In: Reglindis De Ridder (ed.) (2023): "One size fits all"? Linguistic standards in the media of pluricentric language areas: PCL-PRESS/epubli. Graz/Berlin p. 197-219.

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TV news in Italian-speaking Switzerland
Linguistic authorities and standard-setting

Abstract

In this contribution, we examine the Swiss and Italian varieties of Italian and the dissemination of their linguistic norms within the media domain, focussing on TV news. A qualitative analysis of a small corpus of news television programmes was carried out to that end. The aim was to conduct a contrastive study providing data on the presence of geographical variants in the two varieties of Italian under scrutiny. We therefore explored the use that regional TV news programmes make of non-standard linguistic phenomena taking the language of the national dominant variety as a control language. Our corpus consists of a selection of recent daily news programmes, aired respectively by the Swiss Italian TV channel RSI, an Italian national TV channel and an Italian regional TV channel. The data showed that there is a significant difference between the two varieties of Italian in terms of the presence of geographically marked traits in the media. We also identified criteria for determining which regional features are more prone to enter the non-dominant standard through exposure to these features in the media.

1. Introduction

When the diatopically marked traits of a non-dominant variety of a pluricentric language are perceived by the speakers as neither diaphasically nor diastratically marked, one can speak of a tendency towards the standardisation of the variety. In cases where there is an imbalance between the two varieties – in terms of numerical weight of its language users and linguistic prestige of the variety – the explicit coding of standardisation is often almost absent in the non-dominant variety. In this case, it is crucial to observe the channels of diffusion of the standard in other, less direct linguistic influence situations, such as through media exposure.

In this contribution, we deal with the variety of Italian used in Italian-speaking Switzerland by investigating the role of media language (more specifically, television) on the perception of the norm. After briefly revisiting the

main characteristics of this variety of Italian and its relationship to the dominant variety (section 2), we present the reasons that led us to consider the language of television as particularly significant in the standardisation process of Swiss Italian regional traits (section 3). In section 4, the small corpus collected and the type of annotation carried out is presented. The data are then analysed and discussed in section 5, in which the trends observed serve as a starting point for qualitative observations on the differences found between the Swiss and the Italian sub-corpora.

2. The Italian of Switzerland as a non-dominant variety of a pluricentric language

There are four national languages in Switzerland: German, French, Italian and Romansh. Speakers of these different languages inhabit areas of different sizes in the entire country. Italian is the third most spoken language after German and French, and national statistics show that 8 % of Swiss people claim Italian as their main language, or as one of their main languages (Pandolfi/Casoni/Bruno 2016; Janner/Casoni/Bruno 2019). However, only half of these speakers of Italian reside within the traditionally Italian-speaking territory of Switzerland ("Svizzera italiana"). This is can be ascribed to the long tradition of immigration from Italy, but also to internal mobility within Switzerland. The traditionally Italian-speaking territory includes i) the entire Canton of Ticino (one of the 23 Swiss cantons), located in the south of Switzerland bordering northern Italy and in particular Lombardy and Piedmont, and ii) four valleys in the Canton of Graubünden, located east of Ticino. Two of these valleys, Mesolcina and Calanca, are adjacent to each other and alongside the territory of Ticino, while the other two, Poschiavo and Bregaglia, are territorially separated from each other and from the rest of the Italian-speaking Switzerland, but they both border on Italy.

There are therefore many varieties of Italian in the Swiss national territory (in this respect see, e.g. Berruto 1980, 1984, 1987, Petralli 1990, Moretti 2005, Pandolfi 2006, 2009, 2011, Berruto 2012). In this contribution, we focus exclusively on the variety spoken by native speakers within the traditionally Italian-speaking territory, which is spoken by around a little under 300,000 speakers (Janner/Casoni/Bruno 2019). From a linguistic point of view, this region is part of the Lombard area of the Italian speaking territory. As in all other areas, the local

dialects[1] developed in parallel with the Tuscan dialect, which became the model for the Italian standard. As in Italy, the strong predominance of dialect that characterised spoken language up to 50-60 years ago gradually gave way to Italian, which became the language of first socialisation for the majority of Italian-speaking Swiss people.

Belonging to the Duchy of Milan until the mid-15th century, the territory corresponding to today's Ticino was then progressively annexed to Switzerland with the status of 'baliaggio' [subject territory]. Three centuries later, in 1803, the Napoleonic Act of Mediation gave Ticino the status of a fully-fledged Swiss canton (Bianconi 2001, Baranzini/Casoni 2020). Today, Italian in Switzerland is not only one of the official national languages, but also the only official language of Ticino and one of the three official languages of the Canton of Graubünden, together with German and Romansh.

The idea that the Italian of Italian-speaking Switzerland should be considered as a separate standard variety of Italian was first introduced in Pandolfi (2010) and was later addressed in Berruto (2011), Hajek (2012), Pandolfi (2017), Moretti/Pandolfi (2019) and Baranzini/Moskopf-Janner (2020). During these last twelve years, this language variety has thus gradually started to acquire the linguistic status of a national variety. As a result, Italian has acquired the status of a pluricentric language. Examining Michael Clyne's criteria for defining a pluricentric language (Clyne 1992), we can establish that these fundamental criteria are indeed also applicable to the case of Italian-speaking Switzerland: the two Italian-speaking areas in Europe, i.e. Italy and neighbouring Switzerland, are separated by a national border, and Italian is also an official language in Switzerland. Moreover, the Swiss variety can be associated with the identity of the language community concerned (see among others Bianconi 2016). These observations obviously presuppose a significant (internal) difference between the two varieties, on which the very recognition of the Swiss variety as such depends. The Italian of Italian-speaking Switzerland does indeed present numerous productive distinctive features, in constant and widespread use (Petralli 1990, Pandolfi 2009, Moretti 2011, Baranzini/Casoni 2020 among others). These differences occur at several linguistic levels (phonetic, morphosyntactic, pragmatic, etc.), but mainly at semantic-lexical level. The main influencing factors at the origin of most of this variety's linguistic peculiarities are the following:

[1] Here and throughout this paper, the term 'dialect' is used in the 'Romance' meaning, i.e. referring to languages with an evolutive tradition distinct from Italian; this is not to be confused with a simple diatopic variety of the language.

- the contact with the other two national languages, French and German, (examples for French are *crevettes* instead of Italian *gamberetti* [shrimps], or *classatore/classeur* instead of Italian *raccoglitore ad anelli* [ring binder]; examples for German are *schlafsack* instead of Italian *sacco a pelo* [sleeping bag], or *gipfel* instead of Italian *cornetto* [croissant]);
- the need to describe a political, administrative and social reality different from the Italian one;
- the dialectal substratum which, however, as we shall see, is less significant for standardisation processes, and
- the archaising tendency typical of peripheral varieties, which are, in this case, also politically separated.[2]

As far as linguistic features are concerned, the main traits distinguishing Swiss-Italian are phonetic traits - which, however, this variety shares to a considerable extent with all the languages of a larger area, i.e. the Lombard area - and lexical traits: the terms in use in Switzerland, influenced by the factors listed above, sometimes have no counterpart in standard Italian, sometimes systematically replace the term in use in Italy, and sometimes still coexist with the other form, alternating. At a morphosyntactic and more generally pragmatic-textual level, a few specific features can be noted. As an example, we can mention cases of gender differences: *la meteo* [the weather/the weather forecast] vs *il meteo* in peninsular Italian; there are also sporadic cases of differences in verb government: *avere bisogno* [to need] vs *avere bisogno di* in peninsular Italian. However, these are less productive phenomena and far less widespread than lexical differences.

Clyne (1992) had already observed how the relationship between the different national varieties is often asymmetrical, resulting in a relationship of dominance between one variety and the other. On the basis of his criteria and on Muhr (2012)'s later discussion, we can say that the description by authors like Berruto (2011), Hajek (2012) and Pandolfi (2017) characterises the Italian of the Italian part of Switzerland (ISIt) as a strongly non-dominant variety. First of all, the asymmetry between the number of speakers and the territory of diffusion of the two varieties is particularly important: a quick comparison between the population living in Italian-speaking Switzerland and that living in Italy shows a ratio of 1:164.

[2] Matteo Bartoli (for an overview of Bartoli's theories on the subject, see Renzi 1985), noted this phenomenon especially with reference to the Romance languages, regarding the spread of traits from the centre to the periphery and, consequently, the tendency of isolated areas to retain traits abandoned by the centre.

The political power linked to the language community is also limited; while Italian is recognised as an official language in Switzerland, in Graubünden and in Ticino (where it is the only official language), at the national level it is still a minority language, and local power at the cantonal level has no particular influence, in any case much less than the Italian variety in its home territory. The Italian-speaking part of Switzerland is thus, in Ammon (1989)'s terms, a ‘semi-centre’ - or even a ‘rudimentary centre’, cf. Pandolfi (2016) - having no influence on the Italian norm, and often identifying its own linguistic traits as 'deviant' or 'dialectal'; this attitude can be seen a fortiori in Swiss Italian speakers outside the community, e.g. within a group of speakers of the dominant variety.

Of all the characteristics associated with the non-dominant varieties of pluricentric languages, we would like to focus here on the scarcity of linguistic institutions, academies, and reference works - such as dictionaries or manuals - explicitly codifying the norm: only recently have some Italian L2 teaching manuals aimed at learners from other Swiss linguistic regions begun to mention some particularities of Swiss Italian. Nonetheless, there are social actors participating in the implicit codification of the norm of this variety of Italian in Switzerland; in the next section, we discuss precisely how they contribute to this process.

3. Media language as non-explicit linguistic authority

As already noted in Baranzini/Moskopf-Janner (2020), the ISIt variety differs from the other regional Italian varieties of Italy by its presence even in controlled and official contexts. In particular, one of the main lexical features of this variety consists of a rather important number of culture-specific terms linked to the social, political and administrative reality of Switzerland or of the Italian-speaking cantons. These terms are therefore systematically used instead of the corresponding terms used in peninsular Italian, in official texts and administrative communications. Consequently, these are also taken over when referring to these culture-specific topics in journalistic language and everyday language. Although they are often recognised by speakers as specific Swiss terms, therefore geographically marked, these terms and expressions are not perceived as marked on a register level. When they are, the perception of markedness is contrary to what is commonly expected for regional terms, as they are sometimes perceived as formal. In the absence of a codified norm, it is the use of such features in controlled contexts, such as media or administrative texts, by so-called linguistic authorities, that contributes to the standardisation of these Swiss Italian expressions. The

social forces that, according to Ammon (2017), contribute to determining the standard of a language are the language-norm authorities, the language codifiers, the language experts and the "model speakers" and "model authors". It is therefore not difficult to imagine how in the Swiss situation, where the non-dominant variety lacks explicit codification and where language experts remain largely confined to the academic sphere, the predominant role is played by such "model" speakers and "model" authors, like institutions, politicians, journalists and reporters working at public service broadcasters and broadsheets.

We have already mentioned how all the variety features linked to the different political-administrative reality and influenced by contact with other national languages are also typical of official texts and are thus regularly found within texts that are perceived as formal and adhering to a linguistic standard. In addition to literary texts - which, however, in the case of Swiss Italian authors, appear to look to an Italian standard, see Baranzini/Moskopf-Janner 2020 - and to institutional texts in Italian on a national or local level, the role played by the media, both written and broadcast, is therefore crucial. Media linguistic productions serve as an implicit linguistic model and therefore contribute to building a Swiss Italian linguistic norm. As far as written media are concerned, the Italian of Swiss Italian newspapers is the object of an extensive investigation in Ferrari (2009a) Ricci (2009), Mandelli (2009), Ferrari (2009b), Lala (2009), Cignetti (2009), Roggia (2009), De Cesare (2009), in which the authors focused on a corpus of written press from Ticino. The study revealed a series of features characterising the newspapers of this area of Italian-speaking Switzerland and differentiating them considerably from their counterparts from Italy, notably: a much more linear syntax, with globally shorter, less complex sentences; limited openness to the spoken language compared to what was observed for the peninsular Italian written press; a less 'daring', more controlled text architecture; conversely, the use of lexis is described as being broadly similar to that of the peninsular written press (Ferrari 2009a: 244-245). In this contribution, we decided to focus on broadcast media, and precisely on television news broadcasting, both at regional and national level, to gain a first insight into the above-mentioned traits in this type of media. We chose news programmes insofar as their language is a controlled and often partly written variety, which, however, is presented as spontaneous and comprehensible to all. Also, in the case of the interviewees, the context created is one of supervised and challenging communication, but direct and addressed to a wide audience. It is therefore expected that the linguistic habits peculiar to this variety will serve as a

model for a considerable number of speakers, and that any use of terms foreign to the peninsular Italian norm manifests a particularly incisive endorsement.

Our working hypothesis predicts that in Italian-speaking Switzerland the use of regional features in news is essentially the same at the national and local level, since the Swiss variety of Italian is both local and national. The reference corpus allowing us to test our hypothesis consists of the national and local news of two Italian channels. As far as Italy is concerned, the two levels could show a different handling of geographically non-standard features, with a more permeable attitude in the language of regional news and a more 'purist' one on a national level. It is also possible, however, that the greater codification of the linguistic norm in Italy also acts at the level of local broadcasting, favouring a non-regionally marked language. The aim of our study is not to conduct a quantitative analysis of the above-mentioned phenomena, but rather to point out possible trends and provide means of comparison between the varieties analysed.

4. Corpus building and data

Our corpus consists of a selection of four daily news programmes:

1. The national evening news programme aired on the public Swiss Italian TV channel RSI La Uno, covering national, local and international events;
2. The local news programme aired on the same channel, covering news concerning the Italian speaking area of Switzerland (Ticino and Italian Graubünden), as well as, for the same linguistic region, social and cultural topics with in-depth analyses, but also entertainment topics and events;
3. The national evening news programme aired on the public Italian national broadcasting service Rai Uno (Tg1), covering national and international events;
4. The local (regional) evening news programme aired on the regional TV channel TGS Giornale di Sicilia, a private broadcaster, covering news concerning the region of Sicily.

All newscasts were viewed through their respective streaming platforms (Play RSI n.d.; RAI News n.d.; Giornale di Sicilia n.d.). National newscasts were selected based on audience share: we selected the two most viewed national newscasts in Italy and Italian-speaking Switzerland respectively. As for the regional broadcasts, Il Quotidiano is the only such programme in Italian-speaking Switzerland, while the Giornale di Sicilia news programme was chosen primarily because it features a southern regional variety of Italian, distinctively different

from the Swiss-Italian one, and secondly because of the availability of a web portal with a news archive available, which not all regional channels offer. We chose to avoid the regional news being broadcast by the public national service in order to maximise the chances of encountering regional features, as we feared too much linguistic influence by the central service on the regional newsrooms.

Two time spans have been selected: May 15th to May 31st and July 6th to July 14th 2022, for a total of 30 airings per programme. We chose to divide the time period into two fairly distant chronological sections, in order to avoid lack of variation and an impoverishment of data due to the repetition of the same news topics gaining most attention in a given period. Also, a variety of different anchors alternate between days for all news programmes, thus allowing to rule out individual-related peculiarities[3].

In Table 1 below, the mean total of hours of airings per news programme is listed.

News programme	Mean duration time	Mean total hours
Rai Uno – telegiornale	37 min	1110 min
GRS – Giornale di Sicilia	20 min	600 min
RSI La Uno – telegiornale	30 min	900 min
RSI La Uno – Il Quotidiano	37 min	1100 min

Table 1. Mean total of hours of airings per news programme

All television programmes were viewed and the relevant linguistic features were collected and cross-analysed by two native speakers of Italian, one from peninsular Italy, the other one from Ticino. Both the audio and video of all programmes were taken into account, while advertising inserts (only present in the Italian regional news programme GRS) were excluded. Although we chose to give a rough count of occurrences of the relevant phenomena, our aim is not to provide numerical data or to conduct statistical analyses on the occurrences, but rather to give a first indication of the relative frequency of phenomena, so as to point out possible trends and provide means of comparison between the varieties analysed. This allows us to check the observations set out in the literature on the subject (Pandolfi 2009, Baranzini/Moskopf 2020), as well as our hypotheses. Also, an exact counting of some of the phenomena would have resulted in arbitrary

[3] We did not explore gender issues, either concerning anchors and journalists or interviewees, although this aspect is certainly worthy of interest.

choices. For example, carrying out a rigorous count of the phonetic and phonological peculiarities more typical of regional varieties (such as intervocalic [s], relative openness of vowels according to the regions, etc.) in peninsular Italian programmes would not have been possible in view of the absence of a completely defined standard for peninsular television Italian, which admits pronunciations from both Northern and Central Italian regional varieties. However, the general permeability with respect to more regionally marked pronunciations is a trend worth noting, since it is essentially the only feature found in our corpus that distances the Italian of the peninsular 'TGs' from what is considered a more stringent standard language. This, and the fact that the majority of the other phenomena retrieved was mainly lexical, is the reason why we chose to merge the different subtypes of features (lexical, phonetic, morphosyntactic) under macro-categories; individual morphosyntactic or phonetic phenomena are subsequently pointed out and described in the discussion of the results in section 5. The above-mentioned macro-categories of phenomena are listed below, with an example for each of them.[4]

1. Presence of regional and dialectal elements in vocabulary, syntactic constructions and pronunciation, e.g. the above-mentioned direct transitive – non prepositional – use of *avere bisogno*, [to need], in contrast with the peninsular standard Italian prepositional use *avere bisogno di*; some of these features are also to be found in dialects from specific areas of Lombardy; it is therefore interesting to verify if both Italian varieties (Swiss and peninsular) are permeable to their use within their news programmes, or not.
2. Presence of elements in vocabulary, syntactic constructions and pronunciation which are considered archaic in standard peninsular Italian, e.g. the term *vinattiere* rather than *commerciante di vini/vinaio* to refer to a wine merchant.
3. Presence of terms related to the country's national political and institutional domain. Given the particular linguistic status of Switzerland, in this country these terms are for the most part borrowings or calques from French and/or German. One example is the use of the term *Confederazione* to refer to the Swiss government (as in: *la Confederazione ha annunciato che…* [The Confederation announced that…]).

[4] The elements labelled as being 'archaic'/'ancient' as well as 'regional' are characterised as such in different dictionaries of standard Italian (see section 5.), as well as in the literature provided by Italian academic institutions such as the *Accademia della Crusca*.

4. Presence of lexical or syntactic borrowings or calques which are not part of the terminology related to the country's political or institutional life, for instance the use of *evidente* [evident] to mean 'easy, simple', calqued on French *évident* and unknown in peninsular Italian, where *evidente* means 'evident', 'visible'.

A rough indication of the frequency of the relevant phenomena, grouped by macro-category as mentioned above, is given in table 2 below. The most salient characteristics are discussed in the analysis.

News programmes	Regional and dialectal elements in vocabulary, syntactic constructions and pronunciation	Archaic/formal elements in vocabulary, syntactic constructions and pronunciation	Presence of terms related to the local political and institutional domain[5]	Presence of lexical or syntactic borrowings or calques which are independent of the specific political or institutional life of the country
Rai Uno – telegiornale	absent or one-off (with the exception of pronunciation)	absent or one-off	absent or one-off	1 to 5 occurrences (integral borrowings from English)
GRS – Giornale di Sicilia	absent or one-off (with the exception of pronunciation)	absent or one-off	absent or one-off	1 to 5 occurrences (integral borrowings from English)
RSI La Uno – telegiornale	1 to 5 occurrences	~ 10 occurrences	>15 occurrences	1 to 5 occurrences
RSI La Uno – Il Quotidiano	1 to 5 occurrences	~ 10 occurrences	>15 occurrences	1 to 5 occurrences

Table 2. Presence of non-standard features in national and local Swiss Italian and Peninsular Italian news broadcasts

[5] In the case of Switzerland, the expressions in Italian used in institutional settings, even when referring to national politics, are still local, i.e. used in only one Italian-speaking region.

5. Analysis of the results

The comparison between Italian and Swiss-Italian news programmes reveals a series of peculiarities, reflecting the difference between the two linguistic realities concerning the specificities of the norm and its permeability to non-standard phenomena. Below, a discussion of our results is presented for each of the four main macro-categories of features taken into account for this study.

5.1. Presence of non-standard features in national and regional Swiss and Italian news programmes

5.1.1 National and regional Italian news programmes

The systematic observation of Italian news programmes as regards the permeability of the dominant standard language variety with respect to diatopic non-standard phenomena, i.e. regionalisms and dialectalisms, shows a degree of permeability close to zero, in line with the recent history of peninsular Italian. As pointed out among others by De Mauro 1993, television programmes were an essential means of disseminating and teaching standard language to the Italian population, which was, for a vast majority, dialect-speaking. It is therefore not surprising that Italian news programmes still reflect a strict codification of the norm, excluding almost all manifestations of regional language.

The only linguistic level for which news broadcasts reveal greater openness towards non-standard phenomena is the phonetic level, as shown by the constant presence of distinctly regional phonetic and prosodic traits in the pronunciation of tv TV hosts, journalists and other speakers. However, even this is a fairly recent trend: until a few decades ago, pronunciation devoid of any dialectal inflection was a prerequisite for the profession of television announcer (see Rossi 2011). To give but one example of the permeability to phonetic regional traits, we can mention the presence – depending on the anchor – of both the voiced and non-voiced pronunciation of intervocalic [s] (a phonetic feature dividing northern from central-southern variants of peninsular Italian), in both Italian and foreign words (e.g. *caso* [case] pronounced both [kaso] and [kazo]).

As for all other linguistic levels (i.e. lexicon, morphology, syntax) the use of highly standardised Italian is the absolute norm in both news programmes. Regional linguistic phenomena are but extremely sporadic. They appear to be mainly lexical, but occasionally phonetic/morphological, and are allowed mainly in three cases: i. as regional features among the most commonly known and

disseminated through their presence in movies and/or TV shows, or easily understood (e.g. central-southern Italian apocope of the final syllable, as in *So' stata* instead of *sono stata* [I have been], by an interviewee); ii. as originally regional terms which subsequently entered the national standard as part of the cultural heritage of the country (e.g. *'ndrangheta*, Calabrian mafia organisation), or iii. out of necessity, i.e. as unambiguous labels to refer to an entity originally exclusively belonging to a local reality, and subsequently entering the standard language as a result. An example of such is *mandamento*, originally a legal term designing a district in legal language, which is now mostly known, through media diffusion, as indicating in Sicilian mafia jargon the area of influence of one or more families affiliated to *Cosa Nostra*.

It should be noted that all the above observations apply without distinction to both the national news programme (tg1) and the local news programme (GRS Sicily). The local programme shows no substantial differences in the permeability to diatopically marked phenomena. This is all the more noteworthy since the ads inserted within the programme, just after the opening credits, stand out distinctively as being regionally marked. Although we did not include ads within our analysis, they serve as an indication that the language used in regional news results from a specific editorial choice. This convergence between national and local programmes rules out a possible explanation in terms of adjustment to different audiences for the use of a standard variety in national news.

Both in national and in regional news programmes, the very rare cases of deviation from the standard consist essentially in the use of terms belonging to the less formal registers of the language. An example of this are the words of an Italian political leader reacting to the resignation of Italy's prime minister: "la responsabilità [...] impone a [...] Mario Draghi di continuare a *dare una mano... Con chi ci sta!*" [responsibility compels Mario Draghi to go on lending a hand... Together with whoever wants to be in!'].

In the following sections, we highlight the characteristics of the news programmes in Italian-speaking Switzerland, in a contrastive perspective with Italian broadcasts. The comparison is made with respect to all news programmes from Italy and all news programmes from Switzerland, i.e. without distinguishing between the national news programme (RAI) and the local news programme (GDS), since, as just mentioned, we did not find any substantial differences between the two.

5.1.2 National and regional Swiss-Italian news programmes

In contrast to peninsular Italian, the standard of Swiss Italian news shows a degree of permeability to the occasional penetration of non-standard forms. This permeability manifests itself in the following ways:

- presence of typically regional or dialectal vocabulary such as, for instance, *mantellina* [rain jacket];
- presence of typically regional or dialectal syntactic constructions: the direct transitive use of *avere bisogno* mentioned above, which occurs particularly in interviews and does not occur in Italian news programmes, although part of the regional Italian of Lombardy admits this construction; another example is the definite article before a person's first name (*l'Adri* [the Adri], *l'Angela* [the Angela]);
- presence of specific discourse markers such as the confirmation request marker *neh*? [isn't it?];
- insertion within the programme of whole speech sequences of up to 2-3 minutes which are entirely in a local dialect, without subtitles or translation. These typically occur in answers by interviewees. The viewers are expected to understand and there is no clarifying intervention on the part of the interviewer.

It is to be noted that the use of regional forms and constructions appears to be independent of the speaker's education level, based on their professional qualification as indicated in the programme. However, it is most frequently used by interviewees and more rarely by the anchor of the news programme. This is consistent with expectations related to the more or less spontaneous nature of the spoken intervention in each of these cases, as well as - presumably - in line with specific requirements of the broadcasting service's language policies, to which unfortunately we could not gain access. Although present in both news programmes, the above features are slightly more frequent in the regional programme *Il Quotidiano*. We cannot exclude that this difference is also due, at least in part, to the different nature of the news covered in the programmes.

5.1.2.1. Archaic and formal elements in vocabulary, syntactic constructions and pronunciation

In the news programmes of Italian-speaking Switzerland, both national and regional, there is an increased presence of forms which are felt as being archaic in standard peninsular Italian. This observation is in line with past descriptions of

this variety of Italian (see among others Berruto 2012). In other cases, we note the use of lexis that, although not necessarily archaic, is usually considered literary and/or relegated to a highly formal written or spoken language in peninsular Italian. As could be expected in view of the particular characteristics of standard Italian (see Berruto 1987), the above-mentioned features are often indissociable. This is shown by the fact that, in many cases, the characterisation of a term as archaic by Italian dictionaries or grammars is not homogeneous: the same term, labelled as archaic in one dictionary, is labelled as literary or formal in another. One of such cases is *vinattiere* for peninsular Italian *vinaio* [wine merchant], labelled as "ancient, literary" by the *Grande Dizionario Hoepli Italiano di Aldo Gabrielli* (online edition from Gabrielli 2018) and as *non comune* [uncommon, rare] by the *Vocabolario Treccani online.* We also noted several instances of the use of *essi* [they] for the third person plural pronoun, described by Italian grammars (see for instance Treccani 2012) as being nowadays infrequent in common language and limited to highly formal and administrative language. In some cases, anchors or interviewees used lexemes so strongly marked as archaic and/or literary that they are no longer even attested in some of the Italian dictionaries we consulted. This is for instance the case for *vie(p)più* [more and more], which appeared among the terms used by Swiss-Italian interviewees, while it is hardly ever used anymore even in formal language in Italy, and it is no longer attested for instance in Gabrielli (2018). Finally, a case of diaphasically (and concomitantly, diamesic) marked variant distinguishing Swiss Italian news broadcasts is the regular use of *recarsi*, a formal, written variant for the verb *andare* [to go], or *giungere*, a formal, written variant for the verb *arrivare* [to arrive].

In addition to lexical archaisms, a phonological example of a preference for an obsolete form is the use of the so-called *prosthetic i*, a case of epenthesis of [i] between a word-final consonant and a beginning [s] or [z] followed by a consonant sound (as in *In -i- Svizzera* [in Switzerland]), which is either lexicalised in both varieties (*per iscritto* [in writing]), or no longer used in Italy, as a result of the increased tendency in contemporary peninsular Italian to avoid contextually-derived formal variants (see Serianni 1997: 8).

It should be noted that, in some cases, terms which are perceived as archaisms or as having a different meaning in peninsular Italian are not necessarily a remnant of archaic Italian forms, but entered Swiss Italian as calques or borrowings through language contact. For example, the verb *postulare*, of Latin origin, is used in Swiss news reports with the meaning 'to apply' (e.g. for a job) or

'to propose an instance', presumably as a calque of the frequently used in today's French *postuler*, which has this exact meaning. In peninsular Italian, *postulare* in the sense of 'to apply' was used in legal contexts, and this use of the word is now obsolete.

Finally, we have noted the use in the spoken language of lexical elements which, in peninsular Italian, are not only considered formal/literary, but also belong more strictly to a limited number of domain-specific varieties. An interesting example is the sporadic use in non-specialised language of *altresì* [likewise], a form attested in Italian dictionaries as 'literary', and used exclusively in bureaucratic and legal language. These uses, which can sound surprising to an Italian speaker on the level of language register choice, show a tendency by Swiss Italian speakers to exaggerate formal traits in controlled contexts.

In sum, although strictly codified and not permeable to diatopically marked variants, the Italian of the peninsular news broadcasts seems to have gradually embraced the transformations that have progressively defined the 'neo-standard' as coined by Berruto (1987), with the abandonment of formal and literary elements and a wider acceptance of variants in pronunciation. More complex is the picture emerging for the Italian of the Swiss television news, more closely linked to a regional and dialectal substrate, while, at the same time, attached to a more literary and formal model of non-regional standard Italian, in line what is observed for written press (see Ferrari 2009a).

5.1.2.2. Presence of terms related to the Swiss political and institutional domain

The impact of the continuous contact between languages in Italian-speaking Switzerland is mostly visible in the presence of a 'pan-Helvetic' lexicon (see among others. Berruto 1984, 2012, Moretti 2011), which strongly characterises the Swiss Italian news programmes. Before addressing the specificities found in our corpus, a brief explanation is required.

Both the national and the regional news programmes from the Italian part of Switzerland contain expressions and constructions that definitely appear as deviating from the standard, either on a syntactic level, or on a lexical level, or both. The reason for this is that a non-negligible part of the texts produced within the Swiss national news programmes is itself a translation from German or French (e.g. interviews with non-Italian-speaking individuals, such as expert or political figures, or the translation of specific political and/or institutional labels). This can

result in literal translations or actual linguistic calques, and in many cases the boundary between an erroneous rendition of the original term and a specificity linked to the particular variety of Italian can become blurred. Such a phenomenon is an intrinsic part of the Swiss-Italian linguistic reality, and is also typical of advertisements and other areas of public life in Italian-speaking Switzerland. We did not, of course, take into account the cases most visibly resulting from translation errors. One example for all of these cases leaving the viewer with an impression of oddity is the rendition of the name of the "Swiss Tropical and Public-Health Institute" of Basel, translated into *Istituto Svizzero di Salute pubblica e tropicale* [Swiss Institute of Public and Tropical Health].

Apart from these few particular cases, the presence of this 'pan-Helvetic' lexicon is arguably the most immediately visible feature, and also the most frequently occurring in our corpus, as shown in table 2. above. This phenomenon is intrinsically correlated with that of the contact between the national languages, and manifests itself first and foremost in the political and institutional sector and all its related domains (government bodies, administrations, but also, for example, public education, justice, or the Ministry of Health). As was pointed out above, this characteristic results in lexis largely consisting of semantic calques of (Swiss) German or French words or constructions: the items in question are most often shared by both Swiss and peninsular Italian, but used with a different meaning in the two geographic varieties. Below are some examples.

Among the very numerous cases of 'federal' lexicon, we can mention the term *consigliere/consigliera* in its various declinations: *consigliere/a federale* [federal councillor], *granconsigliere/a* [member of the Great Council], etc.; another direct calque of German and French is the term *aiuto* [help, aid] used in many institutional contexts in which peninsular Italian would rather use *assistenza* [social support/welfare] or, in some cases, the plural *aiuti*: *aiuto sociale* [social aid/welfare], which directly translates *Sozialhilfe/Aide sociale*, but also more context-specific cases, such as *aiuto al trasloco* [assistance in moving homes]. *Aiuto sociale* and many other 'Helvetisms' of this kind are collocations whose meaning is specific to Swiss Italian, although the meaning of their components (e.g. *aiuto* and *sociale*) is shared by both varieties of Italian. A second example of this kind is *cassa malati* [health insurance]. Another very frequent case is the use of the term *imposte* [taxes], not totally absent in peninsular Italian, but less frequent and only used in specific contexts. In other cases, variation is observable both on a lexical and on a syntactic level: a lexical element common to standard Italian and Swiss Italian is not only

used with an additional meaning in all main Swiss languages (and therefore in Swiss Italian), but, related to that particular meaning, it can also have an additional syntactic construction not in use in peninsular Italian. This happens for instance with the term *rispettivamente* [respectively], which, in addition to a distributive use, has a 'conjunction' use in Swiss Italian, typically as a synonym for 'or else'/'in addition'/'on x's part'. When it has these uses, *rispettivamente* is placed between two lexical items and even between two sentences, as would be a conjunction; a construction totally unheard of in peninsular Italian.

5.1.2.3 Presence of lexical or syntactic borrowings or calques which are independent of the specific political or institutional life of the country

The boundary between strictly institutional and simply 'cultural' calques and borrowing in Swiss Italian is very fragile. It is undeniable that Swiss news programmes abound with calques and borrowings from French as well as from German, covering simple lexical items (in addition to the above-mentioned *evidente* in the sense of 'easy', we can mention *marcare* [to mark], from French *marquer, implicarsi* [to involve oneself], from French *s'impliquer*), but also entire expressions and idioms, for instance *la chiesa al centro del villaggio*, a translation of the French (*remettre) l'église au milieu du village* [to place the church back in the centre of the village], meaning to put things right.

One effect of linguistic contact that would deserve further study is a Swiss Italian tendency which appears to be in contrast to the wide acceptance of integral borrowings from French and German: it is the tendency towards linguistic conservativeness with respect to Anglicisms, in comparison to peninsular Italian, which largely prefers integral borrowings to calques. While Italian news programmes mention *i social network* or even simply *i social*, Swiss news programmes maintain the Italian translation *reti sociali*, hardly used in peninsular Italian, as does French with *réseaux sociaux*. Globally, Swiss Italian programmes seem to use fewer integral borrowings from English than peninsular Italian programmes.

5.1.2.4. Additional features

We would like to point out another feature most likely resulting from language contact. We have noted a discrepancy between Swiss-Italian and peninsular Italian news programmes in the pronunciation of foreign terms. This is particularly true for German and French lexical items, whose pronunciation consistently matches

the original native pronunciation in Swiss-Italian programmes, as opposed to peninsular Italian news. For instance, we observe in Swiss news broadcasts the correct pronunciation of the high front rounded vowel [y] as well as of nasal vowels, which do not belong to the vocalic system of standard Italian. This is to be expected in Italian-speaking Switzerland: here, speakers are in constant contact with French and German, which are also systematically part of school education. In some cases, the difference in pronunciation is not one of competence, but one of choice of the source language, such as in the case of the word *budget*, occasionally pronounced the French way by some Swiss interviewees, and systematically following the English pronunciation in Italian news programmes.

A linguistic difference highlighting a socio-cultural distinction concerns inclusive language, which is hardly used at all in the Italian news programmes, whereas this kind of language is absolutely *de rigueur* in both Swiss news broadcasting services. For instance, while the latter feature the label *la ministra* [the female minister], Italian news programmes use the label *l'assessore* [councillor] for both genders. It is likely that this characteristic is the result of the inclusive policies implemented by the Swiss Confederation as a whole, and is thus the outcome of a phenomenon that is both institutional and politico-cultural.

6. Conclusion

The observation of our corpora brings out substantial differences between Swiss Italian and peninsular Italian concerning the use of non-standard vs standard linguistic features both in national and in regional TV programmes. The two linguistic dimensions converge in both cases, but for opposite reasons: in the dominant variety, the national standard is used in both national and regional news, while in the case of the non-dominant variety, regional traits are present in both local and national news. As far as peninsular Italian news programmes are concerned, the national and the regional news programmes show no difference in the handling of geographically non-standard features. This is clearly indicated by the almost total absence of regional features, with only one notable exception, i.e. tolerance towards phonetic/prosodic markedness. Influences from foreign languages are exclusively integral borrowings which are part of the lexicon of the language.

Swiss Italian programmes are characterised by the factors already identified in the literature as determining the specificity of the Italian of Switzerland, therefore confirming the importance of these factors in establishing the standard:

the lexical characterisation of a specific Swiss political and social environment, manifesting itself, for instance, in the numerous borrowings and calques from French and German, as well as the general impact of the close contact with these two languages; the regional/dialectal substratum, to which Swiss Italian standard is more permeable than peninsular Italian, and lexis that is considered archaic/literary/formal in the dominant Italian variety and labelled as such in the dictionaries. As far as Swiss news programmes are concerned, the news items of international character (exclusively present in the national edition) do not generally allow for dialect-related features, but do allow for terms related to institutions and administrative, political and social language, and/or terms perceived as more archaic or formal. This shows how, excluding more strongly dialectal terms, which are in any case less present, archaisms, literary words or borrowings from French and German are perceived as standard in the Italian part of Switzerland. On the other hand, the presence of regionalisms is more pronounced in the local edition, which also gives more space to interviews with local inhabitants. The difference in the presence of regional features in the Italian-speaking area of Switzerland vs in Italy is, therefore, not to be ascribed to the fact that regional features are admitted in local news programmes, but to the fact that they are perceived as standard in Italian-speaking Switzerland. An indication of that is their presence in national news programmes.

The observations gathered here are based on a qualitative look at a limited number of items, which only allows the highlighting of relevant features. Areas for future research include therefore primarily a corpus-based quantitative analysis of the media investigated here, in which the relevant phenomena could be systematically retrieved and counted, their representation in different sections of the programmes statistically measured and their linguistic environment taken into account (in the form, for instance, of statistically significant associations between items). Within the same quantitative perspective, the issue of inclusive language - which is a reflection of the social reality in the two areas under consideration - is definitely another research path worth exploring.

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