Romansh

General information

Romansh is one of the minority languages spoken in Switzerland. It is also called German Rumantsch, Grishun, or Grisons. It is a Rhaeto-Romanic language, which has its roots in Latin and it is spoken widely in the canton of Graubünden. Only 0.5% of the population speaks Romansh. There are different kinds of Romansh, such as: Romansch (Surmeiran), Romansch (Scharans) and Romansch (Sursilvan). Sursilvan which is spoken in the western part of the canton is one of the most spoken variants. Romansh has been the official language of Switzerland since 1938. It also has the official status in the canton of the Grisons. It is also spoken in northern Italy.

Romansh alphabet

A a	B b	C c	D d	E e	F f	G g	H h	I i	J j	L l	M m
a	be	tse	de	e	ef	ghe	ha	i	jot/i lung	el	em
N n	O o	P p	Q q	R r	S s	T t	U u	V v	X x	Z z	
en	o	pe	ku	er	es	te	u	ve	iks	tset	

The letters k (ka), w (ve dubel), and y (ipsilon / i grec) are only used in foreign loanwords.

Vowels, diphthongs & triphthongs

a	ai	au	e	ei	eu	ei	eu	i	ia	ie	ieu
[a/aː/ə]	[aːi]	[aːu]	[ɛ/eː/ə]	[e]+[i]	[ɛu] [e]+[u]	[ei]	[eu]	[i/iː]	[ja] [i]+[a]	[ɪeː]	[jɛu]

o	oi	ou	oi	u	ua	ue	ui	uo	ä	ö	ü
[ɔ/oː]	[ɔi]	[o]+[u] [ou]	[oi]	[ʊ/uː]	[wa] [u]+[a]	[wɛ/wə] [u]+[ɛ]	[wi/ui]	[wə]	[ɛ]	[ø]	[y]

Consonants

b	c	ch	d	f	g	gl	h	j	k
[b/p]	[k/ts]	[k/tɕ]	[d/t]	[f]	[g/k/dʒ/tʃ]	[gl/ʎ]	Ø [h]	[j/dʒ]	[k]

l	m	n	ng	p	q	r	s	sc	sch
[l]	[m]	[n]	[ŋ/ng]	[p]	[kw]	[r]	[s/z/ʃ/ʒ]	[ʃk/sts]	[ʃ/ʒ]

stg	t	tg	th	tsch	v	w	x	y	z
[ʃtɕ]	[t]	[tɕ]	[t]	[tʃ]	[v/f]	[w/v]	[ks]	[j]	[ts]

Notes

- Before single consonants vowels are usually short, and before double consonants they are usually long
- In unstressed syllables, **a** and **e** = [ə]
- At the ends of words and syllables, **b** = [p], except where elided with the following word/syllable
- Before a, o or u, **c** = [k]; before i or e, **c** = [ts]
- Before e and in some cases before i, **ch** = [k]; elsewhere **ch** = [tʃ]
- At the ends of words and syllables, **d** = [t], except where elided with the following word/syllable
- Before a, o or u, **g** = [g]; before i or e, **g** = [dʒ];
  at the end of words, **g** = [k] and in somes words [tʃ];
  at the ends of words (and some syllables), **g** = [ʎ]
- **h** is only pronounced in some foreign loanwords, otherwise it is silent
- **j** = [dʒ] in some English loanwords
- On it's own and at the beginning of words, **s** = [s]; between vowels **s** = [z]; before an unvoiced consonant, **s** = [ʃ]; before a voiced consonant, **s** [ʒ].
- **sc** followed by a o or u = [ʃk]; **sc** followed by e or i = [sts].
- At the ends of words and syllables, **v** = [f], except where elided with the following word/syllable

Here are several examples of sample texts in the Romansh language:

Romansch (Surmeiran)
Tot igls carstgangs neschan libers ed eguals an dignitad ed an dretgs. Els èn dotos cun raschung e schientscha e duessan ager l'egn vers l'oter an spiert da fraternitad.

Romansch (Sursilvan)
Tut ils humans neschan libers ed eguals en dignitad ed en dretgs. Els ein dotai cun raschun e cunscienzia e duein agir in viers l'auter en spért da fraternitad.

Translation
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
(Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

A video about Romansh

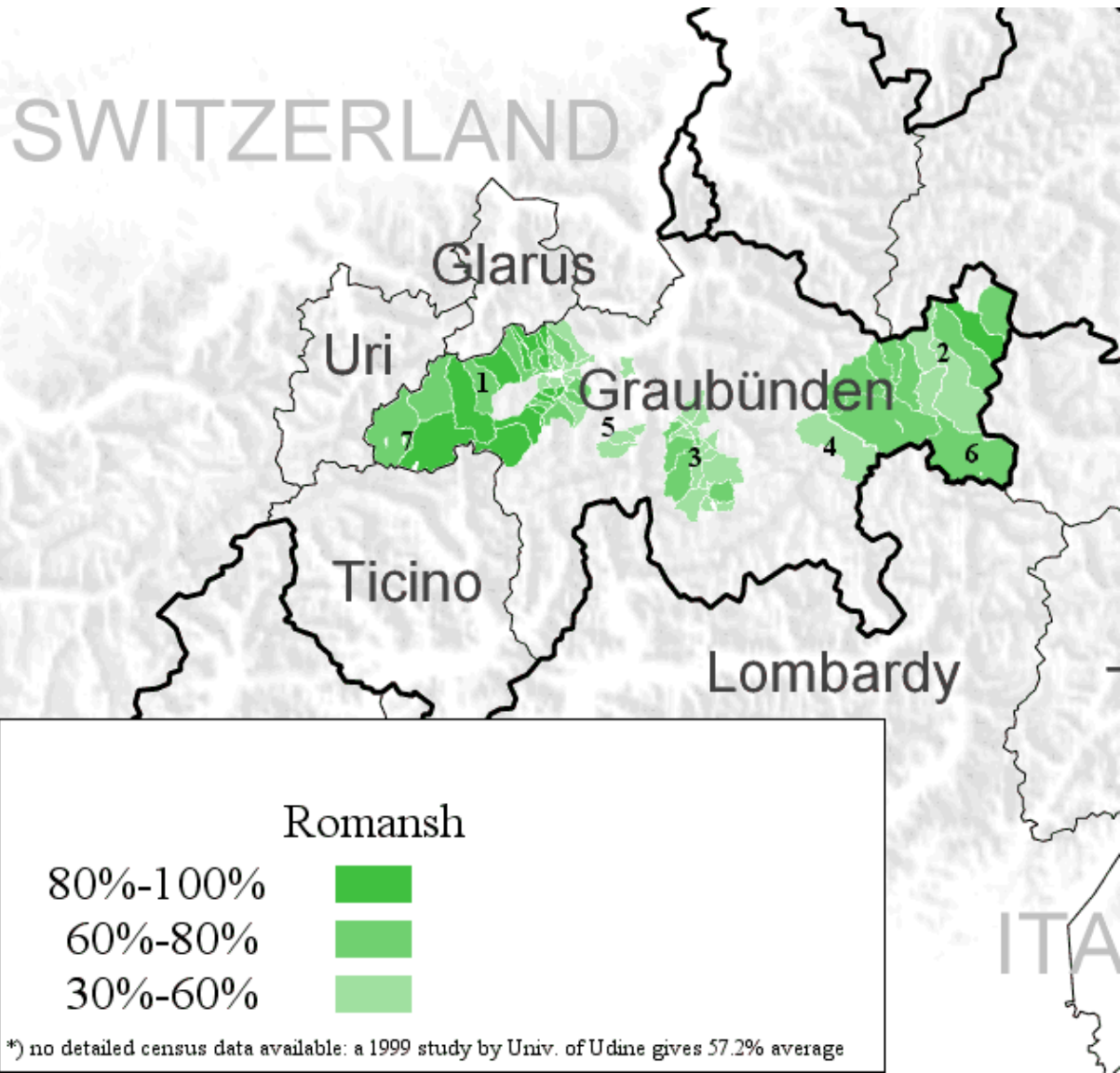https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7fJBUH1JCE

Photos

Canton of Grisons where Romansh is spoken

Parc Ela in Switzerland - Surmeiran variety of Romansh is spoken there

Parts of Switzerland where Romansh is spoken

References:
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