6 English in Swiss higher education

The pragmatic way

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Abstract

This chapter reviews the current discourses surrounding English in higher education, focusing on the impact Englishization has had on education and language policy-planning in Switzerland. While English is in direct competition with national languages at the obligatory school levels, and the debate about the status of English is evident in national language policymaking, higher education institutes (henceforth HEIs) have taken a pragmatic approach, broadening their educational offerings to include English-medium courses and programmes at all levels. Taking legal, strategy and policy documents as its basis, this chapter discusses themes that impact thinking about language in higher education in a small multilingual nation and reviews how the language question has been addressed by policymakers at the national and institutional levels.

Keywords: language policy, English-medium instruction, multilingualism, higher education, Switzerland

1 Introduction

Switzerland is an interesting case in the study of Englishization as it is not only highly interconnected with the world but also quadrilingual. With a population of around eight million people, Switzerland has four national languages – German, French, Italian, and Romansh – which sets it apart from most of the European countries that have one overarching national language (e.g., France, Germany, Italy, Spain). Switzerland is made up of 26 cantons of varying sizes but major distinctions can be made linguistically, with areas where German is spoken predominantly (62.1% of the population)

compared to French (22.8%), Italian (8%), Romansh (0.5%) (FSO, 2018) and bilingual regions (e.g., Bern, Fribourg, Valais). With numerous national and migrant languages present in such a small nation, Switzerland has put considerable effort into creating and maintaining a linguistic harmony through comprehensive policy efforts and measures.

In Switzerland, multilingualism is not only enshrined in the constitution and in day-to-day politics but also finds expression across all domains of public life, especially in education. According to Swiss educational curricula, pupils in public schools are taught through one of the four national languages but are required to learn a second language at an early age. In bilingual regions, pupils may even qualify for bilingual education in two national languages. Despite considerable policy efforts towards language integration, and in spite of the fact that English has no official status in Switzerland, English has, over the past few decades, been increasingly used as a vehicle for communication across language regions and in many professional domains within Switzerland, replacing national languages. Therefore, already at the turn of the millennium, Watts and Murray (2001) wondered whether English had become the fifth national language in Switzerland, and Durham (2016, p. 107) more recently claimed that English had attained the status of a 'de facto' additional language of Switzerland.

According to the Federal Statistics Office population census (FSO 2018), about 40.8% of permanent residents with a migration background use English at least once a week. The use of English as a lingua franca in workplaces has also increased over time, from 17.2% in 2012 to about 20% in 2018 (FSO, 2018). This trend is also visible in education, where the rise of English has repeatedly sparked public controversy and extensive media coverage over the past two decades, at both the national and regional levels. Some cantons, which exercise authority over languages taught in schools, have replaced Swiss second languages by English in the early school curriculum (cf. Demont-Heinrich, 2005; Lüdi, 2007; Pfenninger & Watts, 2019). While the public debate surrounding English in education has primarily revolved around obligatory school levels, higher education has enjoyed more freedom to explore different policy options, a phenomenon which we will further analyse in the following sections.

The spread of English in Switzerland, especially at HEIs, echoes the global trend towards Englishization. By Englishization, we refer to the shift of medium of instruction in HEIs to English in a context where English is not spoken as the first language (Lanvers, 2018). In the European context, Englishization gained particular momentum in the wake of the Bologna process (Kirkpatrick, 2014). Englishization tends to be the result

of a top-down policy effort in tertiary level institutes (Lanvers & Hultgren, 2018), led by 'the imperative of globalization' (Boussebaa & Brown, 2017, p. 7) and the aim of HEIs to internationalize, attract foreign talent, and increase university rankings and overall visibility. Englishization as a trend has been problematized by various scholars, who claim that it is symptomatic of HEIs following a neoliberal, economic ideology 'pushing the global spread of English' through a 'covert language policy mechanism' (Piller & Cho, 2013, p. 23; cf. also Studer, 2021a; generally on economic ideology: Akdağ & Swanson, 2018). Language, in this context, becomes a symbol and object of status allocation in a struggle between elites and counterelites (Barakos & Selleck, 2019; Cooper, 1989, p. 120; Studer 2021a, p. 18).

In this chapter, we aim to trace the policy approaches in response to Englishization at the macro level and at the meso level in selected Swiss universities, critically analysing its impact on the national language status and the perception of Swiss multilingualism. The chapter then proceeds to summarize research carried out over the past two decades into Swiss multilingualism and English in higher education. Secondly, key language-strategic and policy documents at the national and institutional levels are analysed and compared across different language regions of Switzerland.

2   A brief review of language debates and concerns

A recent study by Pfenninger and Watts (2019) investigated discourses surrounding the teaching of English in Switzerland and highlighted their potential to challenge Swiss national cohesion at the federal level. They claim that in Switzerland two radically dichotomous discourse archives exist concerning the spread of English, especially in the educational context (cf. Foucault, 1972, p. 127 on the notion of discourse archives). The first discourse archive is expressive of a serious concern over the decrease in interest in learning, and interacting in, national languages, considering English a threat to national cohesion (cf. Murray & Dingwall, 2001, p. 89), while the second, competing discourse archive supports the introduction of English as an optional second language in schools in all cantons (cf. Watts & Murray, 2001), assuming that learners' efficient linguistic performance in business and industry world will increase their job prospects (Pfenninger & Watts, 2019).

The results of Pfenninger and Watts' (2019) study echo similar findings in other studies that have been conducted at the European level, corroborating fundamental dichotomies in language policy-planning

discourses that seem irreconcilable and contradictory (Studer, 2021b; Studer, 2012). Part of the incompatibility between the two discourse archives is rooted in the dichotomy *unity in diversity* (*e pluribus unum*, cf. Studer et al., 2010), where unity comes at the expense of diversity (on the unity-in-diversity ideology in Switzerland, cf. also Billigmeier, 1979, p. viii; Stępkowska, 2019, p. 70). The sentiment that national or regional diversity is in danger is clearly expressed in other studies in which voices can be heard advocating for the protection of national languages (e.g., Saarinen & Taalas, 2017) and warning against domain loss in local languages (Kuteeva, 2019).

While much of the debate surrounding English in the Swiss education system concerned its controversial status as first foreign language in the national school curriculum, the case is different with higher education: Swiss HEIs, like most schools at the obligatory levels, are public institutions. Unlike public schools, where languages have been subject to debate and controversy, Swiss HEIs have been able to largely stay outside public scrutiny and no cantonal language regulations similar to the national school curriculum have been put in place (Dürmüller, 2001; also see Studer, 2021a, p. 24 for further considerations). Possibly as a result of this, English in higher education in Switzerland has received comparatively little attention from sociolinguists. A few early studies appeared at the turn of the millennium. In 2005, Lüdi and Werlen (2005) found that English was used regularly by 40% of people in HEIs. In another case study, Murray (2001) found that in the University of Bern teaching materials in about 50% of courses were in English, particularly in natural sciences and biomedical subjects. Dürmüller (2001), moreover, found that the use of English was much less common in universities located in French and Italian regions compared to the German speaking parts. In the absence of more recent surveys on the use of English in Swiss higher education, it is reasonable to assume that the overall trend outlined in these early studies as well as the differences between the language regions and the disciplines are still valid today (cf. Murray & Dingwall, 1997, on some historical developments).

HEIs in Switzerland, like elsewhere in Europe, have been active in establishing English-taught programmes (ETPs), that is, study programmes entirely taught through English, over the past 20 years (Wächter & Maiworm, 2002; 2008; 2014). In 2002, out of an estimated total of 600 programmes (Bachelor, Master, PhD) offered in numerous Swiss HEIs, only 15 programmes were ETPs. Visible development can be seen in 2008 when out of an estimated total of 1,400 programmes offered by different

Swiss HEIs, 52 programmes were classified as ETPs. In their latest study, Wächter and Maiworm (2014) reported that out of an estimated total of 1,700 programmes offered in different Swiss universities, the number of ETPs stood at 236, which is about 14% of all study programmes. More recently, Sandström & Neghina (2017) looked at the distribution of ETPs at the bachelor's and master's levels and reported that Switzerland, along with the Netherlands, have the highest percentage of HEIs offering ETPs at the bachelor's level, indicating that English-taught bachelor's programmes have become an integral part of Swiss higher eduation. The numbers in Sandström and Neghina (2017, p. 28) suggest a further rise in English-taught programmes from 2014, with approximately 380 programmes entirely taught through English.

While, as indicated in Wächter and Maiworm's studies and Sandström and Neghina (2017), the number of ETPs has been increasing steadily over the past 20 years, a far more widespread way of implementing English as a medium of instruction is by offering parts of study programmes through English. Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), as one case in point, published so-called EMI guidelines already in 2011, outlining four levels of complexity that can be achieved through the partial integration of English into study programmes, ranging from systematic CLIL (Content and Language-Integrated Learning) to EMI or occasional English-taught classes. Within Universities of Applied Sciences, moreover, it has become a common practice to define International Profiles which are exclusively taught through English (Studer, 2018a, pp. 1-5). These profiles commonly consist of one semester's worth of studies in English in study programmes taught through national languages in order to attract foreign students to Switzerland.

Considering the reality outlined above, it may seem surprising that little attention has been paid to date to issues of language policy and planning in Swiss HEIs. Studer (2013), Gautschi and Studer (2017) and Studer (2018b) have dealt with the role of policy stakeholders in Swiss HEIs at some length. While these studies focus on the perceptions, willingness and role of university stakeholders involved in the planning or implementation of EMI programmes in higher education, they do not address the larger policy context within which university stakeholders position themselves at significant length. In the next sections, the policy context of English in Swiss higher education will be outlined in greater detail by reviewing the legal premises and by highlighting and comparing concrete examples across language regions and HEI types.

3   Document basis

For the purpose of the present analysis, relevant strategic and policy documents were collected from seven HEIs including the two federal HEIs (ETHZ, EPFL), four representative cantonal HEIs from different language regions (UZH, UNIFR, UNIGE and USI) and one University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW). Table 6.1 provides an overview of the HEIs analysed in this chapter. In addition to institutional documents, Federal Acts relating to language and multilingualism as well as to higher education were collected. In the following, findings from the analysis of each HEI are presented by their university type and language region, embedding the discussion in the broader national framework.

Table 6.1   HEIs analysed in this chapter

University	Short form	Language Region	Canton	University Type
University of Zurich	UZH	German	Zurich	Cantonal Tier-One University
University of Fribourg	UNIFR	French and German (bilingual)	Fribourg	Cantonal Tier-One University
University of Geneva	UNIGE	French	Geneva	Cantonal Tier-One University
University of Lugano	USI	Italian	Ticino	Cantonal Tier-One University
Federal Institute of Technology Zurich	ETHZ	German	Zurich	Federal Tier-One University
Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne	EPFL	French	Vaud	Federal Tier-One University
Zurich University of Applied Sciences	ZHAW	German	Zurich	University of Applied Sciences

3.1 English as a language of instruction: National and institutional approaches

Switzerland is small but complex. This is particularly true of its educational system, which is a cornerstone of Swiss identity and pride. If we look back over the past 20 years of research into English as an international language in Switzerland, we notice a thematic development from critical considerations of the role of English in the Swiss multilingual landscape in the face of the country's internal linguistic diversity, to descriptions of English as a reality in Swiss society. This thematic progression largely coincides with public and media attention to the topic, which, particularly

in the first half of this period, treated English in Switzerland as a topic worthy of public attention and scrutiny. This development also coincides with significant language policy developments which led to legal provisions at different levels. In this section, we will trace these developments in greater detail.

The Federal Council's Act on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities in 2007 (Languages Act) can be considered the first important milestone in the new millennium in that it provided the framework for ensuring internal linguistic harmony in Switzerland. With respect to English, two articles are of interest in the context of this chapter: Article 6(5) specifies that, while official communication with authorities will be conducted in national languages, '(i)n dealings with persons who have no command of an official language, the federal authorities shall if possible use a language that these persons understand.' Thus, the Act leaves open the possibility that residents may communicate in other, non-national languages, including English. A similar flexibility as in the Languages Act 6(5) is expressed in the Ordinance on the National Languages and Understanding between the Linguistic Communities of 2014 (Languages Ordinance) which stipulates explicitly in Article 5 that 'International agreements may be concluded in English' under certain circumstances.

Article 15(3) of the Languages Act, the second article of interest here, expresses an explicit commitment to plurilingualism in education and to the teaching of one additional national language together with a foreign language. The order in which these languages are taught in the curriculum, however, is left to the cantons to determine. Within the scope of this law, cantons may decide to focus their language education more strongly on English than on a second national language within the cantonal school curriculum, whatever seems more suited to the professional or academic outlook of the students. A similar regional approach is encouraged at the higher education level, where no national provision regulates the language of instruction across all university types.

Switzerland has a complex higher education landscape in the so-called tertiary-A sector, consisting of federal institutes, cantonal tier-one universities, cantonal universities of applied sciences and cantonal universities of teacher education. In the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector 2011/2020 (Higher Education Act), reference to language is only made in Article 59(2d), which identifies multilingualism in Swiss national languages as an area of national higher education policy interest eligible for federal contributions. In other words, while no overarching

regulation exists at the federal level concerning the use of languages in all university types, the article clearly supports multilingualism in Swiss national languages. Universities of Applied Sciences (i.e., universities that are traditionally closer to industry) seem to present an exception. Article 2(7) of the Ordinance on the Establishment and Management of Universities of Applied Sciences 1996/2014 (*Fachhochschulverordnung*) allows English as an additional language of instruction.

No such federal ordinance exists for cantonal tier-one universities but provisions concerning languages of instruction may well exist at cantonal levels. Cantonal tier-one universities and Federal Institutes, however, have no uniform approach to the language in question. We will, in the following, look at some examples in detail.

3.2 Tier-One Cantonal Universities

Among the tier-one cantonal universities in German-speaking Switzerland, the University of Zurich (UZH) is prominent and, as the largest Swiss university, plays a major role in shaping the Swiss higher education area. The University of Zurich issued regulations concerning language requirements for students in 2017 (*Reglement über die sprachlichen Anforderungen in der Unterrichtssprache*), stating, in Article 5, that the languages of instruction of study degree programmes or subjects at the University of Zurich are German and/or English.

In terms of language level, a minimum of C1 (Common European Framework of Reference, CEFR) is required for enrolment. Article 7 further allows other languages of instruction, depending on the requirements of the study degree programmes (e.g., in language or literature studies). While no mention is made of language in the University Law of the Canton of Zurich (1998), collaboration and coordination with foreign HEIs is laid down in Article 5, underscoring the university's international orientation.

In its Internationalization Strategy 2014-2020, UZH focuses on three strategic goals (among others), which are a) the strengthening of UZH's research profile, b) recruitment and academic career development and c) infrastructure. English is mentioned in two places in this document: Strategic goal I.3 emphasizes the university's continued efforts towards becoming a bilingual university at the level of administrative services:

> Information on administrative and study-related procedures is published in German and English. Bilingual communication is taken into consideration for basic procedures concerning enrollment, booking modules, and

> development strategies. The most important university regulations are
> made available in English. (UZH, 2014-2020, p. 3)

English as a medium of instruction appears secondly as a strategic objective
of the university, especially at master's level. Strategic goal III.3 of the current
internationalization strategy of UZH states that 'Master's degree programs
and PhD programs, except at the Faculty of Medicine, are increasingly
offered in English.'

While UZH seems to include English as a strategic point on its interna-
tionalization agenda, the further west we move in Switzerland, the more
regulated languages of instruction seem to become. One such example is
the University of Fribourg (UNIFR). As the seat of the national institute of
multilingualism, subsidized by the state, and as a bilingual university, UNIFR
is an example of a particularly language-sensitive HEI in Switzerland, more
than Zurich or Fribourg's neighbour, the University of Bern. UNIFR's *Loi sur
l'université* (State of Fribourg, 1997/2015, Article 6, Languages) stipulates that
French and German are the official languages of the university in teaching
and administration but that individual faculties can allow other languages
of instruction. Based on this law, the university, in 2007, issued guidelines
concerning languages of instruction in which they differentiate between
levels and functions of the degree programmes (Article 1). While individual
courses in English are permitted within degree programmes, the main
languages of bachelor's programmes are French and German. At Master's
level, the main languages of instruction are either French and German
(with occasional English courses), or ETPs (*englischsprachig deklarierte
Studiengänge*) which are exclusively or predominantly taught through
English. At faculty level, these guidelines translate into regulations, such
as the Regulations of the Faculty of Economy and Social Sciences (UNIFR,
2014) in which Article 29(1) specifies that the official languages of instruction
at bachelor's level are German and French, but at master's level, however,
they are German, French, and English.

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, on the other hand, is less explicit
on this matter but simply states in its study regulations (Article 1(3)) that it
promotes multilingual studies and particularly bilingual studies in German
and French. What is striking about UNIFR is the clear separation between
language and internationalization policy. In fact, and in comparison to
UZH, English seems to be conspicuously absent as part of the mandate and
as a strategic topic dealt with by UNIFR's International Relations Office.
While in UZH, the International Strategy (2014-2020) clearly promotes
English in its effort to contribute towards making the university a bilingual

German-English institution, the International Relations Office at UNIFR focuses mainly, but not exclusively, on traditional mobility (*Reglement über die internationalen Beziehungen,* 2004/2009).

The University of Geneva (UNIGE) seems to be the best example for comparison with the University of Zurich (UZH). It is located in the largest French-speaking city and the second largest city of Switzerland. Unlike UZH, UNIGE has developed an elaborate language policy (*18 mesures pour une politique des langues à l'Université de Genève,* 2012), following the trend set by Fribourg by not only ensuring instruction in French at undergraduate level but also by committing itself to multilingualism. UNIGE, in Article 3, states that French remains the language of instruction even if classes can be given in English, particularly at bachelor's level (*français comme langue d'enseignement des baccalauréats*). The university also commits itself to ensuring the possibility of studying in French for at least one consecutive master's degree following each bachelor's programme. ETPs are permitted if they provide additional language support for students. Most notably, and in contrast to UZH, Geneva encourages bilingual programmes in which at least one third of classes are taught through a language other than the main language of instruction.

Located in one of the most international cities of Europe, international collaboration and mobility, like in the University of Zurich, is part of UNIGE's identity (*Loi sur l'université*, 2008, Art.4(2) and 4(3); see UNIGE, 2008). UNIGE ranks high in internationalization scores in the Times Higher Education Ranking (9th position in 2019). The core values of UNIGE's Strategy (*Plan Stratégique*, 2015-2025) include international openness, respect for human rights, sensitivity to cultural diversity, to ethics, humanism and to the tradition of scientific research. This mission provides firm ground for the establishment of links with international institutes and for opening up to other languages and cultures.

Unlike UNIGE or UNIFR, but similar to UZH, the University of Lugano (USI) does not have an overarching language policy that regulates and/ or promotes multilingualism, including the use of English as a medium of instruction. Although according to the University Law (1995) Art. 1(6) (Republic and Canton of Ticino, 1995), Italian is stated as the official language of the university, other languages are not excluded from teaching. In the study regulations at faculty level, further guidance concerning language use is offered, which, however, reveals considerable diversity across the university. The Faculty of Economics, for example, states that while written examinations and bachelor's degree papers are usually written in Italian, they can also be written in German, French, or English, with the teacher's permission (Article 27). Similar directives exist in other faculties (e.g., the

Faculty of Communication, Society and Culture). In both faculties, the official language of the programmes at Master's level depends on the study plan. The Faculty of Communication, Society and Culture stipulates that in master's programmes where English is used as a medium of instruction, the level C1 in English must be obtained by the time the final thesis is submitted. The Faculty of Informatics is the most liberal faculty regarding English, formally adopting English as its working language. The Academy of Architecture, conversely, presents a more traditional picture, focused on national culture and identity to promote studies 'in an interdisciplinary, multilingual and multicultural perspective' (*Accademia di architettura Statuto,* USI, 1997/2012, Article 1). In the general study regulations, the Academy further states, following the French-speaking or bilingual universities, that the main language of instruction is Italian but that English may be used as an alternative in parts of the programme.

Being the only Italian-speaking university in the Swiss higher education area, the preservation and promotion of the Italian language forms the basis of USI's internationalization policy. Therefore, most of the bachelor's programmes are offered in Italian, although where possible materials are made available in English and free Italian courses are provided for the entire academic community. English, on the other hand, is not directly mentioned in USI's internationalization policy but the wide range of scientific networks of global partnerships at USI bears testimony to researchers' links with international colleagues from all over the world.

3.3 Federal Institutes of Technology

The Federal Institutes of Technology (ETHZ and EPFL) are interesting cases in point that seem to capture the complex debate surrounding languages of instruction at the meso level. This is not surprising given the fact that the Federal Institutes of Technology have a national mandate but operate internationally. At the Federal Institutes of Technology, current regulations resemble, in their level of detail, those of the cantonal universities such as UNIFR and UNIGE. The Languages Article 12 in the Federal Act on the Federal Institutes of Technology 1991/2017 (ETH Act) specifies that

> 1 The two federal institutes of technology shall provide instruction in German, French and Italian *and, depending on usage in teaching and research, English as well.*
> 2 The Executive Board may authorise other languages of instruction.
> (Authors' emphasis)

The phrase in italics here, which is counter-balanced by the commitment to Swiss national languages in (2), was inserted after extensive discussion on the subject leading up to the Languages Article in 2004. Part of this discussion is summarized in the *Communication on the Partial Revision of the ETH Act* of 27 February 2002, in which English as the universal language of research and as an important language of instruction is acknowledged. English is seen to facilitate mobility and international cooperation in higher education. At the same time, the wording in Article 12 is still vague and leaves room for interpretation and implementation.

The two Federal Institutes subsequently issued directives on the use of languages in teaching (*Weisung ETH Zurich,* 2010; *Directive EPF Lausanne,* 2014/2017). In these directives, the institutes largely follow UNIFR and UNIGE in that national languages are clearly prioritized at bachelor's level, while English is designated the default language at master's level. At the same time, the Federal Institutes are more specific than UNIFR, defining the volume of courses (in percentage) that can be taught through English at bachelor's and, at master's level, in national languages.

The introduction of English as the standard language of instruction at master's level in the ETH Zurich, at the time, drew public criticism and media attention, as in the article in Switzerland's broadsheet *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (26 September, 2010) or in the Sunday paper *Sonntag* (25 July, 2010). The debate surrounding language of instruction taken up by the newspapers echoed a much broader initiative launched by ETH Zurich a few years earlier: the reform project ETH 2020, which was to develop visions for the institute's future, touching on topics such as Quality of Teaching, Internationalization, and Organizational Structure (cf. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 27 October, 2006). This initiative, however, came to a sudden end after strong objection by the professorate. Only some areas were moved forward, including the language question. The debate surrounding ETH's language of instruction, therefore, must be understood in connection to the overall tendency of the university to advance internationalization. The ETH's internal debate was summarized by Anders Hagström in the daily web-paper *ETH Life* (2006), where he argued for the introduction of English at both Bachelor's and Master's level for reasons of communicative efficiency and increasing employability:

> Firstly, language is a tool for communication. In a multilingual environment, a rational language choice is based on the audience. You speak or write the language in which you can reach the largest group of people. As ETH Zurich wants to internationalize its graduate programmes, there is no question that this language is English.

Hagström's arguments clearly anticipated the institute's 2010 directive that emphasized a similar utilitarian view of language (cf. Studer, 2021a, for a critique of English as a basic skill).

Since English was determined as language of instruction at Master's level, several measures have been taken to ensure the quality of the use of a foreign language (e.g., online resources to non-native students and staff). ETH's sweeping introduction of English as a 'rational language choice' at Master's level reflects the strong international orientation of the university, consistent with its title of most international university in the world in 2017 and second in 2018, competing for the first position with its francophone counterpart, EPFL (THE, 2017, 2018).

ETH's international orientation and its commitment to multilingualism today is not only visible in its language directive but also in its education policy which emphasizes comprehensive competences as an educational objective for students such as 'interdisciplinary and system-oriented ways of thinking' beyond disciplinary expertise, including the ability to express oneself 'in several languages' (*ETHZ Teaching Policy*, 2016). A similar approach is found in its francophone counterpart, EPFL.

3.4 Universities of Applied Sciences

Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS), the youngest of the HEIs in Switzerland, resemble UZH in approach in that they permit both national languages and English as languages of instruction. Unlike UZH, the right to use English is established at the federal level and applies to all cantonal Universities of Applied Sciences, as outlined above (*Fachhochschulverordnung,* 1996/2014). Let us briefly look how this plays out, taking ZHAW as a case in point, one of the largest Universities of Applied Sciences, located in the German-speaking canton of Zurich. UAS, as young HEIs, are currently building their international profile, while traditional tier-one cantonal universities or federal institutes are in a position to consolidate their international outlook. UAS have an International Relations Office that not only coordinates traditional exchange and mobility activities but that is also engaged in developing and implementing strategies to drive the internationalization of their university. UAS have recently been supported in that endeavour at the state level, through funding programmes such as *Internationalization of Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences and Arts*, launched by *swissuniversities* (2014), the umbrella organization of the Swiss universities.

At ZHAW, for example, the Internationalization Strategy (*Z-SD-Teilstrategie Internationales*, 2016) is directly aligned with the university strategy

for 2025, defining five areas of activity: (1) Increase student mobility; (2) Full-course enrolment of foreign students; (3) Strategic partnerships with other HEIs; (4) Creation of synergies across schools and service missions; (5) Visibility of ZHAW as an international HEI. In the context of implementing its internationalization strategy, ZHAW developed guidelines for the establishment of so-called International Profiles, which are study options for students wishing to obtain an international certificate as part of their studies (*Z-RL-Richtlinie Certificate International Profile,* 2019). While no distinction is made between bachelor's or master's level, students enrolling for the CIP (Certificate International Profile) are required to engage in three competence areas, such as foreign language competence, international experience, and intercultural competence. Foreign language competence is defined, primarily, in terms of general language competence as specified by the CEFR (C1). While the guidelines leave open which language is meant, it is clear from the wording (p. 3) that any language other than English would be considered exceptional and that, in case of not choosing English, proof of English skills at level B2+ must be provided anyway.

The importance of English is further underscored by the requirement that students also need to enrol in modules given through the foreign language of their choice. While, in theory, such modules may be taken abroad, in practice this means that, in the absence of courses offered in languages other than English, the majority of students enrols in EMI modules at their home institution. Other provisions or guidelines may exist in other UAS, but the general perception and importance of English as a medium of instruction in the context of internationalization is presumed to be very similar across all UAS in Switzerland.

4   Discussion and conclusion

This chapter set out to trace Englishization in Switzerland by looking at institutional and federal responses to regulating English language use in higher education. The chapter was divided into two sections, the first presenting an overview of sociolinguistic research into English in Switzerland. In the second section, we reviewed policy approaches and solutions by seven HEIs representing different university types (Cantonal Universities, Federal Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences) and language regions (French, German, Italian). This section will present a synthesis of this analysis and a critical reflection of the common themes running through these policy approaches.

The policy analysis revealed that while institutions may differ in their international outlook and aspirations, and also in terms of the weight they attribute to national languages, they all have made efforts adapting to a new reality by making space for English in teaching and research, thus trying to create a new linguistic harmony. The paths chosen by the HEIs studied differ considerably, depending on a variety of factors including (a) the type of HEI; (b) their individual tradition; (c) the culture of the language region; (d) the actors inside the HEI responsible for policy-making (university management vs faculty, international relations vs vice-rectorate teaching, etc.); and (e) their management approach (top-down, bottom-up, middle-out).

Firstly, the analysis indicates that English today enjoys greater acceptance at master's level, especially in cantonal universities and federal institutes, where it is either the default language of instruction or 'tolerated' in bilingual programmes alongside national languages. This acceptance of English at the master's level shows, conversely, that education in national languages is considered more important at the undergraduate level.

Secondly, we notice a division between German-speaking Switzerland and French-speaking Switzerland in terms of how institutions conceptualize English vis-à-vis multilingualism and internationalization. Macro-level language-policy considerations concerning the role of English in Swiss society are particularly present in the *Suisse Romandie* and, to some extent, in Italian-speaking Switzerland. In these HEIs, a tolerance of English as a language of instruction, if visible at all, is embedded in the promotion of national languages and national bilingualism. The bilingual University of Fribourg emerges as the most consistent and vocal example in this context, serving as a model for other universities.

The University of Zurich, on the other hand, can be cited as one HEI at the other end of the spectrum, striving towards institutional bilingualism with English, thus reinforcing monolingualism and internationalism. The Federal Institutes of Technology have steered a middle course in that regional monolingualism has been institutionalized at bachelor's level while English is the default language of the master's level. The preference for regional languages at bachelor's level is echoed in other HEIs of the study, most notably HEIs in the west and south of Switzerland. While language is regulated in some HEIs through institution-wide language policies, it forms part of the internationalization agenda or study regulations in other HEIs, particularly in the German-speaking area, or may be regulated at the faculty or departmental level, such as in the Italian-speaking canton.

This diversity in policy approach and solutions may seem puzzling to the reader. We are tempted to explain it as a reflection of cultural divides in Switzerland, with HEIs in francophone cantons taking more centralized, top-down approaches to regulating language use, emphasizing national languages, whereas HEIs in Swiss-German cantons seem to pay less attention to the issue but generally welcome and endorse the trend towards English as a reality in internationalized higher education. Such differences in approach have been described with regard to national language policy-planning (e.g., Siguan, 2005).

Another way of explaining the difference is by looking at the policies as the outcomes of two conflicting argumentation rationales. Language, in the francophone HEIs, can then be understood as a value, an expression of culture or identity, whereas language in the German-speaking HEIs can be conceptualized as an object of a utilitarian cost-benefit analysis (see Colombo, 2019; also Domke et al., 1998). The conflict between principle and pragmatism, and the orientation to either pole at the expense of the other, reflects a key balancing act in which language policy actors find themselves (cf., most recently, Studer, 2021a, 2021b). The two rationales are also expressive of different stakeholder expectations towards change: Value-based considerations are built on the premise of stability, whereas utilitarian cost-benefit thinking 'presumes responsiveness to changing circumstances' (Tavits, 2007, p. 153). Following Tavits (2007, p. 152), who investigated voter responses to party policy shifts, we may be tempted to assume that policy shifts on pragmatic issues tend to be more popular than policy shifts on principled issues. This would imply that language solutions that follow a utilitarian cost-benefit approach may be met with greater acceptance and may be implemented in a more informal way than solutions that focus on principles of multilingualism.

Viewing the policy efforts of the seven HEIs from this perspective, their different approaches become more meaningful. If a consequentialist perspective of language is predominant, then language policy efforts are pursued to optimize business or academic prospects. Universities of Applied Sciences illustrate this point well as they are traditionally close to industry and focus on their students' employability. They are the only HEIs in Switzerland that, by default, have two languages of instruction: their regional language and English. The University of Zurich is another interesting case from our corpus, not only because it strives towards institutional bilingualism but also because the language question appears in close connection to the university's internationalization strategy, a domain that is mainly concerned with the practicalities of inter-institutional

collaboration and exchange. The Universities of Fribourg and Geneva, on the other hand, clearly focus on the maintenance of national languages which is evident in elaborate language policies issued in the form of commitments issued at the university political level. Their approach clearly foregrounds a more value-based vision in favour of Swiss multilingualism. The Federal Institutes, being the only non-regional HEIs, have settled on an apparent compromise. By making the national language the default language of undergraduate programmes and English the default language of postgraduate programmes, their solution seems principled in that it reflects a commitment to English identical in strength to the national language, yet pragmatic in that it addresses the need to institutionalize language use so as to accommodate an international teaching and student body.

Taking a step back from these findings and looking at them from a national perspective, one wonders what they say about Switzerland as a small multilingual nation. Assuming that there are political issues that are 'more principled in nature versus those that are more pragmatic' (Tavits, 2007, p. 153), one wonders where the language of instruction figures on this scale. Clearly, no strong commitment to national languages in higher education as a matter of principle, identity or right can be found at the state level. Apart from the potential financial incentive to implement national multilingualism in HEIs, the state's 'moral voice' seems weak, leaving it to the cantons to define their own policies. In fact, as we have seen, the responsibility for language use can be delegated all the way down from the state to the canton to the institution and, inside institutions, to domains or organizational units. This may not come as a surprise given Switzerland's self-perception as a nation by the will of the people (*Willensnation*), a nation not founded on ethnicity but on pluri-cultural and ethnical diversity (Maiolino, 2013). Hence, it can be explained that strong international and strong regional orientations may co-exist side by side. This also means that, in Swiss higher education, there will always be patchwork solutions, allowing for extremes in a very small area. These solutions, while reflective of what we would like to call the Swiss pragmatic way, lack a comprehensive and overarching commitment to national languages and national multilingualism as an expression of the nation's culture and identity. English, in this constellation, comes out as the winner: it is not only used as a welcome and efficient tool for communication but may, locally, be elevated to rank side-by-side with national languages.

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