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Contrasting language attitudes: The case of Spanish in Basel

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Abstract: Two concurrent discourses on the presence of non-national languages such as Spanish and its speakers circulate in Switzerland's public sphere: one that conceives this presence positively and another that considers it negatively. Following a multimodal discursive-interactive approach, in this study I seek to determine which of these discourses is reproduced in the individual, private accounts of five Swiss nationals. My results show that these individuals echo both of the readily available dominant discourses, meaning that they construct contrasting attitudes related to said presence, regardless of whether these attitudes are deployed as part of their own set of beliefs or that of other Swiss nationals like them. These results build on prior research that shows that the private attitudes of individuals are often strongly affected by various elements of the situational context (e.g., dominant discourses, the immediate surroundings, etc.) and, as a consequence of this, variable by nature. More generally, my results demonstrate the need to reframe how certain aspects of prominent social topics such as the presence of migrants and their languages are treated by authorities and in public media outlets.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, language attitudes, discursive-interactive approach, Spanish, Switzerland

1 Introduction

Multiculturalism and multilingualism related to migration have recently garnered much attention in Switzerland's everyday discourses, equaling and even surpassing the attention traditionally garnered by this country's national multiculturalism and multilingualism – embodied by the existence of three major, distinct cultural-linguistic regions: one that is German-speaking, one that is French-speaking, and another that is Italian-speaking. One reason for this is that the latest

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census data show that 26% of Switzerland's population consists of non-national citizens, a number that contrasts strikingly with the figure of 14% reported a mere three decades ago (Secrétariat d'État aux Migrations 2018). In other words, in Switzerland, at the time of this writing, one out of four residents holds a non-Swiss passport. In the border cities of Geneva and Basel, this figure is even higher and amounts to 40 and 36% of the population, respectively (Office Cantonal de la Statistique 2017; Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2018).

Interestingly, research shows that the country's discursive response to the presence of non-national Swiss citizens and the various languages that they bring to the country ranges from negative to positive. In other words, there are at least two concurrent viewpoints about it. Flubacher (2013) and Yeung (2016), for instance, observe that the response has been negative in the sense that, at least since the early 2000s, this presence – embodied by language and cultural maintenance – has been discursively framed as an impediment to the proper integration of non-national populations into Swiss society and, thus, as a threat to national identity and security. According to these authors, this sort of discourse was mainstreamed, normalized, and brought into the public sphere by politicians whose agendas have emphasized the need to enforce the acquisition of a national language (i.e., German, French, or Italian) as a key component of both the integration of non-national citizens and homeland security. In fact, in 2005, this type of discourse was enacted into a law – Article 54 of the Federal Act on Foreign Nationals (The Portal of the Swiss Government 2005). This law, as can be seen below, grants permanent residency authorizations to non-national residents according to their degree of integration (para. 2), measured in part on the basis of their knowledge of one of the national languages (para. 1).

Art. 54 Consideration of integration in the case decisions

1. The granting of a residence or short stay permit may be made conditional on taking a language course or an integration course. This also applies to the granting of permits for family reunification (Art. 43–45). The obligation to take a course may be stipulated in an integration agreement.
2. The authorities shall take the degree of integration into consideration when granting permanent residence permits (Art. 34 para. 4) and when exercising their discretionary powers, in particular in the case of removal and expulsion as well as of bans on entry (Art. 96).

As can be seen, failure to demonstrate language and cultural competence when applying for permanent resident status may result in deportation or exclusion from admission into the country (para. 2). As a consequence of this agenda, this sort of narrative has become pervasive in the country's media coverage of the

issue. For example, the *20 minutes* articles “Tour de vis pour obtenir le passeport suisse dès 2018” (June 17, 2016), “Pour rester, les étrangers devront être bien intégrés” (September 14, 2016), and “Être bien intégré pour pouvoir s’établir en Suisse” (September 17, 2016) – all of which were published within a period shorter than three months – each emphasize that official entities are responsible for stiffening and enforcing the current law for the sake of the nation’s security and unity.

On the other end of the spectrum, Del Percio (2015) and Duchêne and Alfonso (2014) note that the response to the presence of non-national citizens and their languages has been positive in the sense that it has been discursively conceived as an enrichment of the nation’s inherent cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as increasing the country’s attractiveness as a destination of international business opportunities. According to these authors, such discourse emanated from governmental institutions dedicated, since the late 1990s, to promoting an image of Switzerland as a country fundamentally open to cultural and language heterogeneity and, as such, an attractive place to work and do business without the limitations of countries believed to be monolingual and monocultural. As a result, not only has the presence of non-nationals and their languages been construed as an added value to the country’s already established multiculturalism and multilingualism, it has also been used as a marketing tool through which different national localities brand themselves as attractive business sites. Consider as an example the webpages “Basel is international” and “People from some 160 nations”, both of which are hosted on the website of the city of Basel as of 8 July 2019. Each depicts the city as a cosmopolitan center in which people from different cultural backgrounds happily live together and where doing business is easy.

To date, although the aforementioned studies have addressed the ways in which these discourses have developed in the national public sphere and permeated it, less is known about how they have been internalized in the private sphere and affected (or not) the responses or attitudes of national individuals toward the presence of non-nationals and their languages in the country.

In this article, I explore this question by looking at privately held attitudes of Swiss nationals toward the presence of Spanish and its speakers in the city of Basel, a predominantly German-speaking locality of approximately 200,000 inhabitants marked by a strong presence of speakers of non-national languages, among which speakers of Spanish are well represented (Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2018). In fact, with approximately 5000 people, they are outnumbered only by speakers of Turkish and Serbo-Croatian, who, with roughly 6,000 people each, are the other large groups of speakers of non-national

languages in the city.¹ The presence of Spanish and its speakers in Basel is historical and sustained, dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, when Spaniards and Latin Americans, respectively, arrived in large numbers, the former under programs designed to attract labor, and the latter fleeing the political and economic insecurities generated in their countries by a series of military interventions (Bolzman et al. 2003, 2007). Since then, as census data show, the number of Spanish-speaking non-nationals has remained relatively stable or even increased over the years (Office Fédéral de la Statistique 2018). As a consequence, their presence in the city is remarkable, not only because of their numbers, but also in terms of what Blommaert (2013: 49) calls “traces of human activity”, among which, according to Blommaert and Maly (2016), one could mention the sound of their voices, which could be heard by walking down the streets of the city center, and the signs of the institutions they operate and the stores they own, which could be seen by walking down the same streets.

For all the reasons listed above, I argue that examining the attitudes of Swiss nationals toward the presence of Spanish and its speakers serves the purpose of this study, allowing for an exploration of the ways in which public discourses about non-nationals and their languages become inscribed in the subjectivities of Swiss nationals. Specifically, I aim to determine whether the attitudes of the latter toward the presence of the former primarily echo elements from the widespread discourse that the presence of non-national languages and its speakers may jeopardize their integration into society and thus national security, or whether they reflect elements from the popular discourse that this presence is a sign of openness to diversity and a national virtue. While the first possibility could hint at the formation of negative attitudes among Swiss individuals, the second one could hint at the formation of positive responses.

Understanding the ways in which mainstream and normalized public discourses pervade the private space of individuals, eventually informing their responses to certain societal topics, is important for theoretical and practical reasons. First, this knowledge can help scholars of language attitudes to better understand the connection between language-related cultural or societal ideologies and the attitudes of individuals toward language-related issues deemed to be important by media outlets, public offices, and governmental institutions. Second, this knowledge can also help policy-making institutions to develop much needed interventions related to discrimination against non-national citizens and the maintenance of their languages in migration contexts.

¹ They are followed by speakers of Portuguese and English, with approximately 3,500 people each. Most other speakers of non-national languages number less than 1,000 people (Statistisches Amt des Kantons Basel-Stadt 2018).

I look at my main research question through the lens of a discursive-interactive approach that departs from the idea that privately held attitudes “emerge within the context of the interactional structure; and [...] are expressed under the influence of the situational context, which includes both larger ideologies present in a culture and the immediate context of the interactants” (Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain 2009: 217). This approach has been developed and adapted by authors like Giles and Coupland (1991), Hyrkstedt and Kalaja (1998), Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain (2009, 2017), and Rodgers (2017) during the last three decades or so in response to the shortcomings of written questionnaires and scales, which constitute the traditional approaches to the study of language attitudes (Garrett 2010). According to these authors, the most important limitations of these approaches are the difficulty of applying findings to real-life situations and the rigid nature of closed questions and scales, each of which hinder the possibility of observing both the context-responsive nature of people’s attitudes and their inherent variability and complexity. Studies in the discursive-interactive strand have addressed these shortcomings by tapping people’s language attitudes through everyday casual metalinguistic commentary – which has allowed them to assess what is relevant to people in the situatedness and contextual nature of the present moment – and by putting the focus on how people discursively construct their attitudes and beliefs – which has allowed them to bring to light their variable and complex nature. Therefore, this approach is well-suited for my study, not only because I aim to explore how national individuals reproduce (or not) prevailing local, ideological discourses regarding the presence of non-national languages and their speakers in the country that they share with them in a situated, in-the-moment manner, but also because, as will be seen below, I intend to determine which elements of the immediate surrounding context inform the attitudes that individuals adopt, and how these elements and the nature of the interactional envelope allow them to express complex, nuanced attitudes.

In the next section, I describe the empirical study. In the section thereafter, I present and discuss the emergent findings. In the final section, I address the theoretical contributions and practical implications of my study.

2 The study

The setting in which I conducted my study is the city of Basel, a predominantly German-speaking locality marked by a strong presence of speakers of non-national languages, among which Spanish-speaking populations constitute a visible community. For that reason, it was a fitting place in which to explore the attitudes and beliefs of national residents toward the presence of Spanish and its speakers.

The data of this study were collected during the months of September and November 2016 and come from self-recorded interactions (in dyads) between a then

23-year-old research assistant of Swiss origin named Sara² and five of her acquaintances of the same origin, but of different ages and gender identities: Anna, a 51-year-old woman; Dirk, a 22-year-old man; Tom, a 23-year-old man; Elsa, a 25-year-old woman; and Alina, a 25-year-old woman. With the exception of Elsa, whom Sara met in a store where the former works as a salesperson, all are college-educated and met Sara in this context. Specifically, Dirk, Tom, and Alina were, at some point, Sara's classmates, while Anna was a former academic advisor. The recordings took place in a variety of locations that Sara chose, including cafés, a college cafeteria, and a public bench in the immediate surroundings of Basel's central square.

Self-consciousness is one reason I chose not to participate in the recordings. As Cashman (2015: 68–69) notes, "in any qualitative ethnographic research, it is necessary to recognize that the research process is intrinsically and unavoidably impacted by, among many things, the dynamics of power between researcher(s) and participant(s), affecting both the data collection process and also the product, that is, the data collected." Another factor that may influence the data collected is, as Grewal and Ritchie (2006) and Rickford and McNair-Knox (1994) note, the ethnicity of the interviewer. As a Latino scholar, I did not want the responses of the five individuals who took part in my study to be swayed by either my ethnicity or my academic status as a researcher. The fact that Sara is of the same origin as these individuals, as well as an acquaintance of theirs, was useful in decreasing the influence of these factors on the discursive formation of their attitudes. In addition, following De Fina and Tseng (2017) and Garrett (2010), who note that asking questions aimed at tapping attitudes toward, for example, non-national populations or ethnic groups may lead individuals to self-present in a positive manner and avoid expressing negative attitudes (a phenomenon commonly referred to as *social desirability bias*), I asked Sara to inquire about the attitudes of other Swiss nationals toward the presence of Spanish and its speakers in Basel, rather than asking them directly about their own attitudes. As will be seen below, this resulted in some of the individuals who participated in the study avoiding mentioning their own attitudes. Nevertheless, I take the fact that these individuals talk only on behalf of their fellow countrypersons rather than on behalf of themselves as relevant for my analysis.

In order to elicit the attitudes of Anna, Dirk, Tom, Elsa, and Alina, I used a modified form of Garvin's (2010) *walking tour* methodology. Specifically, I asked Sara to present said individuals with photos of certain places in which the presence of Spanish is visible on public signs (i.e., in the linguistic landscape) before addressing the attitudes question by asking them *How do you think Swiss people feel when they see these stores' signs in Spanish in Basel?* In addition to symbolically embodying the presence of a language and its speakers in a given territory in a situated manner (Landry and

² This and other names are pseudonyms; individuals gave consent to be recorded.

Bourhis 1997; Scollon and Scollon 2003), Albury (2018), Carr (2017), and Garvin (2010), among others, have shown the linguistic landscape to be useful as a visual stimulus through which to elicit people's opinions during recorded conversations. This is the reason why I opted for this method of data collection. Additionally, to reflect the diversity of social realms in which Spanish may be encountered in Basel and thus enhance the situatedness of the materials presented, the pictures that Sara used as prompts showed the façade of La Galería, a Mexican-Guatemalan arts and crafts store; a billboard of the Misión Católica de Lengua Española de Basilea, a Spanish Church; the façade of La Española, a Spanish grocery store; the entrance of the Guardería Infantil Española, a Spanish daycare; and the street sign of Tapas del Mar, a Spanish restaurant (see Figure 1).

All of these places are noteworthy not only because they are located in the immediate surroundings of Basel's central square, but also because they have been part of the city's linguistic landscape for many years. The Church was established in the 1960s, the daycare in the 1970s, the arts and crafts and grocery stores in the 1980s, and the restaurant in the 2000s. For these reasons, Anna, Dirk, Tom, Elsa, and Alina were all familiar with them and acknowledged them as inherent elements of the city center's linguistic landscape.



Figure 1: Signs used as prompts.

I analyze the excerpts in which these individuals discursively constructed their attitudes by drawing from the methods of conversation analysis (Schegloff 1991) and interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 2001). Therefore, I took into consideration not only directly expressed language attitudes as they appear within utterances, but also the structure and function of specific words and linguistic categories, and features of discourse, which also play an important role in the construction of meaning. Following Koike and James (2012), Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2009), and Schiffрин (1987), I considered interjections such as *ähm* 'um' and discourse markers like *aso* 'I mean' as hedging and strengthening devices, respectively, and features like laughter, interruptions, pauses, and intonation and intensity changes as conveyors of meaning. In addition, following Jewitt (2014), I adopted an approach that looks beyond language to all forms of communication, highlighting the potentially complex interactions between what is being said and semiotic resources like the pictures that were presented to Anna, Dirk, Tom, Elsa, and Alina. To gauge if one of the places seen in these pictures was more relevant than others to these individuals during their responses, Sara took notes on how said individuals physically interacted with the materials that she provided by, for example, holding one picture in particular when speaking or gazing at it. As will be seen below, these notes are part of the transcriptions, for which the conventions are included in the Appendix A.

3 Findings and discussion

3.1 Main finding

The main finding emerging from the present study is that both the positive and negative discursive responses to the presence of non-nationals and their languages evidenced in Del Percio (2015), Duchêne and Alfonso (2014), Flubacher (2013), and Yeung (2016) came forth consistently among Anna, Dirk, Tom, Elsa, and Alina when they were asked *How do you think Swiss people feel when they see these stores' signs in Spanish in Basel?* In other words, both predominantly language-related ideologies present in the Swiss society were embedded in the attitudes that these individuals expressed in their oral interactions with Sara. Interestingly, these attitudes are strikingly different and, had I held to traditional approaches to the study of language attitudes such as questionnaires and scales, I would not have found them articulated next to each other in one person's set of attitudes. In what follows, let us consider excerpts in which these contrasting attitudes were expressed for each of these individuals. Note that all the interactions occurred in Baseldütsch, which is the German dialect spoken in everyday talk by Swiss nationals in the city of Basel. Sara, a native speaker of this variety,

transcribed them and helped me translate them into English. As will be seen, in the lines with English glosses, I have not only rendered the utterances' content, but also all features of discourse, because they play a significant role in the construction of meaning and are thus essential for my analysis.

In excerpt (1) below, Anna starts by expressing positive attitudes toward the presence of Spanish in the city. As shown in lines 01-02, while holding the picture of the arts and crafts store, she mentions that diversity is good.

(1) (holding the picture of the arts and crafts store)

01 Anna: ähm:: (.) jo ebbe glich i finds es isch schön
 ‘um:: (.) well yes i think it’s nice’

02 wenns e vielfalt git
 ‘if there’s diversity’
 ((turns her head toward the picture of the church’s
 billboard))

03 ähm:: (.) ich ha denn müeh
 ‘um:: (.) what may bother me’

04 wenn lüüt ähm:: eso quasi in ihrem ghetto sin
 ‘it’s when people are um:: let’s say in their ghetto’

05 und die anderi sproch nid lerne
 ‘and that they don’t learn the other language’

06 Sara: Jj
 ‘yeah’

07 Anna: aber i muess säge (.) ich ha au bi integration geschafft
 ‘but i have to admit (.) that i’ve worked in the field of
 integration’

08 Sara: jä
 ‘yeah’

09 Anna: also vo dem her @@@
 ‘that’s why @@@’

10 ich find eifach s’einte bhalte
 ‘i just think that you still have to be yourself’

11 und sini wurzle bhalte
 and keep your roots

12 Sara: jä (.) interessant
 ‘uh-huh (.) interesting’

13 Anna: aber trotzdem in s’andere ihnewachse
 ‘but you still have to adapt to others’

However, as she turns her head toward the picture of the Church’s billboard, she expresses negative attitudes. Specifically, while her gaze drifts from the picture of

the arts and crafts store to the picture of said billboard, Anna states that she is bothered by “people” (line 04) – read Spanish-speaking immigrants – who do not acquire “the other language” (line 05) – read: German. Furthermore, she associates this lack of language-learning with the presence of ghettos (line 04) and a lack of integration (line 13). Note also the hesitation right before bringing up the existence of ghettos (line 04) and the fact that, having brought up these negative aspects of the presence of Spanish and its speakers, she tries to attenuate what she just said by mentioning that she has worked within integration initiatives (line 07), laughing (line 09), and stressing the importance for non-nationals to stay true to who they are (line 10) and to maintain their roots (line 11). Nevertheless, she comes back to what seems to be of utmost importance to her: that is, the fact that non-nationals have to integrate themselves into Swiss society (line 13).

Similarly to Anna, in excerpt (2) below, Dirk starts by expressing positive attitudes toward the presence of Spanish in the city. In his case, it is the restaurant that causes those positive thoughts (lines 02-03).

(2) ((looking back and forth between the picture of the daycare and the restaurant))

01 Dirk: ähm:: aso i dänke es chunt <MEGA> druf ah
‘um:: well i think it depends <A LOT> eh’

02 aso es het jo (.) es restorant beld gha
‘well there was (.) a restaurant sign’

03 das:: denki esch EHER no okay
‘tha::t i think it’s STILL okay’

04 aso ähm:: relativ normal
‘well um:: relatively normal’

05 und (.) jo secher au ned WITER tragisch
‘and (.) also probably not THAT tragic’

06 aber wennmer wederom so (.) en spanischi chinderchripp-
‘but when on the other hand (.) you see a spanish dayca-’

07 aso CHINDERCHIPPÉ gseht
‘i mean A DAYCARE’

08 denki eschs no speziell
‘i think that’s something else’

09 wellmer sech de::
‘because you then::’

10 vode integration chli abgrenzt
‘you move away from integration’

11 und eher chli separiert
‘and you segregate yourself’

Nevertheless, as can be seen, these positive attitudes are mitigated from the very beginning of his answer. First, Dirk emphasizes the fact that his response has at least two dimensions (line 01), hinting at the fact that he will then express contrasting attitudes. Second, by modifying the adjective *okay* with the adverb *still* pronounced very loudly (line 03), he states that the presence of Spanish is acceptable only to a certain extent. Third, when he indicates that this presence seems “normal” (line 04) to him, he mitigates this adjective with the adverb *relatively*, which insinuates that said presence might also disrupt normality. Then, after a sign of hesitation marked by a brief pause, Dirk mentions that the presence of Spanish is not “THAT tragic” (line 05), insinuating that, in a way, it actually is. This line functions as a bridge, as it gives way to the expression and justification of his negative attitudes toward the presence of Spanish (lines 06-11), which revolve mainly around the presence of the daycare, which he finds quite unique (line 08). Dirk believes that this institution represents a lack of integration that promotes a certain distance between national and non-national citizens (lines 10-11). The use of the discourse marker *I mean* right before referring to it emphatically (line 07) strengthens what the presence of this institution represents for him. Also, the fact that he had been staring at its picture from the very beginning of his answer suggests that the function of the initial expression of positives attitudes was to attenuate everything negative he had to say about it.

In excerpt (3) below, consistent with what was observed in Excerpts 1 and 2, Tom starts by expressing positive attitudes toward the presence of Spanish in Basel. While staring at the picture of the grocery store – which he told Sara he had been to recently – he states that this presence might make some people “glad” (line 02), emphasizing this feeling by pronouncing it very loudly.

(3) ((staring at the picture of the grocery store))

01 Tom: ich weiss ned
‘i don’t know’

02 det chönti denke dass gwössi lüüt sich FREUE
‘you might think that some people are GLAD’

03 und gwössi anderi lüüt so
‘and some people you know’

04 dänke das esch ergendwie chli blöd?
‘they think that it’s somehow kind of stupid?’

05 well s- sie wänd halt SCHWIZER läde
‘because th- they want SWISS stores of course’

06 und ned SPANISCHI läde
‘not SPANISH stores’

However, similarly to what was observed in the first two excerpts, despite initially expressing positive attitudes, Tom shifts to negative attitudes toward the presence of Spanish, stating that people probably think that it is “stupid” (line 04), an utterance that he emphasizes by terminating it with a rising intonation. According to Tom, the main reason for this feeling is the fact that national citizens want national stores, not non-national ones (lines 05-06), suggesting that the presence of non-national businesses and their signage in non-national languages is seen as inconvenient.

In excerpt (4) below, Elsa follows the observed tendency of expressing positive attitudes before expressing negative ones. As can be seen, at first, she states that some people may think that the presence of Spanish in Basel is seen as fine because it implies the presence of “new cultures” (lines 03-04), which, in a way, add to the city’s inherent cultural-linguistic diversity.

(4) ((after barely looking at the pictures and staring at Sara))

- 01 Elsa: jo kunnt druf a was füre füre alter
‘well it depends on the on the age’
- 02 was füre alter sie grad aspräche
‘on the age you’re talking about’
- 03 >s’git die wo< (.) s’toll finde
‘>now there are those< (.) those who think that it’s great’
- 04 dass es neui kulture het
‘that there are new cultures’
- 05 und es git die wos <WENIGER toll> finde
‘and there are those who think that it’s <NOT that great>’
- 06 jo
‘yeah’
- 07 das fallt mr grad so spontan i
‘that’s what i can think of off the top of my head’

She then states that, nevertheless, some people may not share this feeling, loudly and slowly (line 05). Unfortunately, she does not go into much detail about the reasons for these attitudes, stating that that is all she can think of at that moment (line 07).

In excerpt (5) below, following the tendency observed above, Alina initially displays positive attitudes toward the presence of Spanish in Basel. In fact, her initial reaction is to punctuate the expression of these attitudes with a heartfelt laugh (line 01). As an example of a realm in which this presence is welcomed, she mentions the daycare (lines 03-04), which is the picture that she takes immediately after laughing.

(5) ((staring back and forth from one picture to the other))

01 Alina: oh ich freu mi @@@
'oh:: i think it's nice @@@'
((takes the picture of the daycare))

02 aso (.) <ähm::>
'well (.) <um::>'

03 hh, ich glaub die spanischi kinderkrippe
'hh, i think that the spanish daycare'

04 isch jo öbbis mega ähm:: guets
'it's something very um:: good'

05 aso solangs bilingue blibt
'well as long as it's bilingual'

06 ähm:: >und nit nur spanisch<
'um:: >and not in spanish only<'

07 wil schlussendlich mien si jo chömmme denn
'because at the end of the day'

08 die de chinder au in die normali obligatorischi schuel
'these kids also have to go to normal compulsory school'

09 >und dört MIEN si dütsch könne<
'>and they HAVE to speak german there<'

10 und das het eifach mit au-
'and this simply has someth-'

11 mitm chind z'tue
'it's also related to the children'

12 dass me bitzli ans chind dänggt
'that you care a little about the children'

13 und nit nur dänggt s'muess spanisch könne
'and not only about the fact that they need to speak spanish'

14 >sondern ebbe au dütsch<
'>but also german<'

15 well denn wirds nochär eifach für s'chind
'because it will be easier for the children later'

16 ähm:: ähm:: und jo
'um:: um:: and yeah'

17 ebbe bezüglich tapas und spanische läde
'as for tapas and spanish stores'

18 bin ich eigentlich au froh drum
'i'm also happy about them'

19 ebbe dass me jo eifach dass s- öbbis ächts isch
‘the fact that you just kn- that it’s the real stuff’

20 und du weisch wos här chunnt
‘and you know where it comes from’

21 und du chasch dr sichr si dass dass s- ähm authentisch isch
‘and that you can be sure that that i- it’s um something
authentic’

However, from the very beginning, Alina nuances these positive attitudes with pauses (line 02) and hesitations (lines 02-04) that lead her to express that the main condition for her attitudes to remain positive toward this institution is that it needs to be bilingual and not in Spanish only (lines 05-06). If that condition is not met, Alina implies that the presence of Spanish may be problematic, mainly because it would then interfere with the acquisition of German – a language that she thinks the children attending the daycare must learn (line 09) in order to avoid problems later on in their lives in Switzerland (line 15). Interestingly, after having stated all this, she comes back to the expression of positive attitudes, specifying that these are caused by the presence of Spanish in the food and sales sectors (line 17).

3.2 Secondary findings

A secondary finding emerging from the present study is that when it was time to provide an answer to the question regarding Swiss attitudes toward Spanish and its speakers, Anna, Dirk, Tom, Elsa, and Alina all expressed positive attitudes before expressing negative ones. In other words, the default order for expressing both sets of attitudes is positive attitudes first and negative attitudes second. In addition to the previous observation, in the cases of Anna and Alina, there seems to be a reflex to attenuate the expression of negative attitudes by either nuancing them right after expressing them or coming back to the expression of positive attitudes. For instance, in Excerpt 1, immediately after expressing her concerns about the presence of Spanish in Basel because of the possible emergence of ghettos in which people eventually do not feel totally compelled to learn the national language (lines 04–05), Anna mitigates her negative stance by providing information about her implication with integration initiatives for non-nationals (line 07) – a socially rewardable activity – and highlighting the importance for these types of citizens to maintain elements of their culture while they integrate (lines 10–13). In Excerpt 5, immediately after her concerns about the Spanish daycare and the potential harm it could cause for the future integration of Spanish-raised children (lines 05–16),

Alina eases her stance and expresses happiness toward the presence of Spanish in the realms of food and sales (lines 17–21).

Another secondary finding is that, as a result of the wording of the question that Sara was instructed to ask, Tom and Elsa (Excerpts 3 and 4, respectively) did not share their own thoughts on the presence of Spanish in Basel. Rather, they took the wording of the question at face value and answered how their fellow countrypersons may feel about this presence, as is evidenced by their use of third person plural pronouns and their corresponding inflections. Interestingly, regardless of the wording of the question that they were asked, Anna, Dirk, and Alina (Excerpts 1, 2, and 5, respectively) went on to express attitudes related to their own thoughts on the presence of Spanish in Basel, as is evidenced by their use of first person singular pronouns and their corresponding inflections.

One final secondary finding emerging from the data is that Tom and Elsa's answers were considerably shorter than those of Anna, Dirk, and Alina. Indeed, while the latter offered detailed explanations of the attitudes held toward the materials with which they were engaged, naming the causes of such attitudes, the former confined themselves to stating that there were both positive and negative attitudes toward the presence of Spanish in the city, without much description of the sources of their attitudes.

3.3 Discussion

The fact that Anna, Dirk, Tom, Elsa, and Alina all expressed both positive and negative attitudes toward the presence of Spanish is quite interesting, chiefly because most, if not all language attitude studies within the traditional paradigm based on questionnaires and scales generate results in which people are seen as holding either positive or negative attitudes toward an object (generally a language or a variety), but never both. My results are not surprising, however, if one keeps in mind that previous language attitude studies within the discursive-interactive approach have demonstrated that individuals are able to align themselves with sets of both positive and negative attitudes, as long as these attitudes are reasonably argued (Hyrkstedt and Kalaja 1998), and to regularly nuance their attitudes according to the responses of their interlocutors and/or elements of the situational context (Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain 2009). This has led the researchers following this approach to conceptualize language attitudes as context-dependent and, as such, as naturally variable. What distinguishes the results obtained in my study from those previously cited is the fact that those individuals who answered using the first person singular – that is, Anna, Dirk, and Alina – expressed contrasting attitudes as part of their own value system. In other words,

they expressed holding both positive and negative attitudes toward the very same attitude object: the presence of Spanish in Basel. In addition to the fact that both the positive and negative discursive responses to the presence of non-nationals and their languages evidenced in Del Percio (2015), Duchêne and Alfonso (2014), Flubacher (2013), and Yeung (2016) were readily available to these individuals as part of the broader situational context, the most likely explanation for this finding is that, because said presence was embodied for these individuals by Spanish being visible in a wide variety of realms (see Figure 1), all fields of activity did not impart the same message to them, their viewers. For instance, the grocery store, the restaurant, and the arts and crafts store caused Anna, Dirk and Alina to echo elements stemming from the discourse evidenced in Del Percio (2015) and Duchêne and Alfonso (2014), probably because they could easily commodify these entities and thus interpret them as positive products of diversity. On the other hand, the Church's billboard and the daycare caused these same individuals to reflect elements from the discourse evidenced in Flubacher (2013) and Yeung (2016), likely because they could not easily convert these entities into commodifiable products. For that reason, instead of interpreting said entities as positive products of cultural diversity, they construed them as negative products of it. This is in line with Heller's (2003) observation that while some linguistic entities (here Spanish and its speakers) may be seen as valuable in certain fields, they have little or no value in others.

With reference to the default order in which attitudes were expressed (positive attitudes first, negative attitudes second), the most likely explanation is that, because of the social desirability factor mentioned above, the individuals who participated in this study felt compelled to present themselves in a positive way first if they were to feel embarrassed by part of their answers. This may have been the case particularly because of the sensitive nature of the topic of migration in most occidental societies, particularly among white people born and raised in those societies (Bazo Vienrich & Creighton 2017; Janus 2010). The fact that Anna and Alina (Excerpts 1 and 5, respectively) felt inclined to mitigate the negative attitudes that they subsequently expressed by either nuancing them or expressing positive attitudes once again further strengthens and supports this interpretation.

With respect to the fact that some individuals shared their own thoughts about the presence of Spanish in Basel while others took the wording of the question that they were asked literally and answered how other fellow countrypersons may feel about this presence, I contend that one factor that may have triggered these two types of answers is the level of engagement of individuals with the materials with which they were presented. While Tom and Elsa (Excerpts 3 and 4, respectively) barely looked at the pictures that Sara shared with them, never actually holding these pictures in their hands, Anna, Dirk, and Alina (Excerpts 1, 2 and 5,

respectively) all engaged with them in different but meaningful ways. As she was expressing positive attitudes toward the presence of Spanish in Basel, Anna was holding the picture of the arts and craft store. When she started expressing negative attitudes toward this presence, her gaze turned toward the picture of the Church's billboard. As for Dirk, while he was expressing contrasting attitudes toward said presence, he was looking back and forth between the picture of the daycare and the picture of the restaurant. As regards Alina, while initially her gaze was going from one picture to the other, as soon as she took the picture of the daycare in her hands, she started expressing nuanced, contrasting attitudes toward the presence of Spanish in the city. In other words, interacting with the materials presented in a relevant manner (e.g., purposefully looking at one picture and/or handling it) may have played a role in the fact that Anna, Dirk, and Alina omitted the wording of the question and openly shared their own personal views and beliefs with Sara.

Further, it should be noted that the fact that Anna, Dirk, Tom, Elsa, and Alina engaged differently with the materials presented and used different grammatical persons to discursively construct their views on the presence of Spanish in Basel is the most likely reason that they provided answers with different lengths and levels of specificity. As seen, while engaging with the pictures in a meaningful way and answering with the first person singular resulted in extensive, comprehensive answers, barely interacting with the pictures and answering with the third person plural resulted in brief, unspecific responses.

4 Closing remarks

Bearing in mind that there are two concurrent discourses on the presence of non-national languages like Spanish and its speakers in Switzerland – one that conceives of this presence positively and another that considers it negatively – the main goal of this study was to determine which of these discourses would be reproduced in individual, private accounts. A secondary goal was to determine which elements of the observable environment of individuals were relevant as influencing factors in the personal, in-the-moment construction of attitudes and beliefs related to said presence.

By way of summary, it was seen that all the individuals that participated in this study expressed contrasting attitudes toward the presence of Spanish and its speakers in the city that they inhabit, meaning that the attitudes that they conveyed varied from favorability to unfavorability. I suggested that, in addition to the fact that these views were readily available for individuals to echo as a result of their propagation as normalized discourses in Switzerland's public sphere, they

were activated in private accounts of their attitudes according to whether the entities that embodied this presence were easily commodifiable or not. While easily marketable entities such as the grocery store and the restaurant gave room to the formation of positive attitudes, unmarketable entities like the daycare and the Church's billboard led to the expression of negative ones.

Additionally, it was seen that, even though the individuals who participated in this study communicated contrasting attitudes toward the presence of Spanish and its speakers, there was a default sequence in which these attitudes were to be expressed: positive first, negative second. This restrictive order may have been due to the impact of social desirability biases among people for whom talking about migration might be a sensitive matter, if not a topic to be avoided.

It was also seen that while some individuals answered in the first person singular, making it evident that the attitudes expressed were their own, others, in accordance with the question that they were asked, answered in the third person plural, making it difficult to determine whether these were their own attitudes or not. One of the reasons for this difference may have been the level of engagement of the individuals with the materials presented, as the individuals who engaged meaningfully with these materials adopted first person singular pronouns and their corresponding inflections in their accounts of their attitudes, regardless of the question that they were asked.

Finally, it was seen that both the aforementioned level of engagement and the grammatical person used to answer the question that they were asked may have had an impact on the length and detail of the responses of the individuals who participated in this study. While the responses of those who adopted the third person plural and barely engaged with the semiotic resources presented responded in a general, unspecific manner, those who adopted the first person singular and interacted with said resources in a relevant manner gave detailed, specific reasons for their attitudes.

In this way, drawing primarily on discursive-interactive studies showing that the private attitudes of individuals are constructed in discourse, strongly affected by both immediate and more distant elements of the situational context, and, as a consequence of this, variable by nature, my study reveals that attitudes may also be contrasting, in the sense that they may differ strikingly, even in one person's account of their views toward the same attitude object. This observation was possible in part because the attitudes of the individuals who participated in this study were tapped with semiotic resources that embodied the diverse social realms in which language and its speakers may be encountered on a daily basis in real-life situations, and also because their attitudes were expressed in naturally occurring interactions, which provided a platform for them to develop and express these opposing views based on different elements of their situational context.

Given the nature of the empirical analysis and the theoretical discussions, this study has practical implications for Swiss governmental and public institutions. Because the results confirm the observation that people's attitudes are discursively constructed under the influence of larger ideologies present in a society, authorities and public entities should actively seek to avoid describing non-national citizens merely as defective speakers of national languages who need to integrate by reaching native-like proficiency in them – especially because the idea that these types of citizens are not learning national languages is refuted by recent census data that report that more than 90% speak the language of the region in which they live proficiently and regularly (de Flaugergues 2016). In that sense, my study speaks to the need to put a stop to the dissemination of false-to-fact representations about the extent to which non-national citizens are linguistically and culturally integrated into their society of adoption.

As a final note, I have limited my analysis to attitudes toward Spanish and its speakers, even though, as was noted in the introduction, Basel is also inhabited by a considerable number of speakers of Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Portuguese, and English. Bearing in mind that, similar to local varieties and its speakers, languages in diasporic settings and their speakers tend to undergo hierarchization processes (Fuller 2013), a next step would be a comparison of language attitudes: Are responses to the presence of other prominent non-national languages like Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Portuguese, and English similar to or different from the responses to the presence of Spanish documented in this study? And, whether similar or different, what elements of the broader and immediate situational context are relevant to Swiss nationals in the discursive construction of attitudes toward these and other non-national languages?

Likewise, I am cognizant of the fact that the qualitative nature of this study limits the generalizability of the findings. Nevertheless, the importance of my analysis, which is contextualized in both immediate and broader elements of the social context and the envelope of interaction, should not be underestimated. Ultimately, this study brings to light the ease with which hegemonic discourses reach individuals, often affecting their beliefs and opinions on sensitive topics such as the integration of diasporic communities into the receiving society in a negative manner. By doing so, this study sounds the alarm on how these subject matters are treated by authorities and in public media outlets and, thus, constitutes a call to action.

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Appendix A: Transcription conventions adapted from De Fina (2015)

wo::rd	elongation of preceding sound
WORD	loud speech
wor-	truncated word or syllable
<word>	slower speech
>word<	faster speech
?	rising intonation, not necessarily a question
(.)	noticeable pause
hh,	in breath
@@@	laughter
(())	transcriber note

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