SCHWEIZERDEUTSCH VS. HOCHDEUTSCH: A DIGLOSSIC SITUATION

Mohammad Jafar Jabbari
Yasouj University, Iran

Abstract
Swiss German, referred to as Schweizerdeutsch, covers any of the German dialects spoken in Switzerland and in some Alpine communities in Northern Italy. The various dialects of Swiss German must not be confused with Swiss Standard German, a variety of Standard German, referred to as Hochdeutsch. Schweizerdeutsch is not usually intelligible by German people. This unintelligibility is to the extent that, for example, in a talk with a Swiss German speaker on German television, subtitles are necessary. This does not rule out the fact that every literate Swiss German speaker is also able to use Standard German. This linguistic situation is referred to as ‘diglossia’. This article aims to scrutinize the linguistic differences between Hochdeutsch and Schweizerdeutsch, at lexical, semantic and morpho-syntactic levels, to show the reasons behind this unintelligibility.

Key words: Standard German (Hochdeutsch), Swiss German (Schweizerdeutsch), diglossia

Background
Diglossia
Charles Ferguson (1959) was the first to introduce the term diglossia into the literature:

Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly coded (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (p.336).

Ferguson identifies four situations which show major characteristics of this diglossic phenomenon: Arabic, Swiss German, Haitian (French and Creole), and Greek.

Swiss German
"German-speakers in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, likewise switch between standard German and their local varieties of German, which are often not comprehensible to other speakers" (Trask,2007, 73). Keller (1973) asserts that “in the German-speaking countries, diglossia prevails almost only in Switzerland” (p. 132).

Data of the Study
The Swiss German data are collected from two German language guides, titled Swiss German-The Modern Alemannic Vernacular in and around Zurich (Reese, 2007) and Local German- The Complete Course for Beginners (Hatherall & Hatherall, 2005).

The Standard German data are collected from such German text books, as Lernziel Deutsch, Hieber (2010) and Deutsche Sprachlehrer fur Auslander (Schulz & Griesbach, 2008).

Methodology
To illustrate the linguistic differences between Standard German (Hochdeutsch), and Swiss Local German (Schweizerdeutsch), the Surface Strategy Taxonomy can be of help. This taxonomy, "highlights the ways surface structures are altered" (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982, p. 150).
Categorizing linguistic items according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy helps researchers analyze linguistic alterations, in more details.

Data Analysis

The differences between Hochdeutsch (HD) and Schweizerdeutsch (SD) are manifested in (1) phonology, (2) lexicon, (3) morphology and (4) syntax.

In the forthcoming sections, some Phonological, lexical and morpho-syntactic differences between Hochdeutsch and Schweizerdeutsch will be introduced and analyzed, in detail.

1. Phonological Differences

Phonologically speaking, “the L system will often appear to be the more basic]…[there is quite a difference between Standard German and the local varieties”(Wardhaugh, 2006, p. 91).

Consonant Neutralization

In standard German, ch sounds /x/, after the back vowels /a/, /o/ and /u/, e.g.

In Schweizerdeutsch, /x/ does not have the allophone [ç], but is always [x].Some examples are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HD</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>ich</td>
<td>/ɪç/</td>
<td>/Ix/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>Lichtenstein</td>
<td>/ɪçtɛnʃtaɪn/</td>
<td>/Ixtenʃtaɪn/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>euch</td>
<td>/œɪç/</td>
<td>/œIx/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Devoicing

In Hochdeutsch, the voiced plosive consonants (/b/, /d/ and /ɡ/) become devoiced syllable finally, i.e. they change to (/p/, /t/ and /k/), respectively. Schweizerdeutsch does not exhibit final devoicing, unlike Hochdeutsch.

| (4)   | Klub          | /klup/   | /klub/    | club               |
| (5)   | Hund          | /hʊnt/   | /hʊnd/    | dog                |
| (6)   | Zug           | /tʊːk/   | /tʊːɡ/    | train              |

In Hochdeutsch, final -ig becomes -iɡ, -iç. Schweizerdeutsch does not follow this rule.

| (7)   | richtig       | /rɪçtɪk, rɪçtɪç/ | /rɪçtɪɡ/ | right, correct |
| (8)   | Knöig         | /kœnɪk, kœnɪç/  | /kœnɪɡ/  | king            |

Deletion of final /n/ after vowels

| (9)   | Garten        | /gaʁtən/ | Garte /gaʁtə/ | garden          |
| (10)  | machen        | /maʁən/  | mache /maʁə/  | to do           |
| (11)  | von           | /vɔn/    | vo /vɔ/       | from, of        |
Different Stress Pattern

In Schweizerdeutsch the primary stress tends more to fall on the first syllable than in Hochdeutsch:

(13) Kasino /kaˈziːno/ /ˈkasino/ casino
(14) galant /gaˈlant/ /ˈgalant/ gallant

2. Lexical Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HD</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numericals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eins</td>
<td>äis</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zwei</td>
<td>zwäi</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drei</td>
<td>drüü</td>
<td>three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fünf</td>
<td>föif</td>
<td>five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sex</td>
<td>sächs</td>
<td>six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unmöglich</td>
<td>ohnmächtig</td>
<td>impossible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leicht, einfach</td>
<td>ring</td>
<td>simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schnell</td>
<td>tifig</td>
<td>fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zu teuer</td>
<td>überrissen</td>
<td>very expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuhören</td>
<td>lose</td>
<td>listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gucken</td>
<td>lugen</td>
<td>look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fußball spielen</td>
<td>schuttren</td>
<td>play football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regnen, pinkeln</td>
<td>schiffen</td>
<td>rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>einkaufen</td>
<td>lädelen</td>
<td>buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beeilen</td>
<td>pressieren</td>
<td>hurry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rauchen</td>
<td>schloten</td>
<td>to smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nouns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbeit</td>
<td>Büez</td>
<td>work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kätzchen</td>
<td>Büsi</td>
<td>kitten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Borrowed Words

Words borrowed from English
(41) Reisebus Car coach
(42) Trainingsanzug Trainer track suit
(43) Strassenbahn Tram streetcar

Words borrowed from French
(44) auf Wiedersehen adieu good bye, so long
(45) Gebrauchtwagen Occasion used car
(46) Schaffner Kondukteur conductor
(47) danke merci (I) thank
(48) Hähnchen Poulet cookerel
(49) Fahrrad Velo bicycle
(50) Entschuldigung Excusez excuse
(51) Fahrschein Billett ticket
(52) Waschbecken Lavabo basin
(53) Gehsteig Trottoir sidewalk

Loan-translation
(54) Kartoffeln Erdäpfel \(^1\) potato(s)
(55) Ampel Rotlicht \(^2\) traffic light

\(^1\) Erdäpfel made of Erd (earth) and Äpfel (apples) is a loan translation of the French word pomme de terre (apple of earth).

\(^2\) - Rotlicht, made of rot (red) and Licht (light) can be a loan translation of the English red light.
Grammatical Differences

Dative Subject

In some languages like German, sometimes, a subject NP, may appear morphologically dative, while it is in agreement with the tensed verb as the subject of the sentence. This phenomenon, referred to as dative subject, usually happens when the subject NP is an experiencer rather than an agent. Dative subjects occur with the verb \textit{sein} (to be), while nominative subjects occur with the verb \textit{haben} (to have). Hochdeutsch and Schweizerdeutsch may use the two structures in complementary distribution:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(56)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item[HD] Mir ist kalt
\item[SD] Ich ha chalt
\item[ET] I am cold.
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(57)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item[HD] Ich habe etwas geschenkt bekommen
\item[SD] Mir isch oppis geschankt woorde
\item[ET] I have received something as a present.
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

In HD complex sentences, when the subordinate clause consists of both finite and nonfinite verbs, the finite verb occurs last, e.g. Als ich meine Arbeit gemacht \textit{hatte}, fur ich nach Haus. (Schulz & Griesbach, 2008: 148). In SD, the finite verb can preceed the non-fininite one:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(57)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item[HD] Als du gekommen bist, 
\item[SD\textsubscript{1}] Wo du cho bistch,
\item[SD\textsubscript{2}] Wo du bistch cho,
\item[ET] When you have come,
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}
Pro-drop
In Schweizerdeutsch, the first person nominative pronoun may be deleted:

(58)  HD  Ich bin zufrieden.
      I am contented

       SD  Bi zfride.
      am contented
      ET  I am content(ed).

Total Differences
The above-mentioned partial differences, hand in hand, make the two varieties totally different at the levels larger than phonology and lexicon. HD and SD use drastically different phrases and sentences in the same situations. The following examples clarify the extent of the difference.

(59)  HD  Er ist zurück.
       SD  Ër isch zrugg.
       ET  He is back.

(60)  HD  Er muß nach Berlin gehen.
       SD  Ér nues uf Berlin gaa.
       ET  He must go to Berlin.

(61)  HD  Ich habe ein Kuchen gegessn, aber nicht ganz.
       SD  Ich han e Wëëe ggasse, aber nöt ganz.
       ET  I have eatn a cake, but not completely

(62)  HD  Sie ließ ihn nicht schlafen.
       SD  Si hed ne nid la schlafe
       ET  She has not let him sleep.

Concluding Remarks
The data of the study manifest a good number of differences between Standard German (Hochdeutsch) and Swiss Local German (Schweizerdeutsch). These differences were found on the levels of phonology, morphology, lexicon and syntax. These differences, going hand in hand, have resulted in drastic differences, having made Schweizerdeutsch unintelligible for non-Swiss Germans.