakers compared to formal standard varieties (Christen 2005). In contrast to its official quadrilingual language policy, Switzerland's linguistic landscape is further shaped by many other heritage languages (HLs) such as Portuguese or Albanian as well as the international *lingua franca* English and thus much better described as *multilingual*. This linguistic diversity can be felt in almost any sphere of social life and plays a major role at daycare centers: Many children's first extrafamilial experiences are influenced by adults and peers who speak a different language than the one they speak at home. The fact that multilingualism has become a reality in daycare centers and that there are children who enter school without any knowledge of one of the national languages is seen as a major challenge on a social, educational, and integration policy level.

Typically, the language spoken in daycare centers corresponds to the official language of the region. This is especially true for teachers[1] in daycare centers, however less so for the children who are usually not obliged to use a particular language. Whereas many daycare centers pursue a

monolingual language concept, most of them are multilingual in everyday practice. What is more, there are also those which follow a bi- or multilingual language concept by purposefully integrating at least another language into their daily language practices. Similar to recent (controversial) language policy decisions in primary and secondary education (Stotz 2010), we argue that this additional language is often chosen according to the prestige and status it incorporates and the choice legitimized by the benefits and opportunities it provides to its speakers. As a consequence, the children's HLs compete with internationally popular languages such as English for institutional recognition.

This paper focuses on linguistic practices in daycare centers in German-speaking Switzerland, which, along with German[2] have made English a second institutional language to be used by teachers and children. These institutions can be described as *conceptually* bilingual. As we will show, however, the multilingual reality is not adequately mirrored in this restrictive bilingual concept. In fact, the situation resembles a 'selective celebration of linguistic diversity' (Berthele 2020), in which multilingualism is overtly promoted, yet covertly restricting due to the underlying political agenda and ideologies prioritizing standard and prestigious varieties.

In order to contribute to a better understanding of conceptual and lived experiences of bi- and multilingual speakers, we ask:

(1) How are German and English employed in everyday classroom interaction?
(2) How are language hierarchies among institutional languages and children's linguistic repertoires (de)constructed?

First, we elaborate our theoretical perspective, combining the concepts of translanguaging and code-switching with theoretical approaches to language hierarchies and ideologies as well as the state of research (section II). In section III, we introduce our ethnographic research strategy as well as our field of research. Subsequently, we present our empirical results addressing the questions of establishing multiple languages in classroom interactions (IV) and the role of HLs and language hierarchies (V). These results are followed by a short discussion in section VI.

2. Language hierarchies, ideologies, and practices

Language hierarchies and ideologies are inextricably intertwined. Language hierarchies are socially constructed phenomena ranking languages based on artificial values and prestige attributed by individuals' ideologies within the linguistic market of symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991; Kroskrity 2000). Importantly, the status attributed to one's linguistic repertoire can heavily influence how the speaker is viewed in a socioeconomic and political context (Irvine and Gal 2000). Typically, language education policies based on a 'monolingual habitus' (Gogolin 2002) discriminate against the natural multilingual landscape of today's societies and do not capture individuals' pluralistic repertoires, identities, needs, and desires. Targeting language hierarchies and ideologies with a focus on pluralistic learning experiences, the concept of *translanguaging* aims at equitable representation, usage, and appreciation of every individual's linguistic repertoire (García 2009). According to Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015), translanguaging means 'using one's idiolect, that is, one's linguistic repertoire, without regard for socially or politically defined language labels or boundaries' (297, emphasis in original). By applying translanguaging practices, speakers adopt an inclusive and holistic approach to language to make meaning in and of their pluralistic world and express their identities (Blackledge and Creese 2010; Cenoz and Gorter 2015). Translanguaging can also be understood as a space in which ideologies and hierarchies are leveled, where linguistic practices are considered equitable, and languages as fixed constructs do not exist autonomously (García 2009). The new linguistic and cultural complexity and requirements of modern societies call for innovative approaches to cope with and benefit from an increasingly 'superdiverse', transnational community (Vertovec 2007). This is particularly true and relevant for educational institutions focusing on early childhood

development as they play a big role in the children's language acquisition and socialization (Beller 2008; Weitzman and Greenberg 2002).

However, the applicability of translanguaging as a pedagogical approach for learning environments has been questioned (Grin 2018; Marácz 2018). From a critical sociolinguistic perspective, languages cannot merely be seen as social constructs, subsumed in translanguaging practices and spaces where ideologies and hierarchies are flattened. Rather, these multilingual practices can be said to consist of code-switching behavior among separate languages (Edwards 2013). As defined by Woolard (2005, 74), code-switching means 'an individual's use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange.' In fact, by focusing on mere practices and ignoring the socially established languages and the value-laden space in which they are embedded, the risk of linguistic injustice increases (Bakhtin 1981). Therefore, if one aims at an equitable institutional language use, real-life languages need to be accounted for in the policies and implemented by educators as such. That is, languages need to be easily recognizable, applicable, and separately and consciously included so that also 'less popular' HLs have a chance of recognition. Thus, to reject languages and to merge individuals' linguistic repertoires into translanguaging practices makes it extremely challenging to establish equitable linguistic diversity and implement it pedagogically (Grin 2018; Kubota 2015; Marácz 2018).

Given the institutional nature and the emphasis on bilingual education in this study, separate languages, other ways of speaking and expressing oneself, and translanguaging practices can in fact be employed simultaneously and serve different purposes. For instance, HLs are in need of official recognition and cannot simply be replaced by translanguaging practices when aiming at equitable linguistic diversity. At the same time, valuing individuals' linguistic repertoire, empowering their legitimacy and status, and amplifying their 'multi-voicedness' (Bakhtin 1981) can foster linguistic security, language acquisition, and intercultural understanding. Critical awareness needs to be raised of real-life scenarios in which language hierarchies and ideologies continue to exist, possibly causing physical and emotional discrimination and exclusion.

Language practices in educational settings are embedded in different *instructional language contexts* (Gort and Pontier 2013). A *bilingual* instructional language context implies the presence of two languages (e.g. German and English) either as media of communication among children or as the teachers' language of instruction, while a *monolingual* one is limited to one language. In conceptually bilingual programs, language distribution schedules can be established based on two common concepts. First, *language-by-time-of-day* implies a separation by time such as speaking German in the morning and English in the afternoon. Second, in applying the *one-teacher-one-language* concept, every teacher uses his/her (first) language when speaking to the children (ibid.). Individuals can also adopt differing *language modes*. While a *monolingual* language mode is given when a teacher speaks only one language in an interaction with children, a *bilingual* one is achieved with two languages. (ibid.).

The co-presence of multiple languages in educational settings has been the subject of many studies internationally, and increasingly also in early education (e.g. Honig et al. 2013; Imoto 2011; Kim et al. 2018). These studies show that certain attempts to promote bilingual education and children's bilingualism have been made by daycare centers without successfully including the children's L1s, or only to a limited extent, especially when it comes to HLs. For instance, a recent study from Germany showed that although education policy may affirm the inclusion of children's L1s other than German, these are only spoken by a few teachers, and are solely symbolically represented by a multilingual 'welcoming poster' at the entrance (Jahreiß et al. 2017). Studies conducted in Luxembourgian daycare centers showed that although some of them intend to foster bilingualism, monolingual language practices mostly prevail (e.g. Neumann 2012, 2015; Seele 2016). In Switzerland, the few relevant studies primarily focus on kindergarten, which is part of the school system (e.g. Künzli, Isler, and Leemann 2010); children's HLs remain practically excluded in daily interactions (Knoll and Jaeger 2020; Krompàk 2015), and promoting multilingualism takes the form of an educational ritual instead of multilingual practice (cf. Neumann et al. 2016). In a study on

daycare centers, the authors reconstructed different modes of bilingualism in traditionally German- and French-speaking bilingual institutions. They found that HLs were partially included by translating, counting, and singing songs with children in Russian and Italian, for instance. In one center, they observed teachers speaking Spanish to Spanish-speaking children, which served as the only example of recognition of an HL beyond the symbolic level (ibid.). In conclusion, following Brandenberg et al. (2017), early education institutions respond to the challenge of multilingualism mainly by monolingualization and the separation of 'legitimate' and heritage languages. However, language practices as well as language ideologies and hierarchies in recently established high-priced, German-English bilingual daycare centers remain a substantial gap in research.

3. Study, methods, and field

The article is embedded in a research project carried out at the Center for Early Childhood Studies at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. The study is conceptualized as a 'focused ethnography' (Knoblauch 2005), aiming at a particular area of interest: multilingual practices and interactions in early childhood institutions. We therefore limited our observations and contacts in the field to our predefined research question. For data collection, we first collected publicly accessible data from approximately 90 bilingual daycare centers across the country. We then selected and investigated three bilingual daycare centers located in major cities in German-speaking Switzerland between March and June 2019. Sampling criteria included a certain variation in language use and size of the institutions (based on information gathered from websites) as well as practical accessibility. In each institution, we conducted participant observation two to three days a week in the beginning and once or twice every other week at a later stage in data collection. The study's data consists of fieldnotes, audio transcripts and photographs from participant observation, transcripts of expert interviews with managers, documents and content from the centers' websites, and their (non-public) educational concepts. For this contribution, we mainly analyzed multilingual interactions between teachers and/or children which we recorded and described during our field visits, and additional interviews with managers.

The daycare centers are organized in groups of ten to twelve children aged three months to four years, cared for by three or four teachers at any time. They all follow a bilingual concept with German and English as classroom languages, with one teacher speaking (mainly) English and two to three teachers speaking German. They are privately run, do not receive public subsidies, and their high-priced offer almost exclusively addresses economically well-off parents.

The daycare center *Little Birds*[3] is situated in a recently gentrified city district, in an office building next to a train station with good car traffic connection. Four teachers work in this group. The center consequently follows a one-teacher-one-language strategy: One teacher, a native speaker of German and English, is employed to only speak English to the children while the other teachers must speak German, their first language (L1). Language learning and bilingualism are important aspects within the institution as the manager emphasized repeatedly. Besides German and English, the children's (additional) L1s include French, Romansh, Spanish, Greek, Hebrew, and Vietnamese.

Butterfly daycare center lies at the outskirts of a major city, close to a tramway and train station. The preschool group we investigated is mainly led by two teachers, one native German and one English speaker, as well as two pre-service teachers and one intern, all three of whom speak German. *Butterfly's* language concept requires that teachers speak mainly in their L1 – German or English, similar to *Little Birds*. The children attending the preschool group speak German, English, and seven (additional) L1s: Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Bosnian, Russian, and Korean.

The third institution we investigated, *Apple Tree*, is located in the city center. It follows a particular pedagogical concept focusing on children's play and individual learning, while bilingual education only plays a secondary role. However, like the other two daycare centers, a one-teacher-one-language strategy is pursued. In the group investigated, one teacher, a non-native speaker of English, mainly speaks English (with an accent) with the children, while the other teachers primarily

speak German. In contrast to *Little Birds* and *Butterfly*, teachers at *Apple Tree* who speak additional languages, such as Italian, are allowed to use them in class with children (and parents). Besides German and English, the children's (additional) L1s are Italian, Greek, Finnish, Russian, and Turkish.

4. Establishing multiple languages

At first sight, the three daycare centers share many commonalities considering bilingual language use. First, they selected German and English to be used in classes. German is the most commonly spoken and the official language in the region in Switzerland where the centers are located, and its use is therefore not surprising. On the other hand, English not being an official language is introduced as a foreign language into preschool settings. This results in bilingual instructional language contexts: Both languages, German and English, are simultaneously present in class due to the teachers' language use. To be sure, this is only the case when the English-speaking teacher is present, which is true on two to three days a week for *Butterfly* and *Apple Tree* and every day for *Little Birds*. Whenever they are absent, German remains the only spoken language. Hence, German generally turns out to be the most frequent language in the groups. This is equally the case in individual interactions involving teachers and children. Besides monolingual language modes in German, we also observed such ones in English as well as bilingual ones in all three daycare centers.

Further, we witnessed code-switching practices as shown in the following example:

> Rebecca (teacher; German)[4] is helping children to prepare for an excursion to a park. Noticing that John (child; English and Spanish) is not yet preparing, she says to him: 'Gang du schnäll dini Schue go hole, shoes, schue.' ('go get your shoes quickly, shoes, shoes.').[5] (*Little Birds*)

The code-switching example here is intrasentential (Wei 2008), but it often also occurred between sentences. The switch is situational, translating a single German word into English, intending the child's immediate understanding of the teacher's instruction. Another common context is emotionality: Teachers were observed to switch codes when consoling or disciplining children (cf. Knoll and Jaeger 2020).

Regarding the children's language use, the predominant one is German. This is mirrored in the teachers' dominant input in the same language. Children often communicate in German with each other and their teachers. The dominance of German manifests itself in the following morning circle sequence at *Little Birds*. Zoey (teacher, English) is leading the circle solely in English. She introduces every child present by inviting a child to ask another child how she/he is doing. In this turn, Celine (child; English and Vietnamese) asks Chiara (child; German).

> Zoey: 'Celine, do you wanna ask how Chiara is doing?'
> Celine: '*wie gahts dir*?' ('*how are you doing*?')
> Chiara: '*guet*.' ('*fine*.')
> Zoey: 'good.'

Although English is one of her L1s, and she is asked in English to do so, Celine poses her question in German. In six out of seven times Zoey repeated this question, the children asked and responded in German.

Nevertheless, when looking at the children's language use in more detail, there are differentiations to be made. They often orient themselves to the language use or competencies of their interlocutor, as the interaction between English-/Vietnamese-speaking Celine and German-speaking Chiara can be said to demonstrate (see example above). At *Apple Tree's*, for instance, children adjust their language use to Maria's, the English-speaking teacher who does not understand German very well. Children also adapt and switch during the conversation to other children's L1 in order to speak with them. They even 'exchange' languages, as can be seen in the following conversation at *Butterfly's* between Pascal (child; English and Polish) and Lisa (child; German) who are

playing with toy cars. Pascal was talking to Martina (teacher; English) in English before, and is now showing Lisa how he moves 'his' vehicles:

Pascal: 'MIT DEM AUTO.' ('WITH THE CAR.')
Lisa: (And) this?
Pascal: And my forklift.

Once Pascal is directly addressing predominantly German-speaking Lisa, he switches to German. But Lisa is equally changing her language use to English when addressing Pascal, who then continues in his L1.

Children flexibly use their linguistic resources to communicate with each other. They show a very open approach to languages and their acquisition. Languages are seen less as barriers and more so as opportunities to expand their repertoire in order to achieve a greater communicative potential. As long as they use German or English, they can also easily make themselves understood. The children are encouraged and supported by the teachers to try the other language without any linguistic inse-curities. This is achieved through explicit questions, translations, and songs in the 'foreign' language.

The common observation of teachers' code-switching documented above yet points to the fact that the one-teacher-one-language strategy is not always pursued very strictly. There are important differ-ences among the three daycare centers concerning teachers' language use. The center manager at *Little Birds* emphasized that it was crucial that teachers stick to the language for which they are employed in conversations with children, as she is convinced that language acquisition is faster and better that way. Our observations showed that, indeed, the teachers in the group mostly stayed with 'their' language. This is particularly true for English-speaking Zoey who speaks English to every child, no matter how much she or he may understand even if a quick switch to German could potentially facilitate communication. Hence, the language use at *Little Birds* can be called child-centered in the sense that it is (assumed to be) optimal for the children's language acquisition.

At *Butterfly's*, although the same one-teacher-one-language strategy is pursued and teachers are hired primarily for either German or English, we observed that they change their language quite often. That is, the German-speaking teachers speak English to children, particularly if they join an interaction in which the children already speak English. Contrarily, English-speaking Martina sticks to her L1 most times and only switches in certain situations, for instance, when consoling a child. Insofar, the teachers' language use here is more flexible and may be considered child-centered in the sense that it is adjusted to the child's existing linguistic competencies and emotional needs.

Language practices are still different at *Apple Tree's*. Maria, the non-native English teacher, has another European language as her L1. When speaking English, she sometimes makes mistakes, searches for words or forms incorrect sentences. For instance, she confused *feathers* with *fur* and thus introduced a wrong word. Applying the rules of *Little Birds*, she most likely would not have been hired as a teacher. While she basically speaks English with children, Maria sometimes switches to German in order to ensure a child understands her instructions. The German-speaking teachers usually stick to their L1 but also sometimes speak English, particularly during the English circle sequence in the afternoon. While the instructional learning context is usually bilingual (on the days Maria is present), it is almost exclusively monolingual in this afternoon circle: Teachers speak, tell stories, and sing songs together in English only.

Interestingly, in none of the three daycare centers were there restrictions on the use of language on the part of the children, neither in bilingual nor in monolingual situations. They were always given the opportunity to use language flexibly and to express themselves in the language of their choice – as long as it was in German and English.

5. The significance of heritage languages and language hierarchies

In the daycare centers we investigated, HLs besides German and English are not part of the language concepts and their acquisition is not fostered actively. Yet, many children acquire HLs at home and bring their knowledge with them, as do the parents when they bring and pick up their children. Also,

some of the teachers have their own HLs. Hence, the linguistic potential in daycare centers is manifold in principle, involving up to eight languages per group (not counting language variations), but it is in fact to a large extent restricted to the two languages conceptually selected. Nevertheless, there are substantial differences among the daycare centers and the teachers' language practices concerning how they deal with HLs, manifesting language hierarchies on the one hand, but also the children's unbiased attitudes towards them on the other.

HLs are integrated in certain forms. A common practice in all daycare centers is to count in children's L1s. Another low-threshold way to include HLs is by singing songs, a frequent practice in the *Apple Tree* group. For instance, in a morning circle sequence led by a German-speaking teacher, we observed the following:

> Today, they sing songs in Spanish, in Italian, and one in another language I do not know, the teacher says it is a song from natives of the South Pacific region. After an Italian song, the teacher asks who in the group speaks Italian.

Thus, children are exposed to a larger linguistic diversity by singing songs in German, English, some children's HLs and even songs in languages not spoken by anybody in the group. This can contribute to increasing children's interest in other languages. Children's HLs are actively made a subject of interest in everyday interactions. The teachers sensitize them to their personal and other children's multilingual language repertoires and encourage them to actively use it. We documented several conversations among children in which they told each other which and how many languages they speak.

At *Apple Tree*'s, teachers who are also speakers of a certain child's HL, sometimes also make use of it when communicating with children and parents. For instance, there are bilingual teachers who sometimes use their HL, as Nina, a teacher who speaks German and Italian as L1s, does in the following pick-up situation:

> At 6 pm I am going to the wardrobe room to get my stuff; the daycare center will close soon. Only Nina, Matthis (child; Italian and Greek) and his Italian-speaking father are left, talking Italian with each other (which I do not understand). I suspect from the context that Nina tells the father what they did with the children that day, now and then also addressing Matthis for confirmation.

This situation shows that in this institution despite the use of German and English established by the language concept, the use of HLs is considered legitimate. The manager confirmed this in an interview, stating that teachers are allowed to use HLs with children and their parents for the purpose of understanding and in emotional situations. In everyday interaction in the daycare center without parents present, we also occasionally observed teachers addressing children in Italian or French, but only in one-to-one interactions with children who speak one of these languages at home.

In the other two daycare centers, the HLs are treated differently. They are not completely ignored at *Little Birds'*, but their presence is even more limited and controlled. For instance, teachers occasionally ask children for a translation of a word into their HL, like Rebecca (teacher; German) who asked Stephanie (child; English and Hebrew) how to say 'flamingo' in Hebrew, to which Stephanie responded by saying the word. This question manifests the teacher's interest in the child's HL and by this legitimates and recognizes the linguistic diversity in the group. However, Rebecca did not continue the short conversation after Stephanie's response. According to the center manager, if children were to say something in another language than German and English, they would not be encouraged to do so. She added that it would initially be tolerated but if it happened frequently, the children would be reminded to speak German or English. Also, teachers are advised not to address children or parents in their HL even if it could facilitate communication. As a consequence, HLs are hardly ever included at *Little Birds*, even if there was an explicit opportunity to do so:

> Rebecca (teacher; German) is sitting on the couch with Emma (child; English and German), Stephanie (child; English and Hebrew), and John (child; English and Spanish). John brought a bilingual picture book from home, showing people and objects with the corresponding words indicated in English and Spanish. The children

look at the book together for a while. Emma then asks Rebecca in German whether she could read them the book. Rebecca answers in the same language that she cannot tell the book because there are only pictures and situations and nothing to narrate. But she takes the book anyway, shortly consults it and then says to John in German: '*grossmueter heisst ABUELA.*' ('*grandmother means ABUELA.*') Apart from that, she adds, she does not speak Spanish, and hands the book back to the children.

In this situation, it would easily have been possible to include English or Spanish into the conversation by asking John and the others what the pictures in the book were called in the languages they know, for instance. However, Rebecca being a teacher employed for speaking German limits the interaction to translating herself a single word she knows. Hence, the center's strict one-teacher-one-language strategy and limitation to German and English disables the inclusion of the children's L1s to a large extent. At the same time, the children's different origins are prominently positioned, for example in the center's own song they sing together every day in the morning circle:

ob Asie, Europa, Afrika, Australie oder Amerika, mir sind alli uf [Stadt] cho zum zu de Little Birds gah.

(whether Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia or America, we all came to [city] to go to Little Birds.)

In sum, the symbolic mise-en-scène and celebration of the children's diversity at *Little Birds'* cannot mask the fact that their linguistic repertoires beyond German and English do not play more than a small symbolic role in everyday life and therefore their recognition remains very limited. The gap between German and English on the one hand – German being more dominant than English – and other languages on the other, as already witnessed at *Apple Tree's*, is widening at *Little Birds'*.

Finally, we observed another line of linguistic differences at *Butterfly's*. The center manager informed us that it is tolerated if children bring in their HLs, for example when speaking Italian or French to each other or to teachers. Yet, from the teachers' perspective, there is a discrepancy among HLs as the following example shows. Klara (teacher; German) is leading a circle sequence with the children Pascal (English and Polish), Dina (Bosnian), Lena (German), Mandy (German), and others attending. They count together in different languages, starting with English (Dina's choice) continuing with Italian (Mandy's choice). Klara announces that they are going to count in one last language:

Klara:	'MÖCHTEST DU *schwiizerdütsch* ODER HOCHDEUTSCH?' ('WOULD YOU LIKE *Swiss German* OR HIGH GERMAN?')
Pascal:	'HOCHDEUTSCH … ODER VIELLEICHT POLNISCH?' ('HIGH GERMAN … OR MAYBE POLISH?')
Klara:	'WAS MÖCHTEST DU? *Eis, zwöi, drü,* ODER EINS, ZWEI, DREI?' ('WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE? *one, two, three,* OR ONE, TWO, THREE?')
Lena:	'*Isch Polnisch Schwizerdütsch?*' ('*Is Polish Swiss German?*')
Klara:	'NEIN, ICH GLAUB PASCAL MACHT MANCHMAL EIN BISSCHEN EIN DURCHEINANDER MIT SCHWEIZERDEUTSCH UND POLNISCH.' ('NO, I THINK PASCAL SOMETIMES MAKES A BIT OF A MESS WITH SWISS GERMAN AND POLISH.')
	[…]
	The teacher decides to count in Swiss German.
Klara:	'SCHWEIZERDEUTSCH, WIR PROBIEREN ES, DAS TÖNT NÄMLICH FAST WIE POLNISCH.' (SWISS GERMAN, LET'S TRY, IT SOUNDS ALMOST LIKE POLISH.')
all:	'*Eis, zwöi, drü, vier, füf, sächs, siebä, acht.*' ('*One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight.*')
Mandy:	'ABER SO GEHT DOCH GAR NICHT POLNISCH?!' ('BUT POLISH DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY?!')
Klara:	'ICH KANN EBEN GAR NICHT AUF POLNISCH. WIR MÜSSEN MAL DIE MAMA FRAGEN VON PASCAL, DAMIT SIE UNS HELFEN KANN UND SAGEN WIE'S GEHT.' ('I JUST DON'T SPEAK POLISH. WE HAVE TO ASK PASCAL'S MOM SO THAT SHE CAN HELP US AND TELL US HOW TO GO.')

Klara tries to ignore Pascal's wish and forces him to choose between Swiss German and High German. Interestingly, the children understand that Swiss German is not the same as Polish, deconstructing the teachers' attempt to solve her 'problem' and putting her in need of explanation. While counting in Italian, a language that is not part of the center's bilingual concept, is possible and seems legitimate, it is not in the case of Polish. Hence, a gap among different HLs becomes evident. Pascal's L1, Polish, an Eastern European language, is not recognized as a legitimate, in-class language, while

Italian, a Western European language spoken in a neighboring country and in parts of Switzerland is, although it is not one of the children's L1.

6. Discussion

The analysis of the teachers' and children's linguistic practices in the three different daycare centers has shown that English and German are both present in everyday interaction. While German is the dominant language, English functions as a *lingua franca*, playfully transmitted and integrated in teachers' and children's everyday interactions.

Paradoxically, children's multilingualism is conceptually accepted and to a certain extent integrated in very restricted, symbolic rituals. However, its integration remains on a meta-level which superficially recognizes and showcases the romantic values of linguistic diversity without actual implementation in linguistic educational practices. As suggested above, the contemporary, social trend of promoting multilingualism especially within the education sector (Jessner 2008) can best be described as a 'selective celebration of linguistic diversity' (Berthele 2020). Applicable to German-speaking Switzerland's linguistic and educational landscape as a whole, the tension between simultaneously promoting and restraining linguistic diversity is exacerbated by the diglossic language situation and can be felt in almost all spheres of social life in which Swiss and High German constantly undergo such selection and legitimization processes. Typically based on ideological motives, as part of a larger sociopolitical – and often controversial – discourse, different understandings of and attitudes toward linguistic diversity showcase different functions such as (local) identity expression (dialect) or globalization (English) and therefore follow a (hidden) political agenda.

In our case, German, English, and other 'prestigious' languages are prioritized while other HLs such as Polish or Hebrew – and therefore speakers of those – remain excluded. They are neither provided institutional recognition nor the necessary space to express themselves and are implicitly hegemonized by other majority languages. While this might be less problematic for the children, who quickly learn to adapt their way of speaking in a given context, teachers acting as 'language policy arbiters' (Johnson and Johnson 2015) implicitly (re)construct language hierarchies by deciding about the inclusion and exclusion of languages into the official, institutional learning space. These decisions seem to be made rather unconsciously based on their own language ideologies and repertoires. Raising awareness of teachers' (potentially problematic) subjective viewpoints on multilingualism (Lundberg 2019) and uncovering such discriminating practices is essential to do away with linguistic prejudices (Lippi-Green 2012). Another rather simple way to raise the potential of HLs spoken in daycare centers might be to increasingly employ teachers who speak them. However, as the *Apple Tree* example shows, even if a teacher speaks a child's HL, conversations may still be limited to one-to-one interactions if the language lacks a broader promotion. Therefore, the center's language policy, determining the status of languages within the institution, remains the key reference point in this respect.

Following a translanguaging approach, we argue for a greater inclusion of HLs since this would allow children to broaden their linguistic and cultural horizons even further and reduce social injustice (García 2009). Social and institutional recognition is crucial for children's linguistic self-esteem and self-confidence especially when it comes to minority languages (Abendroth-Timmer and Hennig 2014). However, existing language hierarchies cannot simply be flattened by including other HLs (Kubota 2015). Teachers as well as children need to be (made) aware that linguistic diversity is indeed desirable but not when it is promoted solely superficially and simplistically by selecting prestigious languages. To be sure, teachers' inclusion of any language must be cognizant of the socioeconomic and political factors determining the (market) value of languages outside the classroom. This is not to say that languages such as English should no longer be promoted since children can hugely benefit from them in their future educational trajectories. Rather, consciously providing space for authentic and equitable multilingual practices including the children's and teachers' rich

language repertoires can 'potentialize meaning-making, cognitive engagement, creativity and criticality' (García and Wei 2014, 42). These are much-needed skills for actively participating in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Importantly, as our study has shown, children already apply (some of) these skills naturally. They adapt their ways of speaking to their interlocutor, negotiate their communicative needs, and activate elements of their language repertoire accordingly. In fact, they *translanguage* and by so doing cross linguistic borders, which are then rebuilt and legitimized by teachers following a restrictive bilingual language policy of English and German.

Finally, we conclude that English is *let in* the classroom while other languages are *locked out*, which might be even more true for these multilingual preschools than for monolingual ones. Yet, this still has to be investigated. In subsequent studies, monolingual and multilingual daycare centers, those fostering other second languages (e.g. French) and conceptually monolingual ones home to many heritage languages could be contrasted on a national and international basis. The diglossic environment of Swiss and High German in daycare centers and the underlying policy framework as well as the (discursive) trend to teach English in early childhood also deserve a more thorough elaboration. Lastly, a more detailed understanding of parents' perspectives on bilingual education in preschool, expectations they might have of such programs, and their reasons for selecting institutions would be essential to optimize existing offers and children's daily educational experiences.

Notes

1. We use the internationally common expression 'teacher' for employees in daycare centers, although in many daycare centers in the German-speaking countries the focus (still) lies on caring for children and therefore 'carer' would be the more accurate expression.
2. To reduce complexity, we do not systematically examine the distinction between High German and 'Swiss German', a group of dialectal varieties used in a diglossic situation in all of German-speaking Switzerland (for their use in kindergarten, see for example Knoll 2016; Knoll and Jaeger 2020). In all three daycare centers we investigated, Swiss German was predominant among teachers and children, while High German was used by (some) native speakers (teachers and children) and by teachers with poor knowledge of Swiss German.
3. All names and places were pseudonymized, and some details were left out or changed in order to guarantee anonymity.
4. In brackets, we indicate the speakers' function (teacher or child), and the language they are mainly employed for (in case of a teacher) or the first language(s) (in case of a child).
5. Extracts from fieldnotes and conversation transcripts were translated into English. To display the different languages, we add the original citations and highlight linguistic sequences in High German with CAPITALS, those in Swiss German dialect *in italic,* those in English in regular letters, and those in heritage languages *WITH CAPITALS IN ITALIC*.

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Disclosure statement

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