Segmental features of Swiss German ethnolects

In the last decade, a number of studies from different European countries have reported the emergence of new language varieties among adolescents living in multicultural and multilingual neighbourhoods (see, e.g., Cornips & Nortier 2008). Notwithstanding the crucial role played by young people with an immigrant background, the very notion of 'ethnolect' raises a number of problems, given that such ways of speaking cannot be related in a deterministic manner to specific ethnic communities; hence, sometimes the term 'multiethnolect' is used as well (Svendsen & Røyneland 2008).

Nevertheless, since the term 'ethnolect' is now established in the scientific literature, we will continue to employ it in a critical sense. In particular, we will follow the dynamic model proposed by Auer (2003), which distinguishes three types of ethnolects, i.e. primary, secondary, and tertiary ethnolects. Primary ethnolects are spoken by immigrant bilinguals and reflect to a certain extent some features of their 'ethnic' languages; they also may serve an identitary function within peer groups. Secondary ethnolects are created by the media, in particular by comedians who exaggerate some features of primary ethnolects for hilarious purposes. Finally, tertiary ethnolects appear as style shifts of non-immigrant speakers who imitate the mediatised representations of the secondary ethnolects (this phenomenon can be regarded as instances of 'crossing' in the sense of Rampton 1995; cf. also Deppermann 2007).

Auer's model was formulated in order to analyze patterns of urban speech in Germany, but it can be applied analogously to the sociolinguistic situation of German speaking Switzerland, where the emergence of Swiss German ethnolects has been documented since the year 2000; nevertheless, only recently have these varieties been described from a linguistic point of view (Schmid *et al.* 2010, Tissot *et al.* forthcoming). Ethnolectal speech in Switzerland is sometimes referred to as *Jugotüütsch*, due to strong immigration from the former republic of Yugoslavia (in a similar vein, ethnolects in Germany have been called *Türkenslang*; cf. Auer 2003).

While ethnolectal features can be detected on the lexical, the grammatical and the phonetic level, the bulk of available descriptions has dealt with the former two; nevertheless, some sociophonetic studies have tackled the ethnicity issue as well (e.g., Kerswill *et al.* 2008). The present contribution describes how some segmental features of primary ethnolects of Swiss German are reported and/or transformed in secondary and tertiary ethnolects. The five phenomena we focus on all deviate from the phonetics of traditional Swiss German (Fleischer & Schmid 2006). Firstly, we find voiced stops and fricatives which do not exist in Swiss German, where the contrast between two homorganic

obstruents is based on the feature [±tense]. Secondly, we observe the occurrence of tense fricatives in word-initial position which are banned by a phonotactic restriction of Swiss German. Thirdly, a voiced labiodental fricative replaces the homorganic approximant of the traditional dialects. Fourthly, ethnolectal speech lacks the sandhi processes which typically blur the word boundaries in Swiss German.

Our presentation will illustrate how these four segmental features manifest in the speech of second generation immigrants are imitated and exaggerated by professional Swiss German comedians. Interestingly, a fifth feature only appears in the Youtube dubbings created by immigrants themselves, namely the retroflex realisation of /r/ attributed to speakers of Albanian (cf. Manzelli 2004). This reveals a sort of 'insider advantage' in the perception of primary ethnolectal features.

Regarding tertiary ethnolects, it turns out that Youtube dubbings may have a greater impact on the language games of young people than comedy sketches known from television. For instance, a conversational transcript from a corpus of adolescent language (courtesy of Esther Galliker) reveals that Swiss youngsters not only quote entire phrases from Youtube movies, but also reelaborate in a creative manner the above mentioned segmental features in their own discourse.

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