

French in Switzerland, toward standardization?

ISABELLE RACINE

Université de Genève

Due to their shared past, the Swiss French varieties cannot be linguistically separated from their neighboring hexagonal French varieties. Some of the regional features attested in Swiss French also cross the border to the adjacent French regions, or they are attested in Belgium, in North America, or in the francophone African countries. It must also be underlined that Swiss French is not one homogenous variety: some of the regional features can be restricted to a defined area within Romandy.

In a recent perception study, we show that the varieties spoken in Neuchâtel and in Geneva are clearly distinguished from the Parisian variety, when presented to Swiss (from 4 regions) as well as Parisian listeners. Interestingly, this finding also covers the production stimuli taken from the younger speakers. Furthermore, the variety spoken in Geneva seems to be considered the reference variety for Switzerland by the Swiss listeners. In this communication, we examine some of the regional features particular to the Swiss French varieties. In order to examine the hypothesis of a standardization toward a "pan-romand" variety, we concentrate on the production of the youngest speakers in our PFC investigation points.