# 10 Discussions on Swiss and German Politeness in Online Sources

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## 1 Introduction

This chapter explores language ideologies on Swiss and German politeness through a selection of online comments on newspaper articles and one thread of a discussion forum of a magazine. Since Switzerland joined the European Free Movement of People Agreement in 2004, immigration from Germany increased significantly, with a peak in 2008 (46,296 German immigrants; see Plate, 2013, endnote). Around that time, different media outlets published articles with an anti-German stance, reporting on the unpopularity of Germans in Switzerland, with polls indicating that most Swiss people did not like Germans. One of the biggest newspapers even published a series of articles with the title "Reizthema Deutsche" ('Irritant Germans', Herbermann, 2007). One important topic in this coverage was the inadequate or even impolite behavior of Germans living in Switzerland, a topic that was also reflected in a campaign ad by the city of Zurich in 2010 targeting better integration of foreigners living in Zurich. One of these ads was clearly addressed at Germans, since a stereotypically German way of ordering something in a restaurant or bakery was quoted. In contrast to the Swiss version, which is usually mitigated, the German version is direct, without any hedges. The slogan reads: "Sag doch statt 'ich krieg dann mal' lieber 'bitte könnte ich vielleicht'" ('Instead of "I'll get!" you might rather say "could I perhaps have"'). Against this backdrop, we explore how the (im)polite behavior of Germans and Swiss is discussed in recent online commentaries, with a special focus on posts commenting on national differences.

Adopting a discursive approach to politeness, we turn our attention to bottom-up (emic) discussion of Swiss societal politeness ideologies that are publicly discussed online. The data are written in standard German and focus, on the one hand, on a discussion of what the German-speaking population considers to be politeness in a Swiss context and, on the other, on how this differs from politeness norms in Germany. The paper is organized as follows. First, we discuss the theoretical background in order to contextualize our discussion of the data. To that end, we provide a sketch of the theories that

inform our approach to the discussion of norms of conduct (Section 2). In Section 3, we provide an introduction to the linguistic situation of German in Germany and Switzerland. We will show that the notions of 'standard' and 'dialect' are understood and valued differently in the two areas; this also has repercussions for the negotiation of politeness ideologies. The study of discussions on linguistic behavior in online news commentaries enables an in-depth insight into specific public representations of Swiss German and German, and thus into beliefs about these varieties and their speakers (Milani, 2012). In Section 4, we explain the compilation of our corpus and our methodology, before presenting our analysis in Section 5. In Section 6, we present our conclusions and suggestions for further research.

## 2 Theoretical Positioning: (Im)politeness Ideologies

The concept of norms is a *sine qua non* for all approaches to (im)politeness. For example, Lakoff's early paper (1973) on rules of politeness adds understanding of the importance of pragmatic acceptability (not merely grammatical well-formedness), which is culturally informed. In Brown and Levinson's classic theory (1978 [1987]), norms are built into their framework in the variable $R_x$, which stands for the ranking of a particular imposition within a particular context. This means that the risk of a potential face-threat for which interlocutors are in the process of choosing an adequate strategy is estimated with contextual norms in mind. This insight was also taken up extensively in cross-cultural work, which took Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness as a starting point to establish positive and negative politeness cultures (see, for example, Sifianou, 1992; Ogiermann, 2009). Working with a framework that allowed the study of levels of indirectness with respect to phrasing speech acts such as requests, apologies or compliments allowed for a neat comparison of linguistic surface forms (i.e., the study of the presence or absence of mitigating linguistic strategies).

While the advantage of universal theories that allow a comparative approach is evident, there has nevertheless been much debate about the universality of these theories (for an overview, see Sifianou, 2010; Watts, 2010). For example, differences between Western and Eastern forms of politeness have been discussed extensively (e.g., Leech, 2007; Okamoto, 2010). As a reaction to early theories of politeness, discursive approaches to (im)politeness have particularly emphasized the negotiability of norms (see, for example, Watts, 2003; Locher & Watts, 2005, 2008; Linguistic Politeness Research Group, 2011). However, this is not to say that interactants reinvent norms from scratch in any new encounter. Instead, they draw on previous knowledge of norms of appropriate conduct with respect to any specific type of activity in its cultural context, and then work with expectations about adequate (im)polite behavior

(see Locher, 2013, 2015). Many scholars acknowledge that societal politeness ideologies exist in any given society and shape our perceptions, in addition to more locally negotiated norms of interaction (see, for example, Culpeper, 2008; Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Gärtig, Plewnia, & Rothe, 2010). Culpeper (2008: 30), for example, speaks of personal, cultural, situational and co-textual norms. Kádár and Haugh (2013: 95) mention localized norms, "community of practice/organizational or other group-based norms" and societal/cultural norms. Evaluations of politeness are shaped by these overlapping norms, which together constitute part of the moral order of conduct for a particular group of people. For the purposes of this paper, we situate the national ideologies of (im)politeness as part of societal/cultural norms.

It is probably safe to hypothesize that people have a general idea of societal/cultural politeness norms in the sense of ideologies (see Culpeper, 2011: 126–33, on the discussion of conventionalized expectations of politeness and impoliteness). They acquire such norms through socialization and education received from parents, family, peers etc. (See also Pizziconi & Locher, 2015.) This is, of course, true for all the other levels of norms. However, knowledge of societal/cultural norms is also propagated through etiquette books and public discourse at an explicit meta-level. Cross-cultural encounters from traveling or encounters with foreigners at home often raise awareness of differences in politeness norms. (See, for example, Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009.) It is less clear how the aforementioned different personal, cultural, situational and co-textual norms inform, reinforce or contradict each other. Suffice it to say that there cannot be a clear-cut analytical boundary between them, since these norms merge within individuals and are flexibly applied. For example, interactants adopt different roles as they engage in different social practices and shift register throughout the day, and by being socialized into recognizing and playing with different frames, become competent language users. (See overviews on pragmatic variation such as Meyerhoff, 2006.) They can use swear words and imperatives for requests with one group, while using formal and mitigated language in another local context. Despite this variability in language use, people concurrently can have a 'national' (cultural/societal) understanding of how things should be done. Indeed, it is likely that national politeness norms in particular are part of language ideologies, since they are so often discussed at the meta-level.

Our data show classificatory politeness1 ("hearers' judgments (in actual interaction) of other people's interactional behavior as 'polite' or 'impolite'") and metapragmatic politeness1 ("instances of talk about politeness as a concept about what people perceive politeness to be all about") (Eelen, 2001: 35). These comments are triggered by conflict and by perceived clashes in the different discourse systems of Swiss and German people (Scollon & Scollon, 2001), an issue often discussed in the last few years because of public debates

about German immigrants (Helbling, 2011). Publicly discussing such differences and issuing complaints about the behavior of others also contributes to in-group and out-group identity construction and awareness-raising of politeness norms in the first place (Locher, 2008). Rather than applying an established politeness theory to the data, in this paper we are interested in the negotiation of politeness norms at a meta-level, as conducted in online sources. Since our data consist of comments by laypeople posted in response to online newspaper articles and one forum thread in an online magazine, the paper aims to contribute to an understanding of emic language ideologies with respect to politeness norms. We discuss whether the discussants are indeed talking about something like Swiss German politeness, and how this differs from German politeness (Manno, 2005).

## 3 The Linguistic Situation of German in Germany and Switzerland

What makes the online discussions in our corpus particularly rich for politeness scholars is the fact that the 'German' language in its different forms is perceived differently in Germany and in Switzerland. In a nutshell, in Germany we encounter a continuum between dialect, colloquial language and the standard. Most speakers shift on the continuum between the standard variety and a more colloquial variety. Dialects often carry low status and are generally in decline. This is particularly true for the Northern part of Germany, while in the South dialects carry more prestige (see Ammon, 2003). In Switzerland, we encounter a more clear-cut situation. Speakers speak dialects (there are many) and the standard variety in diglossic distribution. The dialect is the high-prestige default in spoken language (but see below). In written communication, the standard variety is generally chosen. There is no continuum as described for Germany. Many Germans cannot understand Swiss dialects (with the exception of some speakers from dialect regions in Southern Germany). Despite the fact that these differences exist, people are generally not aware of them and often assume that the linguistic situation, as well as rules of conduct (including politeness), are the same. Therefore, it is a perception portrayed in the media that many German immigrants to Switzerland assume that nothing will change when they move.

In what follows, we will show how complex the situation is. The German-speaking language area as a 'pluricentric' entity comprises three different versions of standard German – a German version, an Austrian version and a Swiss version – each of them with its own codifications (see Schmidlin, 2011). These standards are very similar, but there are some phonological, lexical and grammatical differences (Ulbrich, 2005; Hove, 2008). Alongside these standards, the dialects of the different areas are used; so, in the case of Switzerland we distinguish Swiss German dialects (SwGD) and Swiss standard German

(SwStG), and in the case of Germany, German dialects (GD) and German standard German (GStG). Since people make the distinction between dialect and standard themselves, and as the standards did not emerge from a single dialect, we will use these terms rather than 'varieties' and instead of differentiating between 'non-standard dialect' and 'standard dialect'.

As mentioned above, in Germany dialects have low status (overt and covert), and their significance is diminishing (although to different degrees: see Schmidlin, 2011; Spiekermann, 2005). In contrast, in the German-speaking area of Switzerland, dialects are not stigmatized as an inferior variety of language. On the contrary, they are the default variety in most informal everyday oral communication and have a higher status there than standard German (see Schmidlin, 2011; Berthele, 2010). In Switzerland, for oral communication, Swiss standard German is only used in situations such as teaching, parliamentary speeches or worship. Swiss standard German is used in most written communication (newspapers, books, written advertisements etc.).[1] Dialects, on the other hand, are used in the overwhelming majority of informal everyday communication settings, such as conversations in families and among friends. Even institutional settings, such as the workplace or service encounters, are conducted in dialect, unless there is a process of accommodation to conversational partners who do not understand dialects. For example, the Swiss often accommodate to immigrants by code-switching to the standard. The choice of language thus depends not only on the mediality but also on the communicative situation that interlocutors are involved in; it is more a functional diglossia than a medial one (Rash, 2002; Petkova, 2012).

Folk linguistics claims that there are pragmatic differences (e.g., concerning politeness) between Germany and the German-speaking part of Switzerland.[2] Contexts in which differences have been reported include situations where hierarchy or solidarity are emphasized and where issues of conflict and consensus are negotiated. Often these differences are related to the Swiss policy of consensus (Manno, 2005), which constitutes a societal ideology in itself. It is true that, at least in politics, Switzerland has a very strong tradition of a consensus culture, in which political decisions are usually made after extensive consultation procedures and protection of the minority also plays an important role (Linder, 2009). It might be in this context that the Swiss are

[1] Dialect also often appears in written private text messages and other forms of digital communication (see Schümann, 2011; Siebenhaar, 2006). Language use in radio and TV is mixed (see Luginbühl, 2012).

[2] Of course, there are also pragmatic differences within Germany (see Hausendorf, 2000; Kreutz, 2002), and there are no homogeneous Swiss norms. Furthermore, we should stress that Switzerland is officially multilingual, so the perception of breaches of politeness norms by Germans in the eyes of the Germanophone Swiss do not necessarily reflect a unified Swiss politeness norm across Swiss language boundaries.

often perceived as people who avoid open conflict. However, there is a dearth of robust comparative research based on empirical analyses of corpora on how this consensus is achieved linguistically.

## 4 Data and Methodology

We should state from the start that our sample is not representative of how ideologies are discussed in the entire country of Germany or Switzerland. What we offer here are insights into the emic discussions of a select number of online data sets that are part of the public discourse on politeness in the two countries. We found these sets by searching for the lexemes *Höflichkeit* ('politeness'), *Schweiz* ('Switzerland') and *Deutschland* ('Germany'). This resulted in a set of online sources that have the following points in common: (a) they all contain a 'trigger text' that opens a discussion on politeness concerns (e.g., an article in an online newspaper or a report on a survey); (b) the source contains a comments section to which readers can contribute; and (c) all sources were in the public domain so that ethical considerations did not prevent us from using the data. (For previous work on online newspaper comments, see, for example, Landert & Jucker, 2011; Langlotz & Locher, 2012; Neurauter-Kessels, 2011, 2013; Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015; Upadhyay, 2010.)

For all the contributions we use for illustration, we have removed nicknames, names and place names in order to ensure anonymity. As mentioned above, the data was in the public domain and was not password-protected. Following the AoIR guidelines on ethics for internet research (Ess et al., 2002; Markham & Buchanan, 2012), we believe that our data can be used without harming the subjects who originally posted the comments. All text in the examples is left unchanged, so typographical and grammatical errors are retained. The translations aim to be comprehensible, idiomatic English while also retaining some of the ungrammatical character of the originals. We should also stress that we do not share the views expressed in the examples, which are often of a pejorative and unjustly generalizing nature (e.g., 'the humorless Swiss', 'the arrogant Germans').

Table 10.1 gives an overview of our datasets. Set 1, 'BRD politeness', and Set 2, 'CH politeness', each contain three trigger texts and 50 analyzed comments. (For the first two trigger texts, we included all comments and used the third trigger text of each set to make the amount up to 50.) These two datasets function as our baseline for finding out what people discuss in threads that deal with Swiss and German politeness norms individually. Our main focus is on Set 3, which contains six trigger texts that explicitly invite reactions to compare Swiss and German politeness behavior. In this focus set, we included the first 50 posts for threads that contained more than 50 comments,

Table 10.1 *Three datasets on online discussion of Swiss and German politeness**

| | Participants | Comments | Comments analyzed |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Set 1 'BRD politeness' (N = 50)** | | | |
| *Deutsche Kinder: Egoistisch, unhöflich, unerzogen*, German children: egoistic, impolite, ill-mannered (2009) | 20 | 27 | 27 |
| *Mangelnder Anstand: Mittelfinger ist der neue Handkuss*, Lacking considerateness: showing the finger is the new kiss on the hand (2016) | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| *Deutsche waren früher höflicher*, Germans used to be more polite (2015) | 16 | 69 | 18 |
| **Set 2 'CH politeness' (N = 50)** | | | |
| *Auf Abstand zum Anstand*, On distance to considerateness (2008, updated 2012) | n/a** | 12 | 12 |
| *Höflichkeit 2.0: Der Knigge für den digitalen Alltag*, Politeness 2.0: The Knigge politeness manual for the digital times (2011) | 21 | 23 | 23 |
| *Höflichkeit versus Wahrheit*, Politeness versus Truth (2016) | 23 | 49 | 15 |
| **Set 3 'Comparison BRD-CH politeness' (N = 215)** | | | |
| *Deutsche Arroganz*, German arrogance (2013) | 16 | 36 | 36 |
| *Deutsche sind direkt, Schweizer humorlos*, Germans are direct, Swiss lack humor (2013) | 45 | 490 | 50 |
| *Deutsche fühlen sich einsam in der Schweiz*, Germans feel lonely in Switzerland (2016) | 46 | 448 | 50 |
| *Sprachbarrieren der anderen Art: „Grüzi mitenand"- Warum die Schweizer die Deutschen nicht verstehen*, Language barriers of a different kind: 'Grüzi mitenand' [Hello (plural address form)]. Why the Swiss don't understand the Germans (2014) | 17 | 18 | 18 |
| *Unsere Waffe*, Our weapon (2009, updated 2012) | n.a.** | 11 | 11 |
| *Weshalb Deutsche gehen*, Why Germans leave (2013) | 40 | 295 | 50 |

* The hyperlinks for the data sources are given in Appendix 1.
** The contributions to the readers' responses are entirely anonymous, so no information can be given on the number of participants.

and the entire set in cases when there were fewer than 50 comments. This resulted in a total of 215 analyzed comments.

As our data are naturally occurring, we cannot control for certain factors. First, because of the nature of this anonymous computer-mediated communication, we have no knowledge of whether the commentators are

Swiss or German unless they self-identify as such within their comments. Second, while all the trigger texts talk about politeness norms, their input does not match ideally. For example, a text such as 'Germans are direct, Swiss lack humor' summarizes the results of an online survey conducted by the newspaper addressing some linguistic topics directly (such as the question of whether Germans living in Switzerland should learn to speak a Swiss dialect or not); others, such as 'Germans feel lonely in Switzerland', report mostly on the shrinking number of German immigrants and do not mention linguistic topics at all. As a result, some of the differences observed in the coding distribution may be due to differences within the trigger texts. We will address this whenever it becomes relevant for our analysis.

The methodology we employed is a content analysis of the comments followed by a linguistic analysis of selected codes. Following MacQueen et al. (2008), we first read a selection of the threads and then drafted an initial code book. This code book was tested through independent coding and refined afterwards, a process that resulted in 28 codes with coder reliability greater than 75 percent. Any remaining differences were agreed on by the authors. Multiple coding for the same chunk of data was allowed. Appendix 2 contains an overview and brief descriptions of the 28 codes.

## 5 Results and Discussion

The codes helped us to identify the themes that the posters raised with respect to the trigger texts and those that developed within the discussions themselves. As a first step, we therefore introduce the set of codes that we identified (Section 5.1). In Section 5.2, we turn to the distribution of the codes as a springboard for further discussion. In Section 5.3, we analyze a select number of codes that deal with linguistic (im)politeness concerns.

### *5.1 Coding Categories*

Table 10.2 shows the set of codes that emerged in the content analysis. The codes cluster into five thematic groups plus two extra categories ('Other' and 'Off-topic'). The codes in Group 1, 'Behavior and (im)politeness', were tagged when posters raised (im)politeness concerns by discussing behavior in general (rather than linguistic behavior in particular). The first three tags refer to Swiss (CH) or German (BRD) behavior or explicitly comparative observations. The code 'Behavior-unspecified' was used in those posts where (im)politeness behavior was described but it was not clear whether this behavior was assigned to a particular nationality. As an illustration, we give two examples: Example 1

Table 10.2 *Coding groups in content analysis of online posts*

| | |
|---|---|
| **1 Behavior and (im)politeness** | **3 Integration** |
| Behavior-CH | IntegrationBeh |
| Behavior-Diff-CH-GERM | IntegrationVariety |
| Behavior-GERM | **4 Prejudices** |
| Behavior-unspecified | PREJagainstCH |
| **2 Language and (im)politeness** | PREJagainstGERM |
| Address terms | **5 General themes** |
| LingBeh-CH people | CommentsMedia |
| LingBeh-Difference GERM-CH | Deterioration |
| LingBeh-Difference within CH | Equalizing |
| LingBeh-Difference within GERM LingBeh-GERM people | Foreigners |
| | Gender |
| LingBeh-Unspecified | Proxy |
| ATTonCH-DialectsStandard ATTonGERM-DialectsStandard | Upbringing |
| | **6 Other concerns related to (im)politeness** |
| LingSituation-CH | **7 Off-topic** |
| LingSituation-GERM | |

illustrates the code 'Behavior-CH' and Example 2 the code 'Behavior-Diff-CH-GERM'.

(1) *Als ich vor mehr als 40 Jahren in die Schweiz kam, habe ich gerade an in den Behörden (den Beamten!) sehr viel Freundlichkeit, Zuvorkommenheit und Hilfsbereitschaft erlebt*
When I arrived in Switzerland more than 40 years ago, it was especially with people in administration that I experienced much friendliness, considerateness and helpfulness
('Why Germans leave', 005, Behavior-CH)

(2) *Überall sitzen die Deutschen drin. Bestimmen, Herrschen, Befehlen. Mag sein, dass es ihre Art ist und ihnen nicht bewusst ist. Aber es reibt sich einfach mit der Art und Weise, wie wir es früher in der Schweiz hatten.*
The Germans are absolutely everywhere. They rule, command, govern. It may be that they are not aware of this. But it is in conflict with the ways we were used to in Switzerland.
('German arrogance', 004, Behavior-Diff-CH-GERM)

The codes in Group 2, 'Language and (im)politeness', refer to passages that contain comments where a link was made between linguistic behavior and (im)politeness concerns, or whenever examples of linguistic (im)polite behavior were given. The code 'address terms' refers to the (im)proper use of titles, first names and the T/V distinction. Five further tags allowed us to code the described linguistic behavior with respect to who is responsible for it (LingBeh-CH people; LingBeh-GERM people), whether there are contrastive

differences (LingBeh-Difference GERM-CH) and whether there is variability within a country (LingBeh-Difference within CH; LingBeh-Difference within GERM). The tag 'LingBeh-Unspecified' was used when the described linguistic renditions could not be assigned to a particular nationality. The two tags on Attitude (ATTonCH-DialectsStandard; ATTonGERM-DialectsStandard) were used when posters took an evaluative stance toward the dialects or standards and linked this to an explanation of (im)polite behavior. The codes on the linguistic situation in Switzerland or Germany (LingSituation-CH; LingSituation-GERM) were applied when the respective linguistic situation was described (e.g., the relation between dialect and standard or mention of internal heterogeneity in general). The last four codes may appear not to be connected to (im)politeness concerns at first sight, but these comments are made in an attempt to explain (in)correct linguistic choices. As we will focus on all codes within this group for further discussion in Section 5.3, we do not give any examples here.

Group 3, 'Integration', contains only two codes that were used when mention was made that either linguistic or non-linguistic behavioral changes have to be made by immigrants in order to integrate into a new country (IntegrationBeh; IntegrationVariety). These codes are also illustrated in Section 5.3.

The codes in Group 4, 'Prejudice', were tagged when passages displayed explicit prejudice against German or Swiss people/groups and negative attitudes toward particular groups of people in general. In Example 3, there is first a negative generalization against Swiss people and later another against a group of Germans.

(3) *Wer hat euch denn diesen Schmarrn eingeredet? Ich bin seit gut 40 Jahren regelmäßig geschäftlich und privat in der Schweiz. Von Höflichkeit oder gar Freundlichkeit habe ich noch nichts bemerkt. Versuchen sie mal mit einem Deutschen Kennzeichen einen Schweizer nach dem Weg zu fragen … Geringschätziger Umgang mit Bedienungspersonal ist eher eine Norddeutsche Spezialität. Bei uns im Süden werden diese Menschen mit Respekt behandelt und gebeten, wenn man von ihnen etwas will.*
Who has told you this rubbish? I have been in Switzerland for business and private reasons on a regular basis for more than 40 years. I've never noticed any politeness or even friendliness. Just try to ask for directions with a German license plate … Treating waiters in a condescending manner is rather a specialty of Northern Germany. Here in the South, people are treated with respect and are asked politely when you want anything from them.
('Language barriers', 005, PREJagainstCH; PREJagainstGERM)

The codes in Group 5, 'General themes', contain a selection of issues that were raised with respect to (im)politeness norms that occurred several times. The code 'CommentsMedia' was used for comments that argue that the discussion about differences in (im)politeness norms between the two

countries is media-generated rather than based on facts, as in Example 4. 'Deterioration' was used for laments that the world used to be polite, as in Example 5. The label 'Equalizing' was used for comments that endeavored to strive for conciliation between the Swiss and Germans, usually by downplaying differences; see Example 6. The code 'Foreigners' refers to passages that blame immigrants in a negative generalizing manner (not necessarily Germans or Swiss people), as in Example 7. The label 'Gender' was tagged when explicit mention of gender norms with respect to (im)politeness was raised, as in Example 8. 'Proxy' was used for any passage that considers the discussion about language and language use only a symptom for much larger concerns; see Example 9. 'Upbringing' highlights the relation of (the lack of) proper upbringing with (im)politeness phenomena, as in Example 10.

(4) *Ist ja wohl klar, dass es vor allem von einem Teil der Medien hochgekocht wird*
It seems obvious that this [topic] is hyped by parts of the media
('Germans are direct', 024-Re022, CommentsMedia)

(5) *Der Umgang in unserer Gesellschaft wird ruppiger, davon ist die Erziehung nicht ausgeschlossen.*
Forms of conduct in our society are getting rougher, raising children is no exception.
('On distance to considerateness', 001, Deterioration)

(6) *Ich kenne ein paar grosskotzige, arrogante Deutsche. Und auch viele nette. Und ich kenne ein paar grosskotzige, arrogante Schweizer. Und auch viele nette. Trotz den Unterschieden in der Mentalität glaube ich nicht, dass wir Schweizer uns grundlegend von den Deutschen unterscheiden.*
I know some loud-mouthed and arrogant Germans. And also many nice ones. And I know some loud-mouthed and arrogant Swiss. And also many nice ones. Despite the differences in mentality, I do not believe that we Swiss are fundamentally different from the Germans.
('Our weapon', 004, Equalizing)

(7) *die spuckerei auf der strasse hat viel mit immigration zu tun, sozusagen!*
spitting on the streets has much to do with immigration, so to speak!
('On distance to considerateness', 011, Foreigners)

(8) *Im Rahmen der Gleichberechtigung ist es albern anzunehmen, dass Männer Frauen die Tür aufhalten sollen.*
In the context of gender equality it is silly to expect men to hold the door for women.
('German politeness', 001, Gender)

(9) *Das Problem liegt nicht bei den Ausländern als solche, sondern an der Angst, die Stelle zu verlieren, weil es viele Bewerber gibt und der Arbeitgeber mit diesem Wissen Druck ausüben kann.*

The problem is not the foreigners as such but the fear of losing jobs since there are many candidates and the employer can exercise power with the help of this knowledge.

('Germans feel lonely', 002, Proxy)

(10) *Vermutlich haben es viele Eltern versäumt den Kindern richtige Umgangsformen mit auf den Weg zu geben.*
Presumably many parents failed to teach their children proper forms of conduct.

('German politeness', 010, Upbringing)

Finally, the code 'Other' was employed for posts that contained a comment on (im)politeness concerns which, however, did not match any of the other established codes and did not lend themselves to further classification. 'Off-topic' was used for comments that could not be brought into connection with (im)politeness concerns at all.

As mentioned above, the same passage could be tagged with several different codes at the same time. For example, the codes for upbringing (n = 19) and deterioration (n = 31) were applied together in six instances; the tags describing prejudice and negative generalizations (n = 98) co-occurred with codes describing linguistic (im)politeness behavior from Group 3 (n = 111) in 20 instances; and (im)politeness behavior as tagged in Group 1 (n = 111) in 15 cases. This possibility of multiple labeling allows us to do greater justice to the data.

### 5.2 *The Distribution of Coding among Groups*

Table 10.3 displays the distribution of the codes as tagged in the three data sets according to the five groups and the two additional categories. The percentage indicates how many texts contained at least one of the codes from the respective groups. What becomes immediately apparent is that the linguistic side of (im)politeness is discussed in all three data sets, but that language is not the only aspect of (im)politeness that laypeople comment on. This can be seen in the importance of Group 1 on (im)polite behavior, which surpasses even comments on language in Set 1 and Set 2. The group 'General themes' has a substantial presence in Sets 1 and 3.

As we are particularly interested in the linguistic side of the discussion, we will concentrate on an analysis of Groups 2 and 3 below, since language issues surface in both. Before we tackle that part of the analysis, however, we make a number of further comments on the more detailed distribution of the subcodes within each group as presented in Table 10.4.

The distribution of codes in Group 1 shows that the trigger texts in Set 3, which contain a clearly comparative element, do indeed result in comments on

Table 10.3 *Coding distribution in the three datasets according to group*

| | Set 1: BRD politeness % (of 50) | Set 2: CH politeness % (of 50) | Set 3: Comparison BRD-CH politeness % (of 215) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Behavior and (im)politeness | 28 | 54 | 20 |
| 2 Language and (im)politeness | 12 | 26 | 32 |
| 3 Integration | 2 | | 28 |
| 4 Prejudices | 8 | | 34 |
| 5 General themes | 46 | 24 | 33 |
| 6 Other | 12 | 12 | 25 |
| 7 Off-topic | 2 | 8 | 13 |

similarities and differences of national politeness norms. While this is not surprising per se, it is nevertheless noteworthy that the posts in Set 2 do not contain any comments that identify national politeness norms that refer to non-linguistic behavior; in Set 1, there are only two such comments (4 percent). This means that – when discussed within a particular perceived group[3] – nationality does not surface as an important identification factor (but see below).

The codes on prejudices (Group 4) occur primarily in the comparative threads of Set 3. This can be related to the tendency to generalize and over-simplify differences along national lines (but see the discussion on heterogeneity in Section 5.3). In contrast, the label 'foreigners' (n = 29) from Group 4 appears in all three data sets, and it co-occurs with 'deterioration' in six instances (20 percent) and prejudice in five (17 percent). This means that a certain contrastive element is, after all, present in all three threads, but that the jibes are more often directed at particular people than at 'foreigners' in general. 'Equalizing' moves (i.e., comments that aim to downplay difference or to argue for acceptance of different politeness norms) occur entirely within Set 3. This can be seen as a result of the generalizations that came about with the contrastive trigger texts, which constitute face-threats to the respective attacked groups and call forth defensive comments.

Finally, the comments on gender (n = 8) occur entirely within Set 1. Here, the trigger text included the example that men (used to) hold the door for

[3] For the sake of the argument, we assume that contributors to the threads in Set 1 and Set 2 orient towards the trigger text, which is written in a Swiss or German online newspaper and thus provides a cultural backdrop for the discussion.

Table 10.4 *Coding distribution in the three datasets according to subcode*

| | Set 1: BRD politeness % (of 50) | Set 2: CH politeness % (of 50) | Set 3: Comparison BRD-CH politeness % (of 215) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1 Behavior and (im)politeness** | | | |
| Behavior-CH | | | 10 |
| Behavior-Diff-CH-GERM | | | 8 |
| Behavior-GERM | 4 | | 9 |
| Behavior-unspecified | 26 | 54 | <1 |
| **2 Language and (im)politeness** | | | |
| address terms | | 10 | 1 |
| ATTonCH-DialectsStandard | | | 3 |
| ATTonGERM-DialectsStandard | | | 3 |
| LingBeh-CH people | | 4 | 7 |
| LingBeh-Difference GERM-CH | | | 9 |
| LingBeh-Difference within CH | | | <1 |
| LingBeh-Difference within GERM | | | 7 |
| LingBeh-GERM people | 2 | | 11 |
| LingBeh-Unspecified | 6 | 20 | |
| LingSituation-CH | | | 10 |
| LingSituation-GERM | 4 | | 8 |
| **3 Integration** | | | |
| IntegrationBeh | | | 19 |
| IntegrationVariety | 2 | | 12 |
| **4 Prejudices** | | | |
| PREJagainstCH | | | 15 |
| PREJagainstGERM | 8 | | 26 |
| **5 General themes** | | | |
| CommentsMedia | 2 | | 5 |
| Deterioration | 30 | 14 | 3 |
| Equalizing | | | 18 |
| Foreigners | 10 | 4 | 10 |
| Gender | 14 | | |
| Proxy | | | 1 |
| Upbringing | 12 | 14 | 2 |
| **6 Other** | 12 | 12 | 25 |
| **7 Off-topic** | 2 | 8 | 13 |

women. This is then reacted to in the comments. Gender did not surface as an issue or concern in the other threads.

### *5.3 Emic Discussions on Linguistic (Im)politeness (Groups 2 and 3)*

In what follows, we focus on the groups 'Language and (Im)politeness' and 'Integration'. We turn first to a number of linguistic renditions that function as cultural markers of Swiss and German people (Section 5.3.1), then to a language ideology that generalizes homogeneity within language areas combined with firm in/out-group positionings (Section 5.3.2) and finally to discussions on integration that are mostly tied to language choice (Section 5.3.3).

*5.3.1 Characterizations of Swiss and German Linguistic Behavior* Our coding group 'language and (im)politeness', which addresses linguistic behavior, attitudes and situations, is especially interesting regarding the codes that capture characterizations of linguistic behavior of Swiss and German people and comparison between them (see Table 10.2, codes starting with 'LingBeh'). The most prominent issue that the posters discuss here is levels of mitigation (see Grundler, 2011: 292–7) in orders placed during service encounters (e.g., in bakeries). The argument usually states that Germans behave impolitely by saying "Ich kriege XY" ('I get XY', verb in indicative) instead of "Ich hätte gern" ('I would like to have', auxiliary verb in subjunctive) when they order something in Switzerland. The post in Example 11 relates GStG and SD to different pragmatic behaviors, resulting in the paradox that the common language is in fact separating people rather than unifying them.

(11) *Paradoxerweise ist es die objektiv gemeinsame Sprache, die trennend wirkt. Für viele Schweizer liegen Welten zwischen dem Schweizerdeutsch und dem Hochdeutsch. Beispiel: „I hätt no gärn es Brot" sage ich der Verkäuferin im Bäckerladen -- der Deutsche: „Ich kriege ein Brot" Und schon hagelt es böse Blicke ob diesem in Deutschland üblichen Befehlston!*
Paradoxically, what appears to be a common language is causing separation. For many Swiss there are worlds between Swiss German and Standard German. For example: I say to the assistant at the baker's, "I'd like to have a loaf of bread" [+ mitigation *no* "just"; the text is written in dialect] – the German: "I get a loaf of bread". And immediately there are harsh glances due to this tone of command, which is customary in Germany!
('German arrogance', 007, LingBeh-Difference GERM-CH)

The difference in language use is first related to the difference between GStG (called *Hochdeutsch*, 'high German') and SwGD (called *Schweizerdeutsch*, 'Swiss German'), but after quoting the different utterances, the author of the

post interprets the German example as a typical behavior pattern for placing orders in Germany. This behavior is evaluated negatively, as it provokes angry looks.

The difference between GStG and SwGD in Example 11 is discussed in quite a few posts, reflecting on different aspects. In Example 12, not only codes starting with LingBehavior are applicable, but also codes relating to attitudes (ATTonCH-DialectsStandard and ATTonGERM-DialectsStandard). While in some posts (mostly by Swiss posters themselves), the deficient language competence of Swiss Germans talking GStG is alluded to, others state that Germans exhibit verbal superiority, as they speak more fluently and clearly (for this view, see Scharloth, 2006; Koller, 1992: 153).

(12) *Deutsche sprechen in ihrer Muttersprache. Hochdeutsch wird uns in der Schule vermittelt, das wir nur selten zur Perfektion ausreifen lassen können-sei es mangels Fleiss oder mangels Liebe zu dieser Sprache. In dieser Betrachtungsweise ist uns der Deutsche also zwangläufig „überlegen".*
Germans speak in their mother tongue. High German is taught at school and we can rarely learn it to perfection – be it due to lack of diligence or lack of love for this language. Looking at it this way, the German is "superior" by definition.
('German arrogance', 033, LingBeh-Difference GERM-CH)

In this example, we find the essentialist idea that people from Germany have different language skills from Swiss people, not only in terms of their level of competence when it comes to standard German, but also in terms of their fluency (see also Koller, 1992: 153, who came to similar results in his survey). In this case two separate, homogeneous spaces are established that differ regarding language skills.

*5.3.2 The Culturalization of Swiss and German Linguistic Behavior* In our posts, the unmitigated formulation 'I get XY' for requests in shop/restaurant encounters (see Example 11) becomes a shibboleth for the impolite German as perceived by the Swiss. This behavior appears to be related to a seemingly homogeneous German mentality or culture, as in Example 13.

(13) *Und dass der Deutsche eine Mentalität hat, die als schweizer nicht positiv wargenommen wird ist auch bekannt. Ich krieg ne Cola. In der Schweiz ist höflichkeit ein muss*
It is common knowledge that the Germans have a mentality that is not perceived positively by Swiss people. I get a coke. In Switzerland politeness is a must
('Germans feel lonely', 035, LingBehavior-GERM people)

Posts commenting on this stated difference between Swiss Germans and Germans are spread all over our corpus, but most of them can be found in the comment section of the text 'Why Germans are leaving'. This trigger

text does not refer to this particular issue explicitly, but it states that there is a very constraining, self-satisfied mentality prevailing in Switzerland. Thus, while it is not surprising that the comments talk of mentality or culture, the 'I get' example itself is not triggered by the text, which affirms that this linguistic example currently functions as a shibboleth for cultural difference.

A lack of mitigation and a tendency to generalization is also mentioned in additional contexts besides 'I get', as in Example 14.

(14) *"Ich kriege" (eine Forderung) und "ich hätte gerne" (eine Bitte) scheint mir doch treffend den grossen Mentalitätsunterschied zu reflektieren. Auch nervt dieses "man", das "man" ständig und überall hört. Mit diesem "man ist ja so glücklich", "man hat gerne seine Ruhe am Abend", "man hat dann immer noch Hunger", etc. redet "man" ständig im Namen von anderen. Das Wort "ich" scheint unaussprechlich, denn "man" weiss ja wie der Hase auch bei den anderen läuft. Deshalb ist bei ihnen auch meistens immer alles "klar" oder "es ist ja völlig klar". Oder "es ist ja völlig normal, dass …" Der Schweizer sagt: "Meiner Meinung nach ist es so, dass …" oder "Ich denke" oder "Ich glaube, dass …" Erlässt immer eine andere Option offen. Auch wenn er keinerlei Zweifel hat, dass es so ist wie er sagt. Das verlangt der höfliche Umgang.*

"I get" (a request) and "I'd like to have" (a plea) seems to reflect well the difference in mentality. The overuse of "one", which "one" hears all the time, is also bothersome. By using this "one", you speak constantly in the name of others: "one is so happy", "one would like to have peace and quiet in the evening", "one is still hungry", etc. The word "I" seems to be taboo because "one" knows how the cookie crumbles. This results in everything being "clear" or "it being totally clear". Or "it is totally normal that …" The Swiss says: "In my opinion it is the case that …" or "I think" or "I believe that …" He always leaves open an alternative. Even when he has no doubt that it is the way he said. This is required as polite conduct.

('Why Germans leave', 045, LingBehavior-GERM people)

First, the 'I get' example is mentioned as symbol of different mentalities: the Swiss version is considered polite, a face-protecting plea (i.e., the face-threat is mitigated) and the German impolite (a face-threatening request). These different behaviors are then illustrated with a further linguistic example. The writer claims that the Germans use the generic pronoun "man" ('one') and thus claim knowledge of the group and speak for the group. In contrast, the argument goes, the Swiss use the first person singular pronoun "ich" ('I') and thus put the expressed statement in an individual perspective, and in so doing implicitly express that other perspectives are possible; that is, the Swiss never describe their own position as non-negotiable truth.

The stated omission of "bitte" ('please') or "danke" ('thank you') is interpreted as another sign of lack of German politeness in some of our posts (Example 15).

(15) *Nichts mit „Bitte"! Nicht wie wir es uns in der Schweiz gewöhnt sind. „Würden sie bitte . . ., oder Würde es ihnen etwas ausmachen.". Immer alles typisch deutsch und immer im Imperativ.*
No "please" ever! Not like we are used to in Switzerland. "Would you like to, please . . ., or Would you mind". Always typically German and always in the imperative.
('German arrogance', 009, LingBeh-GERM people)

Along with posts commenting on two different, homogeneous national behaviors and mentalities, there are also posts emphasizing heterogeneity (Examples 16 and 17).

(16) *Also ich krieg mal ein Bier sagt in D nur der letzte Proll, und dieser kann sich in CH kein Bierli leisten*
Well, only the most rude proletarian would say I get a beer in Germany, and he would not be able to afford a beer [+ diminutive] in Switzerland
('Language barriers', 008, LingBehavior-GERM people)

(17) *Das bezweifle ich, gerade ältere sagen an Theken "ich bekomme . . ." oder eben "ich kriege . . ."*
I doubt this, it is especially older people who say "I receive . . ." at the counter or in fact "I get . . ."
('Language barriers', 016-Re015, LingBehavior-GERM people)

In Examples 16 and 17, the writers ascribe the 'I get' behavior to members of the working class or older people, and thus add sociolinguistic variables to the discussion. As a consequence, there are also voices that question the stereotypical views, although they are rarer.

Within all codes discussed so far (except for 'Equalizing'), the in-group and out-group are marked through different acts of positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990) that refer to homogeneous, nationally defined groups, such as:

- indications of geographical locations/regions in a national sense: 'But it chafes with the ways we were used to in Switzerland' (Example 2); 'Not like we are used to in Switzerland' (Example 15); 'And immediately there are harsh glances due to this tone of command, which is customary in Germany!' (Example 11)
- the use of nation-related nouns with the definite article, be it in the plural: 'The Germans are absolutely everywhere' (Example 2), 'Looked at it this way, the Germans are "superior" by definition' (Example 12); or in the singular: 'The Swiss says: "In my opinion it is the case that"' (Example 14)
- user names that reveal regional or national belonging (e.g., The Swiss, The German, The Saxon, The Bernese, The Bavarian)
- the use of personal or possessive pronouns in the first person plural: 'Not like we are used to in Switzerland' (Example 15); or the third person plural: 'They rule, command, govern' (Example 2).

We can also find acts of positioning that relate to national heterogeneity, usually stating a difference between northern and southern Germany: 'treating waiters in a condescending manner is rather a specialty of Northern Germany. Here in the South, people are treated with respect and are asked politely when you want anything from them' (Example 3). In these cases, which are less frequent in our data, the in-group includes southern Germany and potentially the German-speaking part of Switzerland, the out-group northern Germany. The border between the groups is displaced, but there remain two homogeneous groups bound to geographical areas.

All these acts relate to, and at the same time reinforce, national or at least regional identities, and – as we will discuss later – these negotiations of identities and moral orders are usually triggered by media coverage arguing for similar positionings (as the titles of the stories in Set 3 of our data very clearly show).

The use of address terms, which we coded separately, turned out to be not a prominent issue (n = 7). Sometimes, it is stated that impolite Germans do not greet others, and the overuse (from the perspective of Germans) of the T-form in Switzerland is discussed.

*5.3.3 Integration and Language Choice* The difference between GStG and SwGD (see Example 11, Section 5.3.1) becomes even more important in posts commenting on the question of integration, where the issue of variety becomes crucial (code 'IntegrationVariety'). Basically, there are two positions discussed in the comments, arguing either that learning SwGD is a prerequisite for integration in Switzerland (but that Germans are often unwilling or unable to do that) or that speaking SwGD is interpreted as currying favor when your L1 is GStG or a regional dialect from Germany.

Some posts by Germans report on Swiss people's negative reactions when Germans speak GStG, as in Example 18.

(18) *nur traue ich mich nicht Mundart zu reden, ich spreche dialektfreies hochdeutsch was nicht immer gut ankommt.*
I don't dare to speak dialect, I speak dialect-free High German, which is not always appreciated.
('Germans feel lonely', 048, IntegrationVariety; ATTonGERM-DialectsStandard)

This post shows a clearly critical attitude and hostile reaction of some Swiss people to Germans who are attempting to adapt. However, some Swiss are equally displeased with Germans who insist on standard German in Switzerland. This is because it forces Swiss people to adapt to the Germans in their own country.

We found a number of posts from Swiss people and Germans living in Switzerland who claim that learning SwGD is the only way to integrate and that foreigners who do not follow suit are just profiteers, as in Example 19.

(19) *Also ich habe 30 Jahre als Deutscher in der Schweiz gelebt und es gab nur einen einzigen Weg fuer ein langfristig erfuellendes Leben in der Schweiz: Perfektes Schweizer Deutsch sprechen! Erst dann stehen wirklich alle Tueren offen. Dafuer braucht es aber grosse Motivation und viel Ausdauer und Wille, diese Eigenschaften bringen die meisten deutschen (und anderer Nationen) Gelegenheits-Jobsucher aber nicht mit. Deutsch und direkt gesagt: Die meisten Auslaender suchen in der Schweiz ein hohes Gehalt und sind zu faul die Sprache richtig zu erlernen.*
So I lived as a German in Switzerland for 30 years and there was only one way for a long term and fulfilling life in Switzerland: speak perfect Swiss German! Only then are all doors open. But to achieve this you need a lot of motivation and stamina, these are characteristics that most German (and other nationalities) occasional job hunters do not have. Said in a German and direct way: most Germans look for a high salary in Switzerland and are too lazy to properly learn the language.
('Germans are direct', 033, IntegrationVariety)

On the other hand, Germans report that their attempts to speak SwGD are criticized for inauthentic crossing, which is seen as currying favor (Example 20).

(20) *Ich habe mir anfangs auch Mühe gegeben, Mundart zu lernen, wurde aber fast jedes Mal kritisiert, ich solle es lassen. Schweizer könnten sich veräppelt fühlen, wenn ich sie "nachäffe". Also hab ich gelassen.*
At the beginning I made efforts to learn the dialect, but was criticized almost all the time that I should quit. The Swiss feel that they are being made fun of when I 'mimic' them. So I quit.
('Germans are direct', 036, IntegrationVariety)

Reflected in all these posts is of course the significance and prestige of local varieties (in our case, the Swiss German dialects in Switzerland) regarding social membership (on indexicality, see Ochs, 1992; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). The posts show how difficult, if not impossible, it is to choose a language variety that brings no problems; as some people obviously expect linguistic accommodation, while others condemn it due to the near impossibility of a perfect accommodation.

While integration is often discussed in Set 3 of our data in terms of linguistic accommodation to SwGD, it is discussed even more in more general terms, that is, not excluding linguistic behavior, but also not mentioning it in an explicit way (see IntegrationVariety, 12 percent; IntegrationBehavior, 19 percent, Table 10.4). A fairly uniform attitude is expressed in the vast majority of these posts: immigrants have to adapt, and it is absolutely inappropriate to expect locals to adapt to immigrants. Examples 21 and 22 express this attitude, which can be found in many more posts.

(21) *Sobald sich ein Ausländer in der Schweiz niederlassen und arbeiten will muss er sich unserer Lebensweise anpassen und nicht von uns erwarten dass wir sein anders sein übernehmen.*

As soon as a foreigner wants to settle and to work in Switzerland, he must adapt to our way of life and cannot expect us to adopt his foreign ways.
('German arrogance', 008, IntegrationBehavior)

(22) *Jeder neu Einwanderer soll sich an die Gewohnheiten bzw. Gepflogenheiten im neuen Land anpassen. Kann er das nicht soll er wieder gehen. Auch wir müssen uns im Ausland anpassen.*
Every immigrant should adopt the customs and ways of doing things in the new country. If he cannot do this, he should leave again. We also have to adapt abroad.
('Germans are direct', 045, IntegrationBehavior)

If the question regarding what behavior should be changed and adapted to is discussed, it usually comes down to linguistic behavior.

## 6 Conclusions

An important finding of our analysis is that the cross-cultural framing of the trigger texts in Set 3 also invited viewing politeness norms as a cultural and even national phenomenon, while the national component did not emerge in the discourse of the threads in Set 1 and 2 to the same degree. A second set of findings concerns processes of homogenization and generalization. Linguistic diversity is simplified, and local norms are reframed as cultural and national norms. This transpires especially when linguistic surface structures become a shibboleth for how an entire group of people is supposed to function, think and work.

Within our data, we observed a number of interesting clashes of language ideologies, as societal/cultural politeness ideologies interlace with general language ideologies; language and culture were often equated. In the case of our posts, this entailed that SwGD and GStG are constructed as being two separate languages.[4] Furthermore, in the data, not only is 'Swiss German' depicted as a homogeneous entity and as a different language from German, but also the behavior that comes with it, a Swiss politeness, is construed in the posts as a unified construct.

The intriguing point is that the process of linguistic and behavioral homogenization strongly contradicts the common Swiss language ideology that celebrates regional linguistic differences within Switzerland (Berthele, 2014; Siebenhaar & Wyler, 1997), with respect to SwGD as well as with respect to the different national languages of Switzerland (French, Italian, Romansch, German). This celebration of diversity goes even further in that the discourse

[4] It is a common conundrum for scholars working with questionnaires whether to treat SwGD as separate from SwStG when enquiring after the informants' L1 (see, for example, Werlen, Rosenberger, & Baumgartner, 2011, who list both).

of Switzerland as a nation united by choice (*Willensnation*) has a long tradition (Widmer, 2007: 122). It is, therefore, an interesting finding that our data silence this discourse, with only a few exceptions (see Examples 19 to 22). Consider Example 23.

(23) *Hallo lieber Tessiner! das ist was ganz anderes, wenn du dann mit Italienischem Akzent deutsch sprichst. Das ist eine ganz andere Sprache und du versuchst dich dann einfach gut zu verständigen.*
Hello dear Ticinese [person from the canton of Ticino]! this is entirely different when you speak German with an Italian accent. This is a totally different language and you simply manage to communicate well.
('Germans are direct', 009, IntegrationVariety)

We have shown many examples above in which the tone toward the Germans was aggressive and accusatory with respect to integration. The stance expressed toward the fellow Swiss person who speaks Italian is drastically different. He is welcome to speak Swiss standard German and is not expected to adopt the dialect. It seems that, in quite a clichéd way, the Swiss only see the dialect and the standard as distinct when faced with the Germans who are perceived as 'linguistically superior' and need to construct separateness. In the same vein, it bears stating that we did not find any threads or trigger texts where Germans felt threatened by the Swiss, which might be due to the proportionately small number of Swiss people immigrating to Germany. While this defensiveness might be evidence for the much-discussed minority complex of the Swiss with respect to their national neighbors (Tanner, 2015: 13; Koller, 1992: 153), we found that the Swiss were not exactly shy in telling their readers how polite behavior should be enacted.

Finally, it is worth remembering that the abovementioned processes of generalization are also contradicted, since linguistic diversity within the compared countries is acknowledged in some posts. However, in most cases, dialectal or regional spaces are constructed as homogeneous language areas within themselves that pertain to a particular culture (one dialect, one culture).

For the future, we identify three avenues of research. First, it would be interesting to expand the Swiss and German datasets and to explore further what language ideologies surface in larger data sets. For example, we hypothesize that the processes of homogenization might be complemented by diversification in the sense that differences between dialects are highlighted. Second, the question of whether there is a specific 'Swiss politeness' surely cannot be answered by the Germanophone population on its own, so interesting debates about whether there are Swiss politeness norms across the Swiss language boundaries might be of interest for further research. Third, such an endeavor would have to take into account not only the ideology of the Swiss nation

united by choice (*Willensnation*; Widmer, 2007: 122) and the distinction from the larger neighboring countries (Germany and Austria, Italy, France), but also the distinction across the four language areas within Switzerland.

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