

Swiss German

The Modern Alemannic Vernacular in and around Zurich

Johannes Reese

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1 General Information

1.1 Introduction

There is a great number of literature on Swiss German dialects. Therefore, it seems useless to add another one. On the other hand, a good deal of the works are hard to understand even for Northern Germans. They are designed for Swiss wanting to deepen their knowledge about their own dialect. Mostly, they are written in German. Short introductions are also very scarce.

The aim of this booklet is to give a short, but not too short overview of Swiss German. A student not familiar with German and not willing to make Swiss German his or her key interest, shall be provided with material that gives a rough insight into this language. Besides, I want to present some observations that I haven't found described in the literature so far.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will classify Swiss German in the Indo-European language family and describe the linguistic situation in Switzerland. Chap. 2 will give an account of how Swiss German is pronounced in Zurich, followed by a short chapter on the orthography used in the booklet, the Diets system (chap. 3). In chap. 4, I will show the different forms of Swiss German. Chap. 5 is dedicated to the TAM system. The way elements of speech are combined to yield utterances is described in chap. 6. A short text, provided by the phonogramme archives of the university of Zurich, will end the booklet. I recorded the uncited examples I present throughout the booklet myself, they were produced by young educated people from the Zurich area, born between 1970 and 1980.

1.2 The languages of Switzerland

All languages traditionally spoken in Switzerland belong to the Indo-European language family. Among them, the languages in Switzerland belong either to the Romance or the Germanic language subfamily.

The Romance languages cover only a relatively small part of the country. Five of the twenty-six cantons are totally Romance-speaking, three others to a considerable part. A small portion of the canton of Berne is also inhabited by speakers of a Romance language¹. The Romance languages can be divided into: Franco-Provençal, *langue d'oïl* (also known as French), Lombardian, and Rhaeto-Romance. Nearly all of the dialects belonging to these languages are endangered (or — most of them — already extinct), the latter by Germanic dialects, the other ones by Standard French² (Franco-Provençal and *langue d'oïl*) and Standard Italian (Lombardian). Only the Lombardian dialects in Grisons are still vigorous, and a small number of Franco-Provençal ones are spoken today in some Valaisan valleys. The Lombardian in Ticino has only recently started to be in danger.

¹What is more, three towns are officially bilingual (French/“German”): Biel BE, Fribourg FR and Murten/Morat FR.

²It is itself a dialect inside of the *langue d'oïl*.

The Germanic subfamily may be further divided into Northern Germanic, Eastern Germanic (extinct since the Middle Ages), and Southern or Western Germanic.

The division of the latter is disputed. The researchers in the field of German Studies have a tradition to distinguish the sub-sub-family into German, Dutch, and Frisian, with an additional diversification of German into Low German, Central German, and Upper German. The distinction is based on one important sound change, known as High German Sound Shift (*Hochdeutsche Lautverschiebung*). Low German dialects didn't carry out the shift, Central German ones only partially, Upper German ones almost completely.

This division is biased by national borders, as linguists agree about today. "Low German", now called Low Saxon (or rather divided into Low Saxon and Low Franconian) should be considered a language of its own. The connection between the "Central German" and "Upper German" dialects is unclear, and perhaps will remain so. Whether the terms are meaningful, isn't sure either. In any case, what was called "Upper German" is divided into the dialect group (or possibly languages) of Upper (i. e. Eastern and Southern) Franconian, Bavarian, and Alemannic. Alemannic consists of four branches: Swabian, Lower Alemannic, High Alemannic, and Highest Alemannic. Many scholars split Lower Alemannic into two groups: Lake-Constance-Alemannic and Upper-Rhine-Alemannic.

High and Highest Alemannic are the only dialect groups that carried out the High German Sound Shift really completely. Highest Alemannic dialects are spoken in the Valais, Switzerland, and in colonies that settlers from there founded in other areas during the Middle Ages: parts of Grisons, Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Liechtenstein, and scattered villages in the north of Italy. High Alemannic dialects are traditionally spoken in the southern fringe of the German state of Baden-Württemberg, the extreme south of Alsatia, and in Switzerland.

Apart from the Highest Alemannic area, all Germanic dialects inside Switzerland belong to the High Alemannic dialect group. There are only one or two exceptions to this rule: 1) in Samnaun, Grisons, a former Rhaeto-Romance dialect was replaced by a Bavarian (Tyrolian) one around the beginning of the 20th century; 2) the dialect of the city of Basel diverges from its surroundings; it has some features that traditionally are used to distinguish Lower Alemannic from High Alemannic — Basel German used to go with Lower Alemannic.

Alemannic was brought into what is now Switzerland by the Alemannic invaders in the fourth century AD. Before, large parts of Western Europe were inhabited by Celts, Rhaetians, and Roman immigrants, including large areas of Germany and the whole of Switzerland. The former had been romanized by the latter, but this process was newly finished when the Germanic tribes arrived. A lot of those people fled when the Alemannians came, but a lot of them may have stayed and assimilated to the invaders. The east of Switzerland resisted Alemannization quite long. Until the High Middle Ages many areas were still Romance-speaking. Many valleys of Grisons still are; they are assimilating to the German-speaking Swiss right now.

After the Middle Ages, Swiss German was carried to other parts of the world. Mennonite communities in Indiana and Ohio have preserved their Berne German up to now.

Due to immigration since World War II, many other languages have been imported into Switzerland, especially Portuguese, Southern Slavic languages, and Tamil. The largest immigration groups are Italians and Germans. Except the Germans, at least the children of those immigrants (called *secondos*) are either bilingual in their parents' language and Swiss German or only speak the latter.

1.3 Language situation

We have seen above that almost all Romance dialects in Switzerland are facing extinction. What remains are varieties of Standard French and Standard Italian. This development is typical for Europe, we find it in all Western European nations. Some underwent this process already a century ago or even longer. There are only very few countries that deviate: the most prominent are Norway³ and Switzerland. In Switzerland, in both the Rhaeto-Romance and the Germanic parts, no native uses the Standard language in everyday communication⁴.

Germanic Switzerland is one of the or the only clear case of diglossia in Western Europe. In everyday conversations, Alemannic is used, a language that is hardly ever written. In formal situation (cf. Koch & Oesterreicher, 1994), Standard German is applied, with a few Swiss specialties (Ammon, 1995; Burger, 1995; Rash, 1998). The term "formal situation" must be refined: in recent years, the situations considered to be formal enough to justify the usage of Standard German have diminished. Many speeches are now given in Alemannic.

Swiss don't just speak inherited dialects. In recent years, we can observe a *koinization* process. People drop speech behavior that is special for one region in favor of forms that are similar or equal all over Germanic Switzerland. Only the Upper Valais remains out of this language community. This is an evolution without an ending. Probably, there will never be a uniform Swiss German (Christen, 1998), but slowly the dialects become more similar to each other. What is more, in terms of phraseology and vocabulary, the *koiné* has been heavily influenced by Standard German (cf. also Kuhn, 1997; Rash, 1998).

The center of the *koinization* process (henceforth: *koiné*) is, in a way, Zurich. Outside Zurich, most people call their dialect by the region they live in; in Zurich, however, they say they speak Swiss German. This "Zurich German", however, is not the way inhabitants of Zurich used to speak a century ago. So, the Zurich dialect has made a step towards the new *koiné*, too — the term "Swiss German" is kind of justified.

For loans from Standard German into the *koiné* (which is not a full language system, but a gravitation field of possible Alemannic linguistic instances, s. above), historical phonology is still relevant. Direct loans are rare. Mostly, the morphemes are taken one by one. Due to the kinship of the two languages, the majority of elements exists in both. So, Standard German *aus* corresponds to Swiss German *uus*. The morpheme *weis(en)*, which in Standard German is only used in compounds, is akin to Swiss German *wys(e)*. Standard German *Ausweis* 'identity card' has thus been taken over as *Uuswys*.

The effect of the *koiné* is especially salient in Basel. Most speakers of Basel German have dropped the features that made some scholars subsume it under Lower Alemannic (cf. also Leuenberger, 1997; Hinderling, 1997). Traditional Basel German has practically only survived in the carnival culture.

Besides the pan-Swiss *koinization*, there are local and regional *koinization* processes as well. The most prominent one is going on in the canton of Berne and surrounding areas. Here, the levelling seems to move towards the former low class varieties of the dialect of Berne city. This *koiné*⁵ is known as *Bäärndütsch* (*Berne German*). The change is particularly obvious in

³However, in Norway there are also areas where traditional dialects have been replaced by varieties of the Standard.

⁴In the Rhaeto-Romance area, the situation is especially complicated: people use their native Rhaeto-Romance dialect and the Swiss German *koiné* (s. below) as a vernacular, the local Standard of Rhaeto-Romance and the newly invented common Rhaeto-Romance standard alongside Standard German as written languages.

⁵Again, *koiné* is not a "language", but an open set of probable utterances.

the southern part of the canton, the *Berner Oberland*. Its dialects used to form the transition towards Highest Alemannic. Now, Berne German is suppressing these inherited dialects.

The tendency to use *koiné* forms is reinforced in interactions with outsiders and outside the home region of a speaker. Werlen *et al.* (2002) have examined the linguistic behavior of Valaisans who have moved to Berne city, clearly showing a language with a stronger tendency towards the Berne and pan-Swiss *koiné* than the same speakers would use at home.

This booklet tries to describe the language variety that is spoken today in and around Zurich. *Koiné* forms are described where they have completely replaced older ones, Zurich German forms where they are still competing with the *koiné* or are not likely to be replaced in the near future (without distinguishing between the two options). Zurich speech is still prestigious, even where it differs from the *koiné*.

The interaction of both *koineization* in Switzerland and language shift outside of its borders has led to a language border that coincides with the political ones. As a rule, Swiss will switch to Standard German when they cross the German border and talk to speakers of High Alemannic with a German passport.

In the booklet, Swiss German will sometimes be regarded in comparison to Standard German, as it is spoken as a vernacular today in the north of Germany. The latter will be abbreviated StG.

1.4 List of glossing abbreviations

Nominative and present tense are not given in the glossing, as they are the unmarked forms. Likewise, the accusative is only glossed if it deviates from the nominative. The singular is only indicated for verbs. As Swiss German is an inflecting language, morpheme analysis is possible only in relatively few cases; therefore, I have mostly renounced of it.

1, 2, 3 First, second, third person	DIR Directional
ABTP <i>Abtönungspartikel</i> ⁶	f Feminine
ACC Accusative	FUT Future
ADV Adverb	GEN Genitive
AP Active participle	HAB Habitual
COMP Comparative	IMP Imperative
COND Conditional	IND Indefinite article
CONJ Conjunction	INF Infinitive
DAT Dative	LOC Locational
DEF Definite article	m Masculine
DEM Demonstrative	n Neuter
DIM Diminutive	NEG Negation

⁶There is a large set of particles in Swiss German and other Southern Germanic languages, which fulfil a great number of different discourse functions, too many to deal with this phenomenon in this booklet.

NEGART Negative article

OBL Oblique

PART Participle

PERS Personal pronoun

PL Plural

PN Proper name

POSS Possessive

REL Relative marker

S Singular

SAT Satellite (Talmy, 1985)

SUBJ Subjunctive

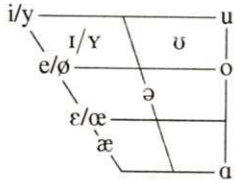
SUP Superlative

2 Phonology

I follow Maas (1999b) in assuming different levels in phonology. On the lowest level, an element (here a phoneme) is combined with other elements. This combination itself is an element in the next level and so forth.

The lowest level is, of course, the inventory of phonemes. I will first give the vowels, then the combinations of vowels, i. e. the diphthongs, then the consonants. The second level is the syllable. In Swiss German, syllables behave awkward if we don't observe the next level of description: two-syllable connections known as feet. Feet involve different syllable types. Feet combine to words, words to clauses and sentences. These latter will be left out of consideration.

2.1 Vowels



As we have seen above, in phonology variation is highest. So, this chapter really dedicates to the Zurich German phonology of today. Consequently, I will talk about “Zurich German” throughout it. This doesn't mean that there is no *koineization* in this domain. However different phonological systems of Swiss dialects may be, any speaker of German will recognize any speaker of Swiss German; due to the recent development, an inhabitant of a German town at the Swiss border will have less difficulties to notice that someone is Swiss than to distinguish if s/he is from the neighboring village on the Swiss side or from the canton Uri in Central Switzerland (apart from the fact that the latter will probably speak Standard German with him/her).

The [ɑ] is very low and very much retracted, as compared to e. g. the Standard German one. To make this point clear, one should perhaps write [ɑ̠]¹. [ɛ̠] is lowered, too, as compared to Standard German; if Standard German speakers pronounce [e], it is usually perceived as [ɪ]. Note that there is no [ɔ] and no short [ɛ]. This is a specialty of Zurich German. Berne German, e. g., has [ɛ] and [ɔ] rather than [e] and [o]. Eastern dialects distinguish between [ɛ] and [e], [ɔ] and [o] (Hotzenköcherle, 1984).

Length Most of the vowels exist in a short and a long variant (cf. also Schmid, 2004). Exceptions are [ɛ:], [œ:], [i:], [u:] and [y:], which are always long. [ə] is always short and occurs

¹Zurich is an island in the so called *Verdampfungsgebiet* ‘rounding zone’. In the dialects to the north and surrounding Zurich, [ɑ] is in most circumstances substituted by [ɔ] or [ɔ̠]. The lack of this rounding is typical for the Southern Swiss dialects.

in reduced syllables, s. below. In modern Zurich German, [ɪ:], [ɔ:], and [y:] have merged with [i:], [u:], and [y:]. Most non-Zurich dialects keep distinguishing them.

Diphthongs The following diphthongs exist:

- [æi] • [ɔi] • [oö] • [uä]
- [eɪ] • [æö] • [iä] • [yö]

There is a tendency to substitute [æi] with [ai]. In rural areas, [ɔi] is replaced by [œi].

2.2 Consonants

Non-phonemic consonants are given in brackets.

Labial and coronal consonants

	Bilab.	Labiodent.	Dent.	Alveol.	Postalveol.
Plosives	[p/b]		[t̪/d̪]		
Fricatives		[f/v]	[s]		[ʃ]
Laterals			[l]		
Nasals	[m]		[n]		
Trills				[r]	

Dorsal consonants

	Palatals	Velars	Uvulars	Glottals
Plosives		[k/g]		([ʔ])
Fricatives			[χ]	
Approximants				[h]
Nasals		[ŋ]		
Semivowels	[j]			

There is no voiced/unvoiced opposition in Swiss German (except [v] against [f]). Instead, a fortis/lenis opposition exists. The phonetic correlate of this distinction has been investigated by Willi (1995, 1996). So, as opposed to Standard German, where [b] contrasts with [p^h], we have [b̥] against [p]. The only voiced fricative is [v]. Sonants are always voiced. In foreign words, other phonemes or allophones exist, like [ɹ] or [w]. As hinted to above, consonants may be short or long, just like vowels.

In opposition to the Standard German apical alveolars, Swiss German has *laminal dentals*. The correct form for the above list should thus be: [d̪], [t̪], [s̪], [l̪], and [ŋ̪]. The only alveolar is [r]. In the 20th century, many speakers have dropped the [r] in favor of a uvular [R] — is has almost become predominant among speakers born after, say, 1980 — which may be pronounced as [ʀ] in front of a consonant; it is, however, not pronounced as an approximant as in the usual modern Standard German pronunciation ([ʀ])². In few other Swiss German

²What is more, Standard German R turns into [ʀ] in any position but before a vowel in a syllable and produces

dialects, like Schaffhausen German and Basel German, the uvular variety predominates now — produced as a postuvular approximant³ ([ɣ]), whereas in most other dialects, the uvular is not accepted.

Affricates The affricates reflect, in historical terms, the difference between High German dialects and the rest of the Germanic languages. In syllable initial position, old Germanic plosives have turned into affricates in the dialects affected by the *hochdeutsche Lautverschiebung*.

The following affricates exist:

- [pf]
- [ts]
- [kχ]

Like the vowels, consonants exist in a short and a long variant.

Not as phonemes, but as a result of assimilation, nasal release of plosives ([bⁿ], [dⁿ], [gⁿ]) occurs in syllable onsets: [bⁿuɔ̃tər] ‘the mother’.

There is a strange peculiarity in the phonological system of Swiss Standard German, given the prestige that Standard German has even in Switzerland (at least in the media people try to adapt Standard German pronunciation):

Standard German reduced syllables only contain a schwa, if it is not followed by a sonant. In this case, the schwa vanishes and the latter becomes the nucleus of the syllable, sometimes yielding nasal or lateral releases: [ʃ^(w)ɑ:f̃n] ‘sheeps (Dat.)’, [g̃y:s̃n] ‘to greet’, [zɑ̃t^{hl}] ‘saddle’, [bɑ̃k^{ln}] ‘to bake’. In Swiss German, nasal releases are restricted to syllable onsets. Thus they pronounce [ʃɑ:f̃ñ], [g̃y:s̃ñ], [sɑ̃:t̃ñ], [bɑ̃k̃:ñ], when speaking Standard German.

2.3 Syllable structure

Syllable structure can be very complex in Swiss German, cf. [b̃j̃t̃e.lə] ‘to order’, [vq̃z̃st] ‘grows’, [sæ̃χ̃t̃s̃g] ‘sixty’ [t̃s̃t̃s̃yri] ‘in Zurich’, or [t̃s̃b̃sũɔ̃χ̃] ‘visiting’. The complex syllable structure is the result of historical phonological processes that can be traced back to the trochaic foot structure and the stress-timedness of Swiss German, s. below.

2.3.1 Combinations of syllables

Two basic entities are crucial for determining the Swiss German phonological system: the syllable and the foot. As almost all Germanic languages, Swiss German has a *trochaic* foot structure (Maas, 1999b). That means, in principle, all words can be broken down to two-syllable units, the first of which is prominent (Maas, 1999b). Prominent syllables can potentially be stressed.

The prototypical foot, to be found in most inherited words, consists of a prominent and a reduced syllable. The nucleus of a reduced syllable is always a schwa. Maas (1999b) assumes a hierarchical structure; he substitutes the term “stress” with prominence to cope with this specialty. The traditional terms of primary and secondary stresses are thus only a part of a

diphthongs.

³This is the predominant articulation in most Alemannic dialects inside Germany now, too, except in Bavaria.

system containing different degrees of “stressedness”. In sequences of feet, some feet are more prominent, hence “more stressed” than others. Usually, the resp. first foot is more prominent than a second one.

The first foot of a phonological word is more prominent as opposed to all other feet in the word, yielding a first syllable stress for the whole word — in sentences, this stress may be suppressed by the stress of the word that is in focus. Composites make up a new word that can be broken down to two basic ones (or combinations of two-word-units); i. e., each element has got a prominent foot, and one of those feet dominates the other — usually the first one. This is the secondary accent described in the literature.

So, stress is incorporated into a metric system. The most prominent syllable in a sentence is the first syllable of the word highest in a syntactical hierarchy of the most focussed constituents.

Deviations from this scheme on the word level occur predominantly in foreign words borrowed from Latin via French: [fɔ̃nɔ̃lɔ̃ʒi:] ‘phonology’. Here, the last foot is more prominent.

“Real” French loans, however, usually follow the ordinary pattern, unlike in Standard German. So it’s [t̃rɔ̃t̃w̃ɑ̃r] ‘sidewalk’ and [k̃wɑ̃f̃ɔ̃r] ‘barber, hairdresser’ as opposed to Standard German [f̃ɪ̃z̃œ̃b̃].

However, more systematic deviations of the foot scheme occur: one is the occurrence of two reduced syllables in a row, yielding dactylic structures; the other are single syllables that can occur before a prominent syllable: Maas calls them offbeat. They are less often in Swiss German than in Standard German, as a lot of them are reduced to parts of a syllable⁴: it’s [b̃j̃t̃e.lə] ‘to order’ and not [b̃ə.j̃t̃e.l̃n] as in Standard German. As a third possibility, a prominent syllable may be a foot by itself, according to Maas — it is a reduced foot then. Reduced feet explain part of the complex syllable structure in codae, remember [sæ̃χ̃t̃s̃g] ‘sixty’ above. The concept of reduced feet is justified by the fact that in inflected forms, a reduced foot usually becomes an ordinary one again.

No further comment on stress is necessary, as stress is a function of the foot structure of Swiss German. Each two syllables can be compared as to the degree of stressedness. A reduced syllable, i. e. a second syllable in a foot, is always the least stressed one. First syllables in a foot are more prominent than reduced ones, but they are less prominent than the first syllables in the feet before it in a word.

With this scheme, Swiss German can only be a stress-timed language. This is the case.

2.3.2 The syllable link

The link of the two syllables of a foot is important to look at. In the trochaic southern Germanic languages like Swiss German (and Standard German), the syllable onsets of second syllables must be distinguished from the onsets of first syllables. They rather follow the principles of syllable codae.

Fortis consonants are lengthened at the link of two syllables in a foot (henceforth: intersyllabic). This is done even in recently borrowed words, as in: [æ̃t̃:ɔ̃] ‘car’. Length is thus linked to the phenomenon of fortis consonants (cf. also Willi 1995, 1996).

Intersyllabically, after short vowels, [χ] and [ŋ] are always lengthened: [χ̃ɔ̃χ̃:ə] ‘to cook’, [j̃ɔ̃ŋ̃:ə] ‘young (m)’.

The remaining sonants are lengthened in reduced feet, they are short in full feet: [f̃ɔ̃l:] ‘full’, [f̃ɔ̃lə] ‘full (dat.)’.

⁴That’s how the onset can be so complex, s. above.

[h] is restricted to onsets of first syllables. [ŋ] is restricted to onsets of second syllables in a foot and codae of first ones.

2.4 Sandhi and Assimilation

Whereas in Standard German, the foot structure determines nearly all processes that rule when two syllables meet⁵, in Swiss German, assimilation and sandhi processes exist that are widely independent from the foot structure.

2.4.1 Intervocalic sandhi

If two vowels follow each other across word boundaries, very often [ŋ] is intercaled. This is a historical feature. Most word final *n*'s have been dropped in Swiss German language history (the same rule applies to all other Alemannic and Franconian dialects up to the Mosel-Franconian area).

That is why in some cases, the sandhi consonant is not [ŋ], but [r]. These word phonemes are latent, they rearise as sandhi consonants between two vowels, but are omitted in all other cases. Where no historically disappeared consonants exists, [ŋ] is taken.

After diphthongs, sandhi is less probable.

2.4.2 Assimilation

Dentals are assimilated to labials and velars: [ʔəm̩b̩ɛ:rg] *en Bëërg* 'a hill', [ʔəŋg̩aʃt̩] 'a guest'. No morpheme boundaries inhibit this process.

In Zurich German, unlike the Thurgau dialect e. g. (Krähenmann, 2003), long consonants in syllable onsets unpreceded by vowels are prohibited⁶. So, morphemes may completely drop due to assimilation: [ʔæʊf̩:ɪ] *d Tauffi* 'the christening'. With lenis consonants, assimilation yields fortes: [b̩ʊə] 'build', [p̩ʊə] 'built' (**ge-boue*), [g̩ablə] 'fork', [k̩ablə] *d Gable* 'the fork'.

Nasals "assimilate" to labiodentals to yield [m] (not [ŋ]): [ʔəm̩faʔ:ər] *en Vatter* 'a father', [g̩əmf] *Genf* 'Geneva'. This behavior is parallel to one of the affricates ([pf]), where also a bilabial is followed by a labiodental. Plosives with following nasals become nasally released plosives [b̩ⁿuəʔ:ər] *d Mueter* 'the mother'.

When followed by a stop in the following syllable, syllable-final stops are not released ([ʔo:b̩ʔuə] 'put something onto the stove').

[r] may be dropped in recent speech in syllable final position inside pre-tone unstressed syllables: [f̩ər'g̩æs:ə] or [f̩ə'g̩æs:ə] 'forget'. Possibly, alveolars may sometimes be pronounced instead of an r followed by a dental, but only if the r is the coda of a reduced syllable [ʊŋ̩t̩ər̩t̩æʊχ:ə] or [ʊŋ̩t̩ət̩æʊχ:ə] 'dive, hide oneself'.

⁵In Standard German, there is even no assimilation between voiceless and voiced consonants if they are connected at a boundary of two feet. So, we have [ab̩'big̩ⁿ] 'turn'. The first syllable is a reduced foot followed by another foot. Both consonants have the same articulation except voicedness. The first foot loses voice according to the *Auslautverhärtung* principles, the second one is voiced. The only assimilation process is that the first sound is not released before voice onset for the second one begins.

⁶Remember that after vowels fortes consonants are always lengthened, be they based on morpheme assimilation or not.

[s] turns to [ʃ] in front of consonants inside a word, like in [feʃt̩] 'firm'. It always assimilates to [ʃ]: [ʃi:i:b̩æi] *s Schybäi* 'the shin'. Only in foreign words, it may remain [s]: [lɪŋgu'ist̩ɪf] or [lɪŋgu'ɪʃt̩ɪf] 'linguistic'. The first variant is preferred.

2.5 The phonology of foreign words

Swiss German (sometimes) takes over French vowel nasalisation: [f̩ās] or [f̩ajs] 'chance'. French borrowings are stressed on the first syllable: [losaŋ] or [lozaŋ] 'Lausanne'. If this first syllable contains a schwa, it is rendered as [ø]: [røŋe] 'René(e)'. In recent loans and French words, the French phoneme [ʀ] is often rendered as [ʁ], becoming [χ] under assimilation to a following unvoiced consonant ([paχti:ʁ] *partir* 'to leave'). Established loans have [r].

As to English borrowings, [ɹ] is preserved, sometimes in its American variety: [ɹ] — in any case, it is pronounced preconsonantically as well. The English interdental fricatives are reflected as dental plosives. [k^(h)] is optionally rendered as [kχ]. The English [ʌ] is pronounced as [œ]: [œb̩'ðeɪt̩] 'update', English [ɜ] as [œ]: [vœ:ɪt̩] or [wœ:ɪt̩] 'the computer program *word*'.

Latin (and Greek) borrowings are pronounced like the Standard German spelling makes expect: *ae* is written *ä* and pronounced [æ], *c* becomes *z* or *k*, pronounced [ts] or [kχ] (!) respectively ([afrikχa'nist̩kχ] 'africanistics'. *ph* is [f], *ch* always [χ]: [χarakχ'te'rist̩ɪf] 'characteristic', *g* [g], *h* [h], *v* [v], seldom [f], *y* [i:]/[ɪ] or [y:]/[ʏ].

2.6 Excursion: the difference of the Standard and Swiss German phonological systems

If we follow Maas (1999b) in the description of Standard German, we have to state that the Zurich German system (and that of other Swiss German dialects) has no resemblance to the former.

Maas (1999b) is based on one pillar: *fester Anschluß* (close connection): this phenomenon is both phonological and phonetic. It has recently been investigated by Spiekermann (2000). Phonetically, vowels that are closely connected to a following consonant have their energy peak just before the start of the consonant, and not in the middle of their resp. utterance, as all "normal" vowels are pronounced. Phonologically, they raise the problem of determining syllable boundaries. A closely connected consonant seems to belong to two syllables⁷.

A great number of distinctions crash in front of this feature, at least if we believe in Maas's description.

- There are no long consonants in Standard German, as German orthography makes us believe. They are only used to mark close connection.
- Long vowels occur only in prominent syllables. They appear whenever a prominent syllable would otherwise be open. So, vowel length isn't phonemic either.

⁷Wiese (1996) thus speaks of ambisyllabicity of the consonant in close connection. I mark close connection by [x̩x̩], connecting the vowel and the following consonant (cf. Reese, 2001). As far as is known today, the phenomenon exists only in the speech of Northern and Middle Germans (with a decreasing tendency towards the south), in Dutch, and in pre-modern English.

- [ɪ, ɛ, ɔ] are epiphenomena of close connection as well. In close connection, the vowels become centralized. They are thus allophones to [i, e, o].

In Swiss German, there is no close connection. So, all the distinctions made above are part of the phoneme inventory: it has a length distinction in both consonants and vowels, and the distinction between [ɪ] and [i] etc. is phonemic, too.

3 Orthography

There is an old tradition of writing Alemannic in Switzerland. Writing rules date back to the Middle Ages, when Alemannic was the only alternative to Latin. Nowadays, the usage of written Swiss German shows the characteristic traits of dialect literature. For “neutral” contents, (Swiss) Standard German is used. In recent years, however, Swiss German has gained new areas. SMSs and e-mails are often composed in Swiss German.

Dieth (1938) developed an orthography for Swiss German, based on the old principles. His convention is not too wide-spread (Christen, 2004), though it dominates grammatical description and, in part, dialect literature. Most people, however, know some of the older rules. Among them there are *ä* for [æ]¹, *gg* for [k] or *y* for [i:].

Dieth’s orthography will be used in the remainder of this booklet.

It can be called phonemic, so I can give a list of the phonemes of chap. 2 with their corresponding letters in orthography.

[a]	<i>a</i>	[e]	<i>e</i>	[k]	<i>gg</i>	[l]	<i>l</i>	[ø]	<i>ö</i>	[ʃ]	<i>sch</i>		
[æ]	<i>ä</i>	[ɛ]	<i>ë</i>	[h]	<i>h</i>	[m]	<i>m</i>	[œ:]	<i>öò</i>	[t]	<i>t</i>		
[b]	<i>b</i>	[ɐ]	<i>e</i>	[i:]	<i>y</i>	[n]	<i>n</i>	[p]	<i>p</i>	[u]	<i>u</i>	[ʏ]	<i>ù</i>
[χ]	<i>ch</i>	[f]	<i>f</i> or <i>v</i>	[ɪ]	<i>i</i>	[ŋ]	<i>ng</i>	[r]	<i>r</i>	[ʊ]	<i>ù</i>	[v]	<i>w</i>
[d]	<i>d</i>	[g]	<i>g</i>	[j]	<i>j</i>	[o]	<i>o</i>	[s]	<i>s</i>	[y]	<i>ü</i>		

Length is shown by doubling the character, except *y*, which stands for [i:]. As length of plosives is connected to fortis, *gg* is used throughout for [k]. Long [k:χ] is written *ck*, analogous to Standard German. The diphthongs are written *äi* ([æi]), *ei* ([ɛi]), *öi* ([øi]), *au* ([æu]), *ou* ([oü]), *ie* ([iɛ]), *ue* ([uɛ]), and *üe* ([yɛ]). Often, *ù* and *ü* are written as *u* and *ü*. Some writers substitute *ë* by *è*, *y* by *ii*, and *ii* by *ii*.

The affricates are written *pf* ([pf]), *z* ([ts]), and *k* ([kχ]). The combination [kχv] is written *qu*. *X* is used to yield a phoneme combination which is pronounced [χs] by some speakers and [ks] by others (in foreign words only the latter)² — sometimes we get [kʃ] due to assimilation: *Text* ‘text’ is pronounced either [tekst] or [tekʃt].

Apart from the phonemes, the system tries to visualize syllable structure and morphemes as well. The methods resemble the ones used in Standard German orthography (Eisenberg, 1998; Maas, 1992; Reese, 2001). Unlike in Standard German, no special devices are needed to ensure that a syllable is marked off from others. The orthography tries to keep the shape of a morphological unit, too, by not writing assimilation (except in a few cases), neither inside a word

¹As opposed to this habit, in Low Saxon dialect literature, another language in a diglossia with Standard German, *ä* is constantly used as a variant of *e* for representing [ɛ], analogous to the pronunciation of *ä* in Standard German, although a lot of Low Saxon dialects also know [æ]. Then, a new character is created or a grapheme combination used, as *ae*, lengthened *äē* by Book (1993). Similarly, *ie* is used for [i:] in writing most German “dialects”, whereas Swiss German has preserved it for [iɔ] — for this diphthong, other dialect “orthographies” write *iä* or *ia*.

²*X* it also sometimes used in advertising to attract attention; so, we find *xii* instead of *gsy* ‘been’.

nor outside of it: [ʔəm ˈbɛ:rg] *en Bäärg* 'a hill', [bˈuɔ̃tər] *d Mueter* 'the mother', [ˈbapˈmantəl] *Badmantel* 'dressing gown'.

Loans are usually left in their original shape until they are perceived as deeply integrated into the language system. So, we write *Computer* for [kɔ̃m ˈpjʊ:tər] 'computer', *Coiffeur* for [kwaf:ø:r]. Similarly to the preservation of the original shape in foreign words, *f* is substituted by *v*, sometimes *öi* by *äu* or *eu* to make words look like in Standard German. Remember that all Swiss German speakers grew up with Standard German as their primary written language.

Nouns are marked by capital letters like in Standard German. However, some people write common nouns without the capitals.

4 Morphology

The structure of Swiss German is relatively similar to English. However, I want to give a thorough account of the morphology and a view into how Swiss German works (in the next two chapters). That's why I explain features, too, that people knowing English will be familiar with.

In Swiss German, different classes of words behave in a different way. Some word classes are inflected: nouns, articles, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs. Each word class follows different principles in inflection, has different categories in morphology. They are dealt with in this chapter.

4.1 The nominal system

The nominal system knows the following categories for inflection: gender, case, and number.

For these categories, the following options exist:

- Gender
 - masculine
 - feminine
 - neuter
- Number
 - Singular
 - Plural
- Case
 - Nominative
 - Accusative
 - Dative

Only personal pronouns can distinguish the accusative from the nominative.

4.1.1 Gender

As indicated above, Swiss German nouns are classified along three genders: masculine, feminine, and neuter. They motivate nominal agreement. Normally, they have got nothing to do with sex. Only with humans, there is a very slight tendency to decouple sex and gender as to the use of personal pronouns:

(1) *Ich käne s Greetli¹. Ich ha si/s gëern.*
 PERS1S know:1S DEF:n PN:DIM PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sf:ACC/PERS3Sn:ACC like

I know Greta (n.). I like her.

4.1.2 Case and number in nouns

Morphologically, nouns are only inflected for plural. Other forms in the paradigm have either died out or become fossilized. There is no trace of the accusative, neither of the dative singular. The dative plural as a separate form (ending in *-e*) is extinct, too.

Historically, the genitive is preserved in some idiomatic contexts: designating families by a surname (*s Müllers* 'the family Müller') and in idiomatic expressions (Weber, 1948)²; it is marked by *-s* or zero:

(2) *Ich ha nôt de Zyt ghaa zum s mache.*
 PERS1S have:1S not DEF:GEN:f time have:PART to:DEF:DAT PERS3Sn make:INF

I didn't have time to do it.

The number of such idioms is growing again — as Standard German loans:

(3) *Mynes Wüssens stimmt das.*
 POSS1S:GEN:n know:INF:GEN be.right:3S DEM:n

As far as I know, it is correct.

The idiomatic character of the genitive in Swiss German is visible e. g. by the fact that the surname construction has been reinterpreted as a nominative plural (Seiler, p. c.):

(4) *S Müllers sind geschter bi öis gsy.*
 DEF:GEN PN:GEN be:PL yesterday at PERS1PL:DAT be:PART

The Millers were at our place yesterday.

The plural can be marked by: zero, *Umlaut*, the suffix *-e*, and the suffix *-er*. The latter two can be combined with *Umlaut*. A further variant, which is spreading, is *-ne* for feminines ending in *-i* and nouns ending in *-e* (the *-i* is changed to *-e*): *Lugi* 'lie (n.)', *Lugene* 'lies', *Gruppe* 'group', pl. *Gruppene* 'groups'. Each noun is assigned to a declination group that determines which plural is to be chosen.

One noun knows a vocative in the plural: *Chind* 'child', pl. *Chind*, voc. pl. *Chinde*³.

¹*Greetli* is a diminutive; this is why it has neutral gender.

²The cited form is dying out.

³The forms compete with younger pl. *Chinder*; then, there is no special vocative form.

4.1.2.1 Umlaut

There are the following *Umlaute* in nominal inflection⁴:

- *o* → *ö* (*Kantoon, Kantöön*) 'Swiss state'
- *u* → *ü* (*Wuurm, Wüürm*) 'worm'
- *ue* → *üe* (*Buech, Büecher*) 'book'
- *au* → *öi* (*Baum, Böim*) 'tree'
- *a* → *ä, ë, e* (*Name, Näme*) 'name'
- *aa* → *ää, ëë, ee, òò* (*Aarm, Äärm*) 'arm'

Thus, if the vowel (of the prominent syllable) is one of those to the left of the → sign, it is changed to the one on the right side to yield the plural.

4.1.3 Articles

There are three sets of articles: definite, indefinite, and negative. The negative article hasn't been classified as articles so far. It has usually been regarded as a pronoun; but it is distributionally equivalent to the definite and indefinite articles.

Definite Article The definite forms are:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>de(r)</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>s</i>
dat. sg.	<i>em</i>	<i>de(r)</i>	<i>em</i>
nom. pl.		<i>d</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>de(n)</i>	

The letters in brackets show a sandhi feature: the longer forms are used when a vowel follows, the shorter ones before a consonant. In the plural, there is only one set for the three genders.

Before adjectives, the definite article *d* is changed to *di* (in both singular and plural).

Indefinite Article There is no indefinite article for the plural and for mass nouns; they are zero marked. The indefinite article in the singular:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom.	<i>en</i>	<i>e(n)</i>	<i>es</i>
dat.	<i>emene(n)</i>	<i>enere(n)</i>	<i>emene(n)</i>

Before adjectives, the indefinite article *es* is changed to *e(n)*⁵. In recent times, *es* may be preserved before adjectives, which can be retraced to influx from other dialects.

⁴*Umlaute* don't occur only in the plural, but also in the formation of the diminutive and in the comparison of adjectives.

⁵This is a special feature of Zurich German. A lot of dialects use *es* both in front of an adjective and before a noun.

Article sandhi In combination with prepositions, the following ligations occur:

a 'to'	<i>em</i> DEF:DAT:m/n	<i>am</i>
	<i>emene</i> IND:DAT:m/n	<i>amene</i>
	<i>enere</i> IND:DAT:f	<i>anere</i>
	<i>de</i> DEF:m	<i>an</i>
	<i>s</i> DEF:s	<i>as</i>
i 'in, into'	<i>em</i> DEF:DAT:m/n	<i>im</i>
	<i>emene</i> IND:DAT:m/n	<i>imene</i>
	<i>enere</i> IND:DAT:f	<i>inere</i>
	<i>de</i> DEF:m	<i>in</i>
	<i>s</i> DEF:n	<i>is</i>
bi 'at'	<i>em</i> DEF:DAT:m/n	<i>bim</i>
	<i>emene</i> IND:DAT:m/n	<i>bimene</i>
	<i>enere</i> IND:DAT:f	<i>binere</i>
zue 'to'	<i>em</i> DEF:DAT:m/n	<i>zum</i>
	<i>emene</i> IND:DAT:m/n	<i>zumene</i>
	<i>enere</i> IND:DAT:f	<i>zunere</i>
	<i>de</i> DEF:DAT:f	<i>zur</i>
vo 'from, of'	<i>em</i> DEF:DAT:m/n	<i>vom</i>
	<i>emene</i> IND:DAT:m/n	<i>vomene</i>
	<i>enere</i> IND:DAT:f	<i>vonere</i>

Formerly, the dative plural article combined with the above prepositions as well to yield *an*, *in*, *von*, etc.

Negative Article

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>kä(i)n</i>	<i>kä(i)</i>	<i>kä(i)s</i>
dat. sg.	<i>kä(i)m</i>	<i>kä(i)ner(e)n</i>	<i>kä(i)m</i>
nom. pl.		<i>kä(i)</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>kä(i)ne</i>	

For mass nouns, the negative article is used in the same form as for the plural (so, I will gloss it as plural):

(5) a. *Ich cha käi Änglisch.*
PERS1S can:1S NEGART:PL English

I don't know English.

b. *Ich wott käi Kafi.*
PERS1S want:1S NEGART:PL coffee

I don't want any coffee.

c. *Es hät käi Määl mee.*
PERS3Sn have:3S NEGART:PL flour more

We are out of flour.

d. **Ich cha käis Änglisch.*
PERS1S can:1S NEGART:n English

I don't know English.

e. **Ich wott käin Kafi.*
PERS1S want:1S NEGART:m coffee

I don't want any coffee.

f. **Es hät käis Määl mee.*
PERS3Sn have:3S NEGART:n flour more

We are out of flour.

4.1.4 Adjectives

Adjectives agree with a noun in gender, number, definiteness, and case. There is only one form for the three genders in the plural.

The forms for definite noun phrases are called "weak", the ones for indefinite ones "strong". Only after the singular masc. and n. of the possessive pronoun, the "strong" form is chosen.

The weak forms⁶:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>guet</i>	<i>guet</i>	<i>guet</i>
dat. sg.	<i>guete</i>	<i>guete</i>	<i>guete</i>
nom. pl.		<i>guete</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>guete</i>	

The strong forms (shown by the adjective *guet* 'good'):

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>guete</i>	<i>gueti</i>	<i>guets</i>
dat. sg.	<i>guete</i>	<i>guete</i>	<i>guete</i>
nom. pl.		<i>gueti</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>guete</i>	

Besides, there is a set of "even stronger" forms in Zurich German, which are used when there is no article in a singular noun phrase at all.

⁶The singular forms are different in different dialects. Others have *gueti* in the nominative feminine instead of *guet*. Those forms are gaining ground in Zurich as well, they will probably succeed.

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>guete</i>	<i>gueti</i>	<i>guets</i>
dat. sg.	<i>guetem</i>	<i>gueter</i>	<i>guetem</i>

- (6) *Ich bi mit hööchem Fieber im Bett gläge.*
 PERS1S be:1S with high:DAT:n fever in:DEF:DAT:n bed lie:PART
 I lay in bed with a high fever.

In predicative usage, no suffixes are added⁷:

- (7) *Das isch guet.*
 DEM:n be:3S good
 That's good.

In Zurich German, a few adjectives have an ending *-e* in predicative usage:

- (8) *Ich bi vol-e.*
 PERS1S be:1S full-*e*
 My stomach is full/I have eaten too much/I am satisfied.

4.1.4.1 Adjectives ending in *-e*

A number of adjectives end in an *-e*, which historically was *-en*. This has led to some peculiarities in inflection. The most important group of these adjectives are the participles of strong verbs; one of them will act as an example here ("even stronger" forms omitted):

The strong forms:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>gfundne</i>	<i>gfundni</i>	<i>gfundes</i>
dat. sg.	<i>gfundne</i>	<i>gfundne</i>	<i>gfundne</i>
nom. pl.		<i>gfundni</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>gfundne</i>	

The weak forms:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>gfunde</i>	<i>gfunde</i>	<i>gfunde</i>
dat. sg.	<i>gfundne</i>	<i>gfundne</i>	<i>gfundne</i>
nom. pl.		<i>gfundne</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>gfundne</i>	

⁷It is a sign of Highest Alemannic (and dialects close to Highest Alemannic) to preserve agreement in predicative usage and even in "resultative constructions" and depictives (Bucheli Berger & Glaser, 2004).

4.1.4.2 Adjectives ending in other vowels

Some often used adjectives ending in a (stressed) vowel take sandhi-*n*. I give only the strong forms:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>früene</i>	<i>früeni</i>	<i>frües</i>
dat. sg.	<i>früene</i>	<i>früene</i>	<i>früene</i>
nom. pl.		<i>früeni</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>früene</i>	

4.1.4.3 Modifiers of adjectives

Modifiers of adjectives usually occur between article and adjective. For some of them, an indefinite article is doubled, and they come between both instances:

- (9) *en ganz en guet-e Maa*
 IND:m quite IND:m good-m man
 a quite good man

The modifier *ggnueg* may be positioned after the adjective, taking its inflectional endings (every speaker doesn't accept this usage):

- (10) *e grooss ggnueg-s Glaas*
 IND:n big enough-n glass
 a glass that is big enough

4.1.4.4 Comparison

The comparative is formed by the suffix *-er*, the superlative by adding *-scht*. Sandhi-*n* may be inserted, *Umlaut* is applicable:

	positive	comparative	superlative
'quick'	<i>schnäll</i>	<i>schnäler</i>	<i>schnälscht</i>
'early'	<i>früe</i>	<i>früener</i>	<i>früescht</i>
'big'	<i>grooss</i>	<i>grösser</i>	<i>grösscht</i>

There are a few irregular forms:

	positive	comparative	superlative
'good'	<i>guet</i>	<i>besser</i>	<i>bescht</i>
'a lot'	<i>vil</i>	<i>mee</i>	<i>mäischt</i>

As a positive form of high degree (trad. called "elative"), the prefix *uu-* may precede an adjective (cf. Christen, 2003):

- (11) *Das isch uu-schöön.*
DEM:n be:3S very-beautiful

This is very nice.

An alternative is *huere-* (lit. 'whore'), which is restricted to colloquial use, however.

- (12) *S isch huere-gmüetlich deet.*
PERS3Sn be:3S whore-comfortable there

It is very comfortable there.

The forms are marked. Adverbs serving the same purpose exist, in recent times above all the Standard German loan *säär* 'very'.

Propositional nouns may be put into an "elative" as well in recent colloquial talk:

- (13) *Das isch es Mega-Puff gsy.*
DEM:n be:3S IND:n big-mess be:PART

That was a big mess.

4.1.5 Pronouns

4.1.5.1 Personal pronouns

There are three sets of personal pronouns. They are traditionally described as being distinguished by "emphasis". This "emphasis", however, can be viewed in connection to syntactic features that will be dealt with in chap. 6.1.1.1. I will count the "emphasis" levels, beginning with the level of "highest emphasis". The emphasis-III-forms are clitic. Personal pronouns have separate forms for the accusative.

First person:

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	<i>iich</i>	<i>ich</i>	<i>i</i>
acc. sg.	<i>miich</i>	<i>mich</i>	<i>mi</i>
dat. sg.	<i>miir</i>	<i>mir</i>	<i>mer</i>

nom. pl.	<i>miir</i>	<i>mir</i>	<i>mer</i>
acc. pl.	<i>öis</i>	<i>öis</i>	<i>is</i>
dat. pl.	<i>öis</i>	<i>öis</i>	<i>is</i>

Second person:

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	<i>duu</i>	<i>du</i>	\emptyset/t
acc. sg.	<i>diich</i>	<i>dich</i>	<i>di</i>
dat. sg.	<i>diir</i>	<i>dir</i>	<i>der</i>

nom. pl.	<i>iir</i>	<i>ir</i>	<i>er</i>
acc. pl.	<i>öi</i>	<i>öi</i>	<i>i</i>
dat. pl.	<i>öi</i>	<i>öi</i>	<i>i</i>

Third person (masc. and plural):

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	<i>ëër</i>	<i>ër</i>	<i>er</i>
acc. sg.	<i>inn</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>en</i>
dat. sg.	<i>imm</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>em</i>

nom. pl.	<i>sy</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>s</i>
acc. pl.	<i>sy</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>s</i>
dat. pl.	<i>ine</i>	<i>ene</i>	<i>ne</i>

Third person (neutr., animate):

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	<i>ëës</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>s</i>
acc. sg.	<i>ins</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>s</i>
dat. sg.	<i>imm</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>em</i>

Reflexives (third person):

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	—	—	—
acc. sg.	<i>siich</i>	<i>sich</i>	<i>si</i>
dat. sg.	<i>siich</i>	<i>sich</i>	<i>si</i>

Third person (fem.):

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	<i>sy</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>si</i>
acc. sg.	<i>sy</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>si</i>
dat. sg.	<i>ire</i>	<i>ere</i>	<i>ere, re</i>

Third person (neutr., inanimate):

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	<i>daas</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>es, s</i>
acc. sg.	<i>daas</i>	<i>das</i>	<i>es, s</i>
dat. sg.	<i>dëmm</i>	<i>dëm</i>	<i>em</i>

Generic personal pronoun:

	I	II	III
nom. sg.	<i>man</i>	<i>men</i>	<i>me</i>
acc. sg.	<i>äin</i>	<i>än</i>	<i>en</i>
dat. sg.	<i>äim</i>	<i>äm</i>	<i>em</i>

Besides the generic personal pronoun, the second person singular and the third person plural can be used as generic pronouns, but only in emphasis-II- or -III-forms.

The first and second plural emphasis-III-forms are dying out.

Optionally, prepositions can combine with personal pronouns to form a single stress group. The stress falls on the preposition, the "emphasis-III-forms" of the personal pronouns are used: *vó mer* 'of me', *mít em* 'with him'. In other cases, the prepositions combine with "emphasis-II-forms": *vo mír*, *mit ím*.

4.1.5.2 Possessive pronouns

First person:

	masc.	fem.	neutr.
nom. sg.	<i>myn</i>	<i>myni</i>	<i>mys</i>
dat. sg.	<i>mym</i>	<i>mynere</i>	<i>mym</i>

nom. pl.		<i>myni</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>myne</i>	

Second person:

	masc.	fem.	neutr.
nom. sg.	<i>dyn</i>	<i>dyni</i>	<i>dys</i>
dat. sg.	<i>dym</i>	<i>dynere</i>	<i>dym</i>

nom. pl.		<i>dyni</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>dyne</i>	

Third person (masc.):

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>syn</i>	<i>syni</i>	<i>sys</i>
dat. sg.	<i>sym</i>	<i>synere</i>	<i>sym</i>
nom. pl.		<i>syni</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>syne</i>	

Third person (neutr.):

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>syn</i>	<i>syni</i>	<i>sys</i>
dat. sg.	<i>sym</i>	<i>synere</i>	<i>sym</i>
nom. pl.		<i>syni</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>syne</i>	

First person plural:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>öise</i>	<i>öisi</i>	<i>öises</i>
dat. sg.	<i>öisem</i>	<i>öisere</i>	<i>öisem</i>
nom. pl.		<i>öisi</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>öisne</i>	

Second person plural:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>öie</i>	<i>öii</i>	<i>öies</i>
dat. sg.	<i>öiem</i>	<i>öiere</i>	<i>öiem</i>
nom. pl.		<i>öii</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>öine</i>	

Third person (fem.):

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>ire</i>	<i>iri</i>	<i>ires</i>
dat. sg.	<i>irem</i>	<i>irere</i>	<i>irem</i>
nom. pl.		<i>iri</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>irne</i>	

Third person plural:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>ire</i>	<i>iri</i>	<i>ires</i>
dat. sg.	<i>irem</i>	<i>irere</i>	<i>irem</i>
nom. pl.		<i>iri</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>irne</i>	

If used predicatively, *myn*, *dyn*, and *syn* are substituted by *myne*, *dyne*, and *syne*.

4.1.5.3 Demonstratives

There are three sets of deictic markers: one for the narrow one and one for the remote one, plus one for sortal deixis.

Narrow deixis:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>dëë</i>	<i>die</i>	<i>daas</i>
dat. sg.	<i>dëmm</i>	<i>dëre</i>	<i>dëmm</i>
nom. pl.		<i>die</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>dëne</i>	

Remote deixis:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>de säb</i>	<i>di säb</i>	<i>säb</i>
dat. sg.	<i>em säbe/säbem</i>	<i>de säbe/säbere</i>	<i>em säbe/säbem</i>
nom. pl.		<i>di säbe</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>de säbe/säbne</i>	

Sortal deixis:

	<i>masc.</i>	<i>fem.</i>	<i>neutr.</i>
nom. sg.	<i>sonen</i>	<i>sone</i>	<i>sones</i>
dat. sg.	<i>somene</i>	<i>sonere</i>	<i>somene</i>
nom. pl.		<i>settigi</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>settige</i>	

There is a number of variants for the plural forms of the sortal deixis.

For "anaphoric" deixis the narrow deixis forms are most likely to be used. The adverbial demonstratives corresponding to the above series are *daa* 'here', *deet* 'there' and *so, eso* 'so'.

In combination with prepositions, the demonstratives (and neuter personal pronouns that refer to inanimates) may be substituted by an oblique form which merges with the preposition. So, *vo dëm* and *von em* may both become *de-vo* DEM:OBL-*of*. This is only an optional device (unlike in StG).

4.1.5.4 Interrogatives

There are two sets of interrogatives: one used as a noun phrase and one as an attribute. The latter agrees with a noun. The former can be divided into a set for animates, and one for inanimates.

	animates	inanimates
nom.	<i>wër</i>	<i>was</i>
dat.	<i>wëmm</i>	<i>was⁸</i>

The attributive interrogatives:

	masc.	fem.	neutr.
nom. sg.	<i>wele</i>	<i>weli</i>	<i>weles</i>
dat. sg.	<i>welem</i>	<i>welere</i>	<i>welem</i>
nom. pl.		<i>weli</i>	
dat. pl.		<i>welere</i>	

Wele selects from a given set. A variant that doesn't do this is *was für en*, pl. *was für/was fürigi*. It is inflected in the singular by the indefinite article in which it ends, in the plural as an adjective.

4.1.5.5 Indefinites

There is a number of indefinite pronouns. The main motivation for accepting them as a special category in morphological terms is the fact that they take *-ne* instead of *-e* (adjectival ending) as dative plural suffix and *-ere* instead of *-e* as feminine dative ending. Some of them can optionally drop endings altogether. They can be used both as heads of noun phrases or as adjectival modifiers.

4.1.5.6 Locative proadverbials

Some locative proadverbials exist in two sets: one is independent, the other occurs as specifiers in an adverbial. The independent forms are marked by an additional *d-* or *di-*.

(14) a. *Ër isch dune.*
PERS3Sm be:3S down(LOC)

He is downstairs.

b. *Ër isch deet une.*
PERS3Sm be:3S there down(LOC)

He is down there.

<i>dune</i>	<i>une</i>	down
<i>dobe</i>	<i>obe</i>	up
<i>dine</i>	<i>ine</i>	inside
<i>duisse</i>	<i>usse</i>	outside
<i>däne</i>	<i>äne</i>	beyond
<i>divorne</i>	<i>vorne</i>	in front
<i>dihine</i>	<i>hine</i>	back

verusse 'in the open air', *überobe* 'upstairs', *überune* 'downstairs' each don't combine with other locative pronouns.

The directional proadverbials exist only in one set.

⁸In other dialects, we find forms like *wasem*.

<i>ane</i>	towards the goal
<i>abe</i>	down
<i>ine</i>	in(side)
<i>use</i>	out(side)
<i>ufe</i>	up
<i>füre</i>	forth
<i>hindere</i>	to the back

There are other sets of directional proadverbials, which focus additional nuances (like stronger emphasis on direction than on goal).

<i>dury</i>	inside	<i>fürsi</i>	forwards	<i>überufe</i>	upwards
<i>duruus</i>	outside	<i>hindersi</i>	backwards	<i>überabe</i>	downwards
<i>duruuf</i>	up	<i>obsi</i>	upwards	<i>hinefüre</i>	forth
<i>duraab</i>	down	<i>nidsi</i>	downwards	<i>unen ufe</i>	bottom up
<i>durfüre</i>	forth	<i>verby</i>	going by	<i>oben abe</i>	top down
<i>durhindere</i>	to the back	<i>veruus</i>	in front		
		<i>veruse</i>	to the open air		

4.1.6 Numerals

Numerals come in two forms: one are nouns, the others combine with a common noun. The existence of nominal numerals is used e. g. in indications of the time of day. There is no idiom like English "o'clock". The noun forms are built out of the ordinary ones by adding *-i* or *-ni* (after vowels). Only *äis*, *zwäi*, *drüü* and numbers above a thousand remain unchanged.

(15) *Es isch vieri.*
PERS3Sn be:3S four(noun)

It is four o'clock.

Number	Cardinal numbers	Ordinal numbers
1	<i>äis</i>	<i>erscht</i>
2	<i>zwäi</i>	<i>zwäit</i>
3	<i>drüü</i>	<i>dritt</i>
4	<i>vier</i>	<i>viert</i>
5	<i>föif</i>	<i>föift</i>
6	<i>sächs</i>	<i>sächst</i>
7	<i>sibe</i>	<i>sibet</i>
8	<i>acht</i>	<i>acht</i>
9	<i>nüün</i>	<i>nüünt</i>
10	<i>zää</i>	<i>zäät</i>
11	<i>elf</i>	<i>elft</i>
12	<i>zwölf</i>	<i>zwölft</i>
13	<i>drizää</i>	<i>drizäät</i>
14	<i>vierzää</i>	<i>vierzäät</i>
15	<i>fünfzää</i>	<i>fünfzäät</i>
16	<i>sächzää</i>	<i>sächzäät</i>

17	<i>sibezää</i>	<i>sibezää</i>
18	<i>achtzää</i>	<i>achtzää</i>
19	<i>nüünzää</i>	<i>nüünzää</i>
20	<i>zwänzg</i>	<i>zwänzgischt</i>
21	<i>äinezwänzg</i>	<i>äinezwänzgischt</i>
22	<i>zwäiezwänzg</i>	<i>zwäiezwänzgischt</i>
30	<i>drysg</i>	<i>drysgischt</i>
40	<i>vierzg</i>	<i>vierzgischt</i>
50	<i>fünfzg</i>	<i>fünfzgischt</i>
60	<i>sächzg</i>	<i>sächzgischt</i>
70	<i>sibzg</i>	<i>sibzgischt</i>
80	<i>achtzg</i>	<i>achtzgischt</i>
90	<i>nüünzg</i>	<i>nüünzgischt</i>
100	<i>hundert</i>	<i>hunderscht</i>
101	<i>hundertäis</i>	<i>hunderscht</i>
102	<i>hundertzwäi</i>	<i>hundertzwäit</i>
110	<i>hundertzää</i>	<i>hundertzää</i>
200	<i>zwäihundert</i>	<i>zwäihunderscht</i>
300	<i>driühundert</i>	<i>driühunderscht</i>
400	<i>vierhundert</i>	<i>vierhunderscht</i>
500	<i>föifhundert</i>	<i>föifhunderscht</i>
600	<i>sächshundert</i>	<i>sächshunderscht</i>
700	<i>sibehundert</i>	<i>sibehunderscht</i>
800	<i>achthundert</i>	<i>achthunderscht</i>
900	<i>nüünhundert</i>	<i>nüünhunderscht</i>
1000	<i>tuusig</i>	<i>tuusgischt</i>
1001	<i>tuusigundäis</i>	<i>tuusigeerscht</i>
1002	<i>tuusigundzwäi</i>	<i>tuusigzwäit</i>
2000	<i>zwäituusig</i>	<i>zwäituusgischt</i>
10'000	<i>zäätuusig</i>	<i>zäätuusgischt</i>
1'000'000	<i>e Milioon</i>	<i>milioonscht</i>

In both Swiss German and Swiss Standard German writing, ordinal numbers are marked by a dot: 1.,2.,3. etc. In Switzerland, groups of digits above a thousand are separated by ': 1'000, 10'000, 10'000'000, 10'000'000'000 etc.

The numbers up to four can be inflected:

	1			2		
	<i>m</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>n</i>
Nom.	<i>äin(e)</i>	<i>äi(ni)</i>	<i>äis</i>	<i>zwee</i>	<i>zwoo</i>	<i>zwäi</i>
Dat.	<i>äim</i>	<i>äinere</i>	<i>äim</i>	<i>zweene</i>	<i>zwoone</i>	<i>zwäine</i>

	3		4
	<i>mlf</i>	<i>n</i>	
Nom.	<i>drei</i>	<i>driüü</i>	<i>vier</i>
Dat.	<i>dreine</i>	<i>driüüne</i>	<i>vierne</i>

Modern speakers usually preserve only one form for 'two' and 'three': *zwäi* and *driüü*, with an optional dative *zwäine* and *driüüne*. *Äi* instead of *äini* as feminine form of 'one' is used before nouns, interchangeably with *äini*. *Äine* is the variant of *äin* in constructions without a noun.

4.2 The verbal system

In the following, I will give the paradigms for verbs. These contain: four person-marked forms for present, subjunctive, and conditional; two forms for imperative; an infinitive; a participle. The meaning and usage of these forms will be dealt with in the chapters 5 and 6.

Two conjugation patterns can be distinguished: a "weak" one and a "strong" one. They differ systematically only in the participle form.

The example verbs given here are *rüeffe* 'to call, to shout', and *schrybe* 'to write'.

	weak	strong
1. sg.	<i>rüeffe</i>	<i>schrybe</i>
2. sg.	<i>rüeffsch</i>	<i>schrybsch</i>
3. sg.	<i>rüefft</i>	<i>schrybt</i>
pl.	<i>rüeffed</i>	<i>schrybed</i>
part.	<i>grüefft</i>	<i>gschrybe</i>
imp. sg.	<i>rüeff</i>	<i>schryb</i>
imp. pl.	<i>rüeffed</i>	<i>schrybed</i>
subj. 1. sg.	<i>rüeffi</i>	<i>schrybi</i>
subj. 2. sg.	<i>rüeffisch</i>	<i>schrybisch</i>
subj. 3. sg.	<i>rüeffi</i>	<i>schrybi</i>
subj. pl.	<i>rüeffid</i>	<i>schrybid</i>
cond. 1. sg.	<i>rüeffti</i>	<i>schrybti</i>
cond. 2. sg.	<i>rüefftisch</i>	<i>schrybtisch</i>
cond. 3. sg.	<i>rüeffti</i>	<i>schrybti</i>
cond. pl.	<i>rüefftid</i>	<i>schrybti</i>

After sibilants und consonant clusters, *-sch* is mostly substituted by *-isch*. The ending *-t* of the third person is changed to *-et* after stem inherent *-t* (but not after *-d*). The imperative is often rendered by the do-periphrasis, especially if there is more than one consonant in the ending of the stem. The conditionals are often constructed analytically, esp. if the verb stem ends in consonant clusters: the conditional of *wërde* (seldom the one of *tue*, both s. below) is combined with the infinitive.

Strong verbs are marked by *Ablaut*, i.e. vowel change, in the participle form. There are several patterns. Two of the patterns show *Ablaut* also in the present singular. Some of the strong verbs know *Ablaut* in the conditional as well; then, *-ti* may be changed to *-t* or zero, *-tid* to *-ted* or *-ed* (Nübling, 1997).

4.2.1 Ablaut

The *Ablaut* patterns are the following (the second position marks the participle vowel, the present singular *Ablaut* is given in square brackets). The patterns are given by an example verb:

1. *byge pige* 'heap up' (seldom *u* in second column)
2. *büüge poge* 'to bend'
3. *schreie gschroue* 'to cry out' (any vowel in first column)
4. *binde punde* 'to bind' (or *ü* in first column)
5. *bräche [ich briche] proche* 'to break' (or *ëë*, *e* in first column)
6. *flächte gflochte* 'to braid' (or *u* in second column)
7. *ässe [ich isse] ggässe* 'to eat'
8. *bache pache* 'to bake'

4.2.2 Verb sandhi

The ending of the first person singular is often dropped before unstressed words. Outside Zurich, this is less often the case. Then sandhi-*n* intercales before a vowel.

- (16) a. *Ich iss es Sändwitsch.* (Zurich style)
PERS1S eat:1S IND:n sandwich

- b. *Ich issen es Sändwitsch.* (Eastern Aargau style)
PERS1S eat:1S IND:n sandwich

I'm eating a sandwich.

4.2.3 Irregular verbs

The following verbs are irregular: *haa* 'to have', *sy* 'to be', *gaa* 'to go', *tue* 'to do', *wäärde* 'to become', *wele* 'to want', *müese* 'to must', *tòòrffe* 'to may', *söle* 'to shall', *chöne* 'to can', *möge* 'to can', *wüsse* 'to know', *gëë* 'to give', *nëë* 'to take', *gsee* 'to see', *gschee* 'to happen', *laa* 'to let', *schlaa* 'to hit', *choo* 'to come', *zie* 'to pull', *ligge* 'to lie'. Their plural forms ending in *-nd* merge with a postponed first person plural pronoun to e.g. *gömer* _{go:PL:PERS1PL} 'we go, let's go'.

The conditionals of these verbs are seldom expressed periphrastically.

The paradigms:

inf.	<i>haa</i>	<i>sy</i>	<i>gaa</i>	<i>tue</i>	<i>wäärde</i>
1. sg.	<i>ha</i>	<i>bi</i>	<i>gaane</i>	<i>tuene</i>	<i>würde</i>
2. sg.	<i>häsch</i>	<i>bisch</i>	<i>gaasch</i>	<i>tuesch</i>	<i>wiirsch</i>
3. sg.	<i>hät</i>	<i>isch</i>	<i>gaat</i>	<i>tuet</i>	<i>wiirt</i>
pl.	<i>händ</i>	<i>sind</i>	<i>gönd</i>	<i>tüend</i>	<i>wäärded</i>
imp. sg.	<i>heb</i>	<i>bis</i>	<i>gang</i>	<i>tue</i>	<i>wiirt</i>
part.	<i>ghaa</i>	<i>gsy</i>	<i>ggange</i>	<i>taa</i>	<i>woorde</i>
subj. 1. sg.	<i>heig</i>	<i>sig</i>	<i>göng</i>	<i>tüeg</i>	<i>wäärdi</i>
cond. 1. sg.	<i>hett</i>	<i>wäär</i>	<i>gieng</i>	<i>täät</i>	<i>wüür</i>

inf.	<i>wele</i>	<i>müese</i>	<i>tòòrffe</i>	<i>söle</i>	<i>chöne</i>	<i>möge</i>
1. sg.	<i>wott</i>	<i>mues</i>	<i>tòòrff</i>	<i>söll</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>mag</i>
2. sg.	<i>wottsch</i>	<i>muesch</i>	<i>tòòrffsch</i>	<i>sölich</i>	<i>chasch</i>	<i>magsch</i>
3. sg.	<i>wott</i>	<i>mues</i>	<i>tòòrff</i>	<i>söll</i>	<i>cha</i>	<i>mag</i>
pl.	<i>wänd</i>	<i>miend</i>	<i>tòòrffed</i>	<i>sölid</i>	<i>chönd</i>	<i>möged</i>
part.	<i>wele</i>	<i>müese</i>	<i>tòòrffe</i>	<i>söle</i>	<i>chöne</i>	<i>möge</i>
subj. 1. sg.	<i>well</i>	<i>mües</i>	<i>tòòrffi</i>	<i>söll</i>	<i>chönn</i>	<i>mög</i>
cond. 1. sg.	<i>wett</i>	<i>müest</i>	<i>tòòrfft</i>	<i>sett</i>	<i>chönt</i>	<i>möcht</i>

inf.	<i>wüsse</i>	<i>gëë</i>	<i>nëë</i>	<i>gsee</i>	<i>gschee</i>
1. sg.	<i>wäiss</i>	<i>gibe</i>	<i>nime</i>	<i>gseene</i>	—
2. sg.	<i>wäisch</i>	<i>gisch</i>	<i>nimsch</i>	<i>gseesch</i>	—
3. sg.	<i>wäiss</i>	<i>git</i>	<i>nimt</i>	<i>gseet</i>	<i>gscheet</i>
pl.	<i>wüssed</i>	<i>gänd</i>	<i>nämed</i>	<i>gseend</i>	—
imp.	—	<i>gib</i>	<i>nimm</i>	<i>lueg</i>	—
part.	<i>gwüsst</i>	<i>ggëë</i>	<i>gnoo</i>	<i>gsee</i>	<i>gschee</i>
subj. 1. sg.	<i>wüss</i>	<i>gäb</i>	<i>näm</i>	<i>gsäch</i>	<i>gschäch</i>
cond. 1. sg.	<i>wüsst</i>	<i>gëëb</i>	<i>nëëm</i>	<i>gsëëch</i>	<i>gschëëch</i>

inf.	<i>laa</i>	<i>schlaa</i>	<i>choo</i>	<i>zie</i>	<i>ligge</i>
1. sg.	<i>laane</i>	<i>schlaane</i>	<i>chume</i>	<i>ziene</i>	<i>ligge</i>
2. sg.	<i>laasch</i>	<i>schlaasch</i>	<i>chunsch</i>	<i>ziesch</i>	<i>lysch</i>
3. sg.	<i>laat</i>	<i>schlaat</i>	<i>chunt</i>	<i>ziet</i>	<i>lyt</i>
pl.	<i>lönd</i>	<i>schlönd</i>	<i>chömed</i>	<i>ziend</i>	<i>ligged</i>
imp.	<i>las</i>	<i>schlag</i>	<i>chumm</i>	<i>zie</i>	—
part.	<i>glaa</i>	<i>gschlage</i>	<i>choo</i>	<i>zoge</i>	<i>gläge</i>
subj. 1. sg.	<i>lös</i>	<i>schlög</i>	<i>chömm</i>	<i>ziei</i>	<i>liggi</i>
cond. 1. sg.	<i>lies</i>	<i>schlieg</i>	<i>chiem</i>	<i>zieti</i>	<i>liggti</i>

Trääge 'to carry', *säge* 'to say', and *legge* 'to lay down' are irregular in the present singular and in the participle.

inf.	<i>träage</i>	<i>säge</i>	<i>legge</i>
1. sg.	<i>trääge</i>	<i>säge</i>	<i>legge</i>
2. sg.	<i>träisch</i>	<i>säisch</i>	<i>läisch</i>
3. sg.	<i>träit</i>	<i>säit</i>	<i>läit</i>
pl.	<i>träaged</i>	<i>saged</i>	<i>legged</i>
part.	<i>träit</i>	<i>gsäit</i>	<i>gläit</i>

The participle of *bringe* 'to bring, to take' is *praacht*, of *schmäisse* 'to throw' *gchmisse* and of *schäide* 'to separate' *gchide*.

4.2.4 The perfect

Tense or aspect is only expressed by an analytical form⁹. It is composed of the present of either *haa* 'to have' or *sy* 'to be' plus the participle. Researchers have tried to find rules for the choice of one of the two verbs according to the meaning of a verb. I don't want to repeat this here. For speakers of German, only one hint: verbs of position as well as verbs of untargetted movements are combined with *sy*¹⁰:

(17) *Ich bi gläge/gsässe/gstande/gschwume.*
 PERS1S be:1S lie:PART/sit:PART/stand:PART/swim:PART

I lay/sat/stood/swam.

The principle of forming the perfect is the base for three other forms: the subjunctive perfect, the conditional perfect and the pluperfect. They are constructed by the subjunctive, the conditional, or the perfect of *ha/sy* plus the participle.

⁹This has become a specialty of Swiss German. Most southern German dialects dropped the past tense centuries ago. However, almost all of them have reintroduced the past tense of 'to be' from its Standard German form a couple of decades ago.

¹⁰In Standard German, the verb is *haben* 'to have'. However, speakers in the Alemannic, Bavarian, and Southern Franconian area usually use the forms like Swiss do, even when they use Standard German.

5 Aktionsart, Tense, Aspect, Mood

In this chapter, I want to sketch the TAM system of Swiss German, although it diverges quite few from the English system.

5.1 Aktionsart

The usage of the notion of Aktionsart is unclear. Different scholars use it differently. Others avoid the term altogether. Two approaches to Aktionsart may be defined: a morphologically-based one and an "abstract" one. The former asks how to *add* Aktionsart distinctions to verb stems that already exist, e. g. by prefixes (satellites). This approach runs into problems with cross-linguistic comparison. The latter has the difficulty to define its base. Many researchers therefore start from the scheme developed by Vendler (1967). In Swiss German, both approaches are revealing. In the following, I will present some instances of a special behavior of Swiss German in Vendler's verb classes. Afterwards, I will explain how Aktionsart specifications are added in Swiss German.

5.1.1 Verb Classes

Vendler (1967) distinguishes four kinds of predicates. In the following, I cite Van Valin & LaPolla (1997).

"States are non-dynamic and temporally unbounded. Activities are dynamic and temporally unbounded. Achievements code instantaneous changes, usually changes of state but also changes in activities as well; they have an inherent terminal point. Accomplishments are temporally extended (not instantaneous) changes of state leading to a terminal point...

- States: be sick, be tall, be dead, love, know, believe, have
- Achievements: pop, explode, collapse, shatter...
- Accomplishments: melt, freeze, dry (the intransitive versions); recover from illness, learn
- Activities: march, walk, roll (the intransitive versions); swim, think, rain, read, eat"

Accomplishments and achievements are often summarized as telic verbs.

So, all classes but the states involve some kind of change. In the telic verbs, possible intermittent changes (in accomplishments) end in one "great change", activities refer to constant changes without a goal.

The classes are part of the lexicon, hence beyond the scope of a grammar. However, three patterns are noteworthy and will be given below.

5.1.1.1 Motion predicates

Nedjalkov (1988) has established the notion of *resultatives*¹. Departing from this, we can conclude that there must be connections between different verb classes. Maybe, for a lot of verbs we will find three other verbs that can be used to describe basically the same state of affairs, but belong to each of the four classes.

It becomes interesting for grammar if we find systematical relationships between some groups inside a class to a similar group in another. One of these cases, I will describe in the remainder of this subsection.

A motion itself (an activity) may be referred to by the verb *gaa* 'to go'. As such, it will only appear with an adverbial indicating the mode of transport, like *mit em Auto gaa* 'to go by car'. Unless, the manner of a motion will be specified in the verb stem, thus: *lauffe* 'to walk', *faare* 'to drive'.

- (18) *Ër isch zwäi Stund gloffe.*
PERS3Sm be:3S two hour:PL walk:PART

He walked for two hours.

Gaa may be extended to verbs like *abe-gaa* 'to go down', *ine-gaa* 'to go inside', *furt-gaa* 'to go away', *zrugg-gaa* 'to go back' etc. So, the verb stem denotes the manner of a motion, separable prefixes the path. Swiss German is a *satellite-framed language* (Talmy, 1985).

However, the satellites may combine with the copula alone.

- (19) a. *Ër isch furt.*
PERS3Sm be:3S away

He has gone away.

- b. *Ër isch abe.*
PERS3Sm be:3S down

He has gone down.

- c. *Ër isch zrugg.*
PERS3Sm be:3S back

He is back.

There may be different ways to cope with the copula-satellite-constructions: e. g. we could assume entries in the lexicon: *zruggsy* 'to be back' or assign the satellites a nominal character.

However, we run into new problems if we look at the behavior in combination with modals. The assumption that the copula constructions be verbs accounts for ex. (20a). It fails to explain ex. (20b) and the following examples.

- (20) a. *Ër mues furt sy.*
PERS3Sm must:3S away be:INF

He must be gone.

¹Note that the notion of *resultative* has two meanings in linguistic research. The one is English-based (though the construction occurs in other Germanic languages as well): it covers constructions consisting of a verb and usually an adjective; the latter shows the result state of the former. The other one is described below and the issue I am talking about. By the way, resultative in this sense as well as depictives exist in Swiss German, too.

- b. *Ër mues furt.*
PERS3Sm must:3S away

He must go away.

- c. *Ër mues abe.*
PERS3Sm must:3S down

He must go down.

- d. *Ër mues zrugg.*
PERS3Sm must:3S back

He must get back.

What is more, *directional* prepositional phrases may both be combined with the copula and with a modal alone, just like the satellites.

- (21) a. *Ër mues uf Basel.*
PERS3Sm must:3S to Basel

He must go to Basel.

- b. *Ër isch uf Basel.*
PERS3Sm be:3S to Basel

He must go to Basel.

- c. *Ër mues uf s WC.*
PERS3Sm must:3S to DEF:n restrooms

He must go to the restrooms.

We wouldn't expect copulae to be combined with directional adverbials, rather with locational ones. The combination of modal verbs with something else than other verbs will puzzle us, too.

To explain this behavior, it is useful to note that all of the above constructions are distributionally equivalent to some with a verb *gaa* 'to go':

- (22) a. *Ër isch furt-ggange.*
PERS3Sm be:3S away-go:PART

He has gone away.

- b. *Ër isch abe-ggange.*
PERS3Sm be:3S down-go:PART

He has gone down.

- c. *Ër isch zrugg-ggange.*
PERS3Sm be:3S back-go:PART

He has gone back.

- d. *Ër mues furt-ggange sy.*
PERS3Sm must:3S away-go:PART be:INF

He must be gone.

e. *Ër mues furt-gaa.*
PERS3Sm must:3S away-go:INF

He must go away.

f. *Ër mues abe-gaa.*
PERS3Sm must:3S down-go:INF

He must go down.

g. *Ër mues zrugg-gaa.*
PERS3Sm must:3S back-come:INF

He must get back.

h. *Ër mues uf Basel gaa.*
PERS3Sm must:3S to Basel go:INF

He must go to Basel.

i. *Ër isch uf Basel ggange.*
PERS3Sm be:3S to Basel go:PART

He must go to Basel.

j. *Ër mues uf s WC gaa.*
PERS3Sm must:3S to DEF:n restrooms go:INF

He must go to the restrooms.

The distributional equivalence doesn't mean a completely equal meaning for all of them. It is so for the modal constructions, so adding *gaa* seems useless to the hearer. The copulae constructions with *gaa* 'to go', however, refer to events, whereas the forms without it are *resultatives* in Nedjalkov's (1988) sense, hence states. They are explainable if we assume *resultatives* of motion verbs to be built by dropping the motion verb. There is thus a systematic connection between motion verbs and *resultatives* of motion.

5.1.1.2 The pre-phrase of accomplishments

A lot of verbs appear to be achievements that we would normally expect to be accomplishments:

(23) **Ich bi d Türe am zuemache gsy, won er de Fuess dazwüschet ghebet hät.*
PERS1S be:1S DEF:f door at:DEF:DAT close:INF be:PART when PERS3Sm DEF:m foot
in.between hold:PART have:3S

I was closing the door, when he put his foot in the doorway. (So I couldn't get the door closed.)

The English sentence can be imitated by making use of *wele* 'to want'.

(24) *Ich ha graad d Türe wele zuemache, won er de Fuess dezwüschet ghebet hät.*
PERS1S have:1S just DEF:f door want:PART close:INF when PERS3Sm DEF:m foot
in.between hold:PART have:3S

I was closing the door, when he put his foot in the doorway. (So I couldn't get the door closed.)

I leave it to the reader to decide if Swiss German *zuemache* is an achievement or an accomplishment with a formative *wele* to refer to the phase. With other verbs, referring to the phase may require a different expression:

(25) a. **Ër isch am Stäärbe gsy.*
PERS3Sm be:3S at:DEF:DAT:n die:INF be:PART

b. *Ër isch im Stäärbe gläge.*
PERS3Sm be:3S in:DEF:DAT die:INF lie:PART

He was dying.

If we assume the accomplishment variety: a common lexeme for referring to the phase is *versueche* 'to try' with verbs with human actors.

(26) a. *Ër hät versuecht de Stock z verbräche.*
PERS3Sm have:3S try:PART DEF:m stick to break:INF

He tried to break the stick.

b. **Ër isch de Stock am Verbräche gsy.*
PERS3Sm be:3S DEF:m stick at:DEF:DAT break:INF be:PART

He was breaking the stick.

There are some verbs where the try-periphrasis and the ordinary verb form may be distributionally equivalent (cf. Bolinger, 1977, on the other hand):

(27) a. *Ich han em aagliüete. Ër isch nôt ume gsy.*
PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:DAT phone:PART PERS3Sm be:3S not there be:PART

I called him. He wasn't there.

b. *Ich ha versuecht em aazlüüete. Ër isch nôt ume gsy.*
PERS1S have:1S try:PART PERS3Sm:DAT to:phone:INF PERS3Sm be:3S not there
be:PART

I tried to call him. He wasn't there.

5.1.1.3 Multiple-valent verbs

Rappaport Hovav & Levin (1998) distinguish two classes of languages: *manner verb languages* and *result verb languages*. The former prefer verbs that describe the manner of an action, the latter focus on the result.

From this observation, we can again deduce connections between verb classes. If one language tends to describe a state of affairs by an activity, and another one by an accomplishment, then it must be possible that a speaker uses an activity verb for a state of affairs that is temporally bounded. He neglects the goal inherent in the state of affairs. Rappaport Hovav & Levin give a deeper insight into this relationship. In the cases they watch, the accomplishment of the *result verb language* specifies the goal of the action, but not the way this goal is achieved. The corresponding verb in a *manner verb language* does give this information, but doesn't report

the fact of the temporal boundedness. Or rather, it usually expresses this circumstance through the arguments, which, as a rule, are prepositional phrases (s. ex. (28)).

Prepositional phrases might remind us of the satellites (Talmy, 1985). In *satellite-framed languages*, verbs that express the manner of an action are preferred, too — in Talmy (1985), the description is restricted to motion verbs. The goal or path of those motions is rendered by satellites; they look like prepositions without an argument.

Both English and Swiss German are *manner verb languages*. Therefore, in both languages some manner verbs may take an impressing number of arguments.

- (28) *Ër hät d Brösmeli vom Tisch uff de Boden abe
PERS3Sm have:3S DEF:PL crumb:PL from:DEF:DAT:m table on(to) DEF:m ground off
gwüschet.
wipe:PART*

He wiped the crumbs off the table to the ground.

Here, path, source, and goal of a motion are expressed in arguments or satellites. *Result verb languages* would have to select a verb for each of the prepositional phrases/satellites in this sentence.

Perhaps, the link between *result verb languages* and *manner verb languages* is to be found in accepting the satellites and the prepositions as verbal elements (a bit like gerunds in Romance languages). They may combine with inflectable verbs to (often discontinuous) compounds. That's where their satellite-like or part-of-the-argument-structure behavior comes from. They may not occur without an inflectable verb in the same clause, that's why they cooccur with the copula to yield *resultatives*. But, being verbal elements, they can, of course, accompany a modal verb, and they can form chains of complex predicates like in ex. (28). Here, most *result verb languages* choose a verb (with an argument) for each of the prepositional phrases in ex. (28) and a verb for both the satellite and the verb *wüsche* 'to wipe', but they put them all but one in a form that may not occur alone, e. g. a gerund — just like a satellite/preposition. This approach to both satellites and prepositions seems to be the only way to avoid the following assumptions: 1) there is a privative morpheme in the *resultative* motion construction in chap. 5.1.1.1 and 2) we cannot determine the number of arguments in a *manner verb language*.

5.1.2 Adding Aktionsart

Among the plain verbs (i. e. verbs without satellites), there are the so-called "*active accomplishments*", predicates that can behave like activities and accomplishments.

- (29) a. *Es hät es Mega-Büffe ghaa und mir händ öppe zwäi
PERS3Sn have:3S IND:n big-cold buffet have:PART and PERS1PL have:PL about two
Stund lang ggässe.
hour:PL long eat:PART*

There was a huge cold buffet and we ate for about two hours.

- b. *Ich han e Wëë (inere Stund) ggässe.
PERS1S have:1S IND:f cake (in:IND:DAT:f hour) eat:PART*
I ate a piece of cake (in an hour)(the whole of it).

This behavior sheds a light on the Swiss German Aktionsart system. In Russian, both interpretations would be distinguished lexically: *есть est'* for the former, *съесть sest'* for the latter. The two verbs form a so-called aspect pair in Russian.

Swiss German, however, has a less elaborated Aktionsart system. Adding Aktionsart is an optional device in Swiss German, hence the existence of "*active accomplishments*". Distinctions can be made, and they can be made easily via the satellites, but only in a restricted number of verbs.

With a satellite, we can derive a verb out of *ässe* 'to eat' that is no longer an *active accomplishment* in the sense of Van Valin & LaPolla (1997), but inevitably includes completion of the action, hence is an accomplishment.

In the unmarked "*active accomplishments*" (cf. ex. (30a)), the telic interpretation is the *default*, which can be cancelled by further information. In ex. (30b), telicity is not cancellable.

- (30) a. *Ich han e Wëë ggässe, aber nôt ganz.
PERS1S have:1S IND:f cake eat:PART but not whole*

I ate a cake, but not all of it.

- b. *Ich ha d Wëëen uuf-ggässe, *aber nôt ganz.
PERS1S have:1S DEF:f cake up-eat:PART*

I ate up the cake, *but not all of it.

Besides Aktionsart pairs (as it were) like the above, there is an (almost) all-purpose satellite: *fëertig*, that is to be combined with a lot of "*active accomplishments*" to indicate completion:

- (31) *Ër hät s Huus fëertig-poue.
PERS3Sm have:3S DEF:n house have.finished-build:PART*

He finished building the house.

Similar to the *resultative* motion predicates described in chap. 5.1.1.1, *fëertig* can act alone as a completion marker for any action, yielding a resultative. The action itself can be added by an oblique construction.

- (32) *Ër isch fëertig (mit em Huus boue).
PERS3Sm be:3S have.finished (with DEF:n:DAT house build:INF)*

He's done (building the house).

Fëertig occurs in other idiomized constructions indicating completion:

- (33) *S Broot isch fëertig.
DEF:n bread be:3S have.finished*

We are out of bread.

The satellite *fëertig* is an adjective. So, it can be used in attributive constructions. Other satellites occur used as attributes as well, but this is a feature not (yet?) fully accepted:

- (34) a. *s fëertig Huus
DEF:n finished:n house*
the house completely built

- b. *?di zue-ne Türe*
DEF:f closed-PL door:PL

the closed doors

Of course, like in many languages without an elaborated Aktionsart system (Reese, 2006), other devices exist to add Aktionsart specifications to a sentence. There are special verbs that can do so, like *aafange* 'to begin'.

Another device are special markers inside the arguments, like certain prepositions.

- (35) *Ich ha vo dem Broot ggässe.*
PERS1S have:1S from DEF:DAT:n bread eat:PART

I ate some of the bread.

5.2 "Tense"

There are only two verb forms to consider in the domain that is usually assigned to "tense". One is the default form, the "present tense". The other one is the so-called "perfect". The verb classes are needed to understand this field.

The "perfect" has traditionally been considered a tense form in Swiss German, especially since the past forms have died out. I want to show some objections against this interpretation.

Katz (2000) shows, for English, an important distinction between state predicates and non-state predicates in the past tense. State predicates may still be viewed as states, but non-state predicates convey events.

- (36) a. *D Gitare isch vor ere Stund uf em Tisch gläge, und si lyt imer no deet.*
DEF:f guitar be:3S before IND:DAT:f hour on DEF:DAT:m table lie:PART and PERS3Sn lie:3S always yet there

The guitar lay on the table an hour ago, and it's still lying there.

- b. *D Gitare lyt uf em Tisch, und si lyt au inere Stund no deet.*
DEF:f guitar lie:3S on DEF:DAT:m table and PERS3Sf lie:3S also in:IND:DAT:f hour yet there

The guitar is lying on the table, and it will lie there in an hour's time, too.

- c. **Ër hät vor ere Stund Gitare gspilt, und ër spilt imer no.*
PERS3Sm have:3S before IND:f hour guitar play:PART and PERS3Sm play:3S always yet

*He played the guitar an hour ago, and he's still playing.

- d. *Ër spilt graad Gitare, und ër spilt inere Stund au no.*
PERS3Sm play:3S just guitar and PERS3Sm play:3S in:IND:DAT:f hour also yet

He is playing guitar, and he will play in an hour's time, too.

The states represent something that is a good definition for tense: A situation is simply relocated temporally. The example works because after the shift, there is no information left about the time frame outside the new one. Speech time is not included in it.

With non-states, however, the perfect form renders something that it is not visible in the present tense form. Whatever the perfect of a non-state refers to, must be completed until speech time. This completion is not expressed in the present tense form. A possible temporal relocation is only an epiphenomenon of the event character of the perfect form.

The marginal nature of the tense part in the non-state perfect is better visible if we try to compare the Swiss German perfect with the English present perfect. The latter is defined not to be tense.

Anderson (1982) gives the below definition for the English present perfect.

Experiential: *Have you ever been to Japan?*

Current relevance of anterior: *He has studied the whole book. (so he can help)*

New situation (hot news): *Io has just erupted!*

Result-state: *He has gone. (is not here)*

Continuous (still here): *I have been standing here for three hours.*

Anterior: *John thought Mary had left./Mary will have left by then.*

Nearly all of these examples can be translated into Swiss German by using the perfect:

- (37) a. *Bisch emaal z Japan gsy?*
be:2S once in Japan be:PART
- b. *Ër hät s ganz Buech duregläse.*
PERS3Sm have:3S DEF:n whole book read:PART
- c. *D Io isch graad uusbroche.*
DEF:f Io be:3S just erupt:PART
- d. *Ër isch ggange.*
PERS3Sm be:3S go:PART
- e. *Ich bi daa syt driü Stund gstande.*
PERS1S be:1S here since three hour:PL stand:PART
- f. *Ich staane daa syt driü Stund.*
PERS1S stand:1S here since three hour:PL
- g. *De John hät tänt d Mary sig ggange.*
DEF:m PN have:3S think:PART DEF:f PN be:SUBJ:3S go:PART

The anterior given by Anderson is not a perfect, but a pluperfect (s. chap. 5.5.5), so it automatically falls out of consideration. Besides, the example is based on the *consecutio temporum* in dependent clauses, which is rendered as a subjunctive in Swiss German.

Exs. (37e) and (37f) are states. Ex. (37f) is expectable, as the state is not temporally shifted. Ex. (37e) is also possible, though it is marked. It emphasizes the past part of the situation, so it fits to ex. (36). But the example weakens the tense character even for statal perfects.

The explanation is historical: when the past tense was abandoned, it merged in meaning with the perfect. The Swiss German denotes both the Germanic past tense and the present perfect. Katz (2000) has shown that tense is too incomplete an account for the past tense in English, thus probably in prototypical Germanic languages.

There is at least one caveat against the hypothesis that both English simple past and present perfect correspond to the Swiss German perfect. An important feature the past tense has in Standard German and English cannot be imitated in Swiss German:

(38) a. (StG) *Um wieviel Uhr war morgen (nochmal) das Treffen?*
 at how.much clock be:PRET:3S tomorrow (ABTP) DEF:n meeting

b. **Um weli Zyt isch moorn scho wider s Träffe gsy?*
 at which:f time be:3S tomorrow ABTP ABTP DEF:n meeting be:PART

c. *Um weli Zyt isch moorn scho wider s Träffe?*
 at which:f time be:3S tomorrow ABTP ABTP DEF:n meeting

At what time was the meeting due tomorrow?

5.3 The progressive

The progressive is a device to imitate states while using non-state verbs.

Consequently, states may not be used in the progressive:

(39) **Ich bin am Sitze.*
 PERS1S be:1S at:DEF:DAT sit:INF

I am sitting.

It may be substituted by the simple present in present tense.

(40) a. *Ich lise (graad).*
 PERS1S read:1S (just)

b. *Ich bi (graad) am Läse.*
 PERS1S be:1S (just) at:DEF:DAT read:INF

I am reading.

It is obligatory for referring to non-completed pasts of non-stative verbs.

(41) a. **Won i gläse haa, isch er ine-choo.*
 when PERS1S read:PART have:1S be:3S PERS3Sm in-come:PART

b. *Won i am Läse gsy bi, isch er ine-choo.*
 when PERS1S at:DEF:DAT read:INF be:PART be:1S be:3S PERS3Sm in-come:PART

While I was reading, he came in.

5.4 Mood

I showed in chap. 4 that there are two non-indicative forms in Swiss German (besides the imperative): the subjunctive and the conditional.

The former is a totally dependent form, which will be dealt with in chap. 6. The latter may occur in independent utterances:

(42) *Ich wüür das nöt mache.*
 PERS1S become:COND:1S DEM:n not make:INF

I wouldn't do that.

5.5 Other verbal categories and their expression in Swiss German

5.5.1 Future

Future is not a relevant category in the Swiss German verb system.

For marking the future, the present tense is used. Future forms must be differentiated according to the question how likely they are going to happen (cf. Dowty, 1979). The present tense marks a relatively high degree of certainty. A lower degree (but still covering the meaning of the English future tense) can be conveyed by adding the adverb *dänn*.

(43) *Ër chunt dänn moorn.*
 PERS3Sm come:3S FUT tomorrow

He'll come tomorrow.

Only with weather expressions, there is a future construction:

(44) *Es chunnt cho rägne.*
 PERS3Sn come:3S come(SAT) rain:INF

It is going to rain.

5.5.2 Epistemics

Epistemics are marked by the modal *wëerde* 'to become'.

(45) *Ër wiirt scho ggässe ha.*
 PERS3Sm become:3S already eat:PART have:PART

He will already have eaten.

5.5.3 Passive

The passive is relatively seldom used in Zurich German. It is gaining ground, though, due to Standard German influence. It is formed like in Standard German, by a finite form of *wëerde* plus the infinitive.

(46) *S Huus wiirt gstriche.*
 DEF:n house become:3S paint:PART

The house is (being) painted.

5.5.4 Resultative

The verb *sy* 'to be' together with a participle yields a resultative (Nedjalkov, 1988):

- (47) *De Stock isch verbroche.*
DEF:m stick be:3S break:PART
The stick is broken.

The participle that is used with the copula in the resultative construction can be considered an adjective:

- (48) *s gschnitte Broot*
DEF:n cut:PART:n bread
the cut bread

5.5.5 The "perfect paradigm"

As indicated in chap. 4.2.4, there are more forms around the perfect: the main verb in a perfect construction may not only be in present tense, but also in the subjunctive, conditional, and another perfect. The latter is called pluperfect and refers to a situation anterior to another that has already been expressed by a perfect form. The subjunctive perfect is used in reported speech. The conditional perfect refers to past irrealis situations.

- (49) a. *Ich ha scho ggässe ghaa, won er ine-choo isch.*
PERS1S have:1S already eat:PART have:PART when PERS3Sm in-come:PART be:3S
I had eaten when he came in.
- b. *Ër säit er sig geschter dihäime gsy.*
PERS3Sm say:3S PERS3Sm be:SUBJ:3S yesterday home be:PART
He says he was home yesterday.
- c. *Wänn er mer s gsäit hett hett*
if PERS3Sm PERS1S:DAT PERS3Sn say:PART have:COND:3S have:COND:1S
em ghulffe.
PERS3Sm:ACC help:PART
If he had told me, I would have helped him.

6 Syntax

In this chapter, I want to describe how elements of the grammar are composed to form utterances.

Sentences consist of at least two parts: a noun phrase and a verb phrase or, in following other theories, of a predicate and its arguments¹. Adverbial phrases may be added.

6.1 Noun phrases

6.1.1 The subject

The external noun phrase or the first argument of a verb, traditionally called *subject*, is marked by nominative case².

- (50) *Ich ha ggässe.*
PERS1S have:1S eat:PART
I ate.

Li & Thompson (1976) found that there may be language-specific tendencies to determine which *object*³ takes the role of a subject in a clause.

They would count Swiss German among the subject languages. This means that there is a close association between topics and the nominative case or the subject. However, in Swiss German, the situation is a bit more complicated.

In the one hand, the language provides a lot of verbs to ensure this connection. Besides the word for 'to shut', *zuemache*, another one makes it possible that the object of a shutting event is a subject.

- (51) *D Türe gaat nöt zue.*
DEF:f door be.shut:3S not SAT
The door won't shut.

A more revealing example: in a give-scenario, both the one who gives and the one who is given can be rendered as subject, because two verbs exist that have an opposite argument structure:

- (52) a. *Ich ha der es Buech ggëe.*
PERS1S have:1S PERS2S:DAT IND:n book give:PART
I gave you a book.

¹In sentences with a zero-valent verb (like *rägne* 'to rain', a dummy subject *s* PERS3Sn is inserted.

²There are no non-nominative *pivots* like e. g. in Icelandic (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997).

³Here, "object" is meant in its non-linguistic sense. To mark the difference between this and the grammatical object, I will mark the non-grammatical one by italics henceforth.

- b. *Du häsch es Buech vo mer überchoo.*
 PERS2S have:2S IND:n book from PERS1S:DAT get:PART

You got a book from me.

- c. (Fr., both) *Je t'ai donné un livre.*

- d. (Fr.) ??*Tu as reçu un livre de moi.*

On the other hand, in many contexts, the participant prone to be topic, is in an oblique case.

- (53) a. *Mich tunkt Schwyzertüütsch schwäär.*
 PERS1S:ACC think:3S Swiss.German difficult

I think Swiss German difficult.

- b. *Mir gaat s guet.*
 PERS1S:DAT go:3S PERS3Sn good

I'm fine.

The following is an example with a theme in nominative case, and a highly animate participant in an oblique one.

- (54) *Das fröit mi.*
 DEM:n be.glad PERS1S:ACC

I'm glad about it.

If we contrast Swiss German and Standard German, there are constructions, in which German is more subject-oriented than Swiss German, and others the other way round:

- (55) a. *Ich ha chalt.*
 PERS1S have:1S cold

- b. (StG) *Mir ist kalt.*
 PERS1S:DAT be:3S cold

I'm cold.

- c. (StG) *Ich habe etwas geschenkt bekommen.*
 PERS1S have:1S something give.as.present:PART get:PART

I was given something as a present.

- d. **Ich han öppis geschänkt überchoo.*
 PERS1S have:1S something give.as.present:PART get:PART

- e. *Mir isch öppis geschänkt woorde.*
 PERS1S:DAT be:3S something give.as.present:PART become:PART

Summing up, there are strong tendencies towards subject-orientedness, but there are a lot of remnants of an older state.

6.1.1.1 Use of emphasis-forms of pronouns

The different forms of personal pronouns listed in chap. 4.1.5.1 have a base in syntax. If a personal pronoun is in focus, we take emphasis-I-forms. If it is a topic, we usually take the emphasis-II-forms. If it is neither topic nor focus, emphasis-III-forms will probably be used. The forms of the second person singular are normally zero in emphasis-III-forms, but *t* after conjunctions.

- (56) a. *Ich han en Brief überchoo.*
 PERS1S(II) have:1S IND:m letter get:PART

I got a letter.

- b. *Das han i nöt gmäint.*
 DEM:n have:1S PERS1S(III) not mean:PART

I didn't mean that.

- c. *Das bi nöt iich gsy.*
 DEM:n be:1S not PERS1S(I) be:PART

It wasn't *me*.

- d. *Wänn t mäinsch, mach i s.*
 if PERS2S(III) mean:2S do:1S PERS1S(III) PERS3Sn(III)

If you think I should, I'll do it.

6.1.1.2 PRO-DROP

In a lot of languages, the first argument of the verb (or the external noun phrase) may be expressed by nothing more than a suffix to the verb. These languages are called PRO-DROP-languages. In Swiss German, the personal ending must additionally be accompanied by personal pronouns.

This feature is known as agreement. The marking in the verb is usually regarded as secondary against the crucial marking of the argument by the existence of the noun phrase (e. g. a personal pronoun).

In Swiss German, the question which of the two agrees and which motivates agreement, is a bit complicated. Whereas there is no way to leave out the endings, the personal pronoun form is zero in a number of persons: the second person singular (in emphasis-III-form) and the first person singular in emphasis-III-form before other unstressed constituents that begin with a vowel (for a more thorough account s. Werner, 1999, and literature cited there):

- (57) *Geschter han (i) en gsee.*
 yesterday have:1S (PERS1S) PERS3Sm:ACC see:PART

I saw him yesterday.

First person pronouns may be dropped even as a topic under circumstances not yet understood:

- (58) *Bi zfride.*
 be:1S contented

I'm contented. (Weber, 1948)

The unstressed forms of the third person plural and the neuter third person plural merge with other sibilants:

- (59) *Jetz isch s guet.*
 [jets ɪʃ (s) ɡuət]
 now be:3S PERS3Sn good

It's over now.

On the other hand, the endings are not fully specified: there is only one plural form, and first and third person singular merge in a number of forms, too. Perhaps, the solution is to assume a discontinuous morpheme for person in Swiss German.

First and second person suffixes allow only personal pronouns as heads of the subject⁴ (or vice versa).

Very recently, demonstratives have started to occur as a substitute for third person pronouns. This goes back to the influence of modern spoken Standard German.

- (61) a. *Ich ha geschter de Kurt troffe. Ër hät mer gsäit, du sigsch chrank.*
 PERS1S have:1S yesterday DEF:m PN meet:PART PERS3Sm have:3S PERS1S:DAT
 say:PART PERS2S be:SUBJ:2S ill

I met Kurt yesterday. He said you were ill.

- b. *Ich ha geschter de Kurt troffe. Dë hät mer gsäit, du sigsch chrank.*
 PERS1S have:1S yesterday DEF:m PN meet:PART DEM:m have:3S PERS1S:DAT
 say:PART PERS2S be:SUBJ:2S ill

I met Kurt yesterday. He said you were ill.

6.1.2 The structure of noun phrases

Noun phrases are headed by a noun. It usually demands a determiner (s. chap. 6.1.2.2). Optionally, it may take specifiers (sometimes also complements; but they are added the same way as specifiers). These may be adjectives. They precede the noun and agree with it in number, case, and gender. If verbal elements shall specify the noun, relative clauses (chap. 6.5.4) are used. Prepositional phrases may also act as specifiers in a noun phrase. They follow the noun.

- (62) a. *di gääl Wand*
 DEF:f yellow wall
 the yellow wall

⁴Unlike e. g. in Spanish, in this case noun phrases are only possible as appositions to the pronoun:

- (60) a. *Los español-es somos felic-es.*
 DEF:PL Spanish-PL be:1PL happy-PL
 We Spanish are happy.
 b. *Mir Zürcher sind zfride.*
 PERS1PL Zurich.people:PL be:PL contented
 We people from Zurich are contented.

- b. *[D Wand am Fänschter]NP isch gääl.*
 DEF:f wall at:DEF:DAT:n window be:3S yellow

The wall (that is) at the window is yellow.

6.1.2.1 Genitive constructions

Genitive constructions allow a noun to be specified by another noun. There are two ways. If the possessor is animate, s/he is put into the dative, followed by the head, which is preceded by a possessive pronoun. The case of the noun phrase is expressed in the head (or, to be more precise, in the possessive pronoun that precedes the head).

- (63) a. *Ich han em Maa syn Schlüssel gsee.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:DAT man POSSm:m key see:PART

I saw the man's key.

- b. *Ich ha s Buech em René sym Brüeder ggë.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:n book DEF:DAT René POSSm:DAT:m brother give:PART

I gave the book to René's brother.

So, this is a combined head-marked-dependent-marked construction.

If the head is inanimate, it is followed by the preposition *vo* with the possessor in the dative⁵.

- (64) a. *Ich ha s Tach vom Huus gsee.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:n roof of:DAT house see:PART

I saw the roof of the house.

- b. *Ër isch vom Tach vom Huus abegheit.*
 PERS3Sm is from:DEF:DAT:n roof of:DEF:DAT house fall.down:PART

He fell off the roof of the house.

6.1.2.2 Determiners

In the first position of a noun phrase, we usually find a determiner. The determiner may be a demonstrative, an indefinite pronoun, a possessive pronoun, or a numeral (the latter may be combined with a definite article). When there is no other determiner, one of the articles is used. Only indefinite plurals and mass nouns may be zero-marked. The article has two functions: to mark definiteness (or indefiniteness) and provide information about case, gender, and sometimes number, which are not visible in the noun⁶.

The article is obligatory with proper nouns:

- (65) *Ich ha geschter de Hans troffe.*
 PERS1S have:1S yesterday DEF:m PN meet:PART

I met Hans yesterday.

⁵This construction is spreading at the cost of the other one.

⁶However, even the article cannot distinguish singular feminines from the plural.

The tendency to use articleless mass nouns or plurals in non-specific contexts is a bit weaker than in StG. Indefinites like (*e*) *chli* 'a bit' (for mass nouns) will be inserted.

- (66) a. *Nimsch no chli Kafi?*
take:2S yet some coffee
- b. StG: *Nimmst du noch Kaffee?*
take:2S PERS2S yet coffee
- Do you want some more coffee?
- c. *???Nimsch no Kafi?*
take:2S yet coffee

The use of determiners in non-specific contexts is not understood. There has been a lot of investigation trying to solve the problem through semantic considerations. However, it doesn't solve the question whether a non-specific *object* is expressed by a bare noun or obligatorily preceded by an indefinite element.

6.2 Adverbials

Adverbials are either expressed by a special word class, called adverbs, or headed by a preposition. In very rare cases, they may be in accusative case⁷.

- (67) a. *Ich ha geschter i de Stadt es Buech gchaufft.*
PERS1S be:1S yesterday in DEF:DAT:f town IND:n book buy:PART
- I bought a book in town yesterday.
- b. *Ich ha di ganz Wuche gschafft.*
PERS1S have:1S DEF:f whole week work:PART
- I worked for the whole week.

6.2.1 Prepositions

Prepositions are the heads of prepositional phrases⁸, consisting of a preposition and a noun phrase. The noun phrase is assigned either the accusative (only distinguished in personal pronouns from the nominative) or the dative. A set of spatial prepositions combine with both: if the dative is used, it refers to spatial relations, with the accusative to directional ones.

In spite of the clear distinction, the locative proadverbials (s. chap. 4.1.5.6) are often added (cf. Berthele, 2004a,b):

- (68) *Ich gaane i d Stadt ine.*
PERS1S go:1S in DEF:f(:ACC) town inside(DIR)
- I'm going to town.

⁷I prefer to call it an accusative, though in most or even all instances we can't tell it from the nominative.

⁸Prepositional phrases may be complements of a verb phrase or adverbials.

In other cases, they systemically act as specifiers of direction, with a *default* preposition (cf. Berthele, 2004b):

- (69) a. *Si chunt zum Gaartetöörli ine.*
PERS3Sf come:3S to:DEF:DAT:n garden.door:DIM inside(DIR)
- She comes in through the garden door.
- b. *Ër jagt s zum Tämpel use.*
PERS3Sm hunt:3S PERS3PL to:DEF:DAT:n temple out(DIR)
- He chases them out of the temple. (Baur, 1997)

Some prepositions allow zero *reference tracking*. The referent is omitted.

- (70) *Häsch duu myn Schirm gfunde? Ich bin ooni im Rägen umegloffte.*
have:2S PERS2S POSS1S:m umbrella find:PART PERS1S be:1S without in:DEF:DAT:m rain walk:PART
- Have you seen my umbrella? I walked in the rain without it.

6.3 Verb phrases

Verb phrases consist at least of a verb. It is marked for person (s. chap. 4.2). Verbs may consist of more than one part: a great deal of the paradigm consists of analytical forms, viz. the perfect and possibly the conditional. Modals are widely used and oust the propositional verb, too, from the main verb position (s. chap. 6.5.5). Even if these forms can't be used, Swiss German is fond of taking analytical forms; there almost seems to be a tendency to reduce the "main verb" to a bearer of TAM and personal endings:

- (71) a. *Ich fische gëern.*
PERS1S fish:1S like
- b. *Ich tuene gëern fische.*
PERS1S do:1S like fish:INF
- I like fishing.

The elements of these forms are usually non-contiguous in the ordering of sentences.

6.3.1 Complements

Verbs may take complements. These may be noun phrases (assigned accusative or dative case) or prepositional phrases.

- (72) a. *Ich iss es Sändwitsch.*
PERS1S eat:1S IND:n sandwich
- I'm eating a sandwich.

- b. *Ich hilffe de Mueter.*
 PERS1S help:1S DEF:DAT:f mother

I'll help my mother.

- c. *Ich glaub a diich.*
 PERS1S believe:1S on PERS2S:ACC

I believe in you.

The preposition to be used is part of the verbal entry in the lexicon.

In many Alemannic dialects, though not in the *koiné*, the dative has become a totally prepositional case; where Zurich German has the pure dative, they add the preposition *a* 'at' (Seiler, 2003).

The problem of valency as a whole has been problematized by recent research (Rappaport Hovav & Levin, 1998; s. chap. 5.1.1.3).

On the other hand, the rules of a language's grammar determine, too, under which circumstances existing (or possible) complements may be omitted. Among others, in Swiss German, pseudo-intransitivity is a common feature. Dropping the object means that a *default* object is to be supposed.

- (73) *Ich bin am Ässe.* (it is irrelevant what I'm eating)
 PERS1S be:1S at:DEF:DAT:n eat:INF

I am eating.

Few other verbs may omit an anaphoric argument.

- (74) *Ich wäiss (es) nöt.*
 PERS1S know:1S (PERS3Sn) not

I don't know.

In Zurich German, pseudo-intransitivity is a feature a lot more extended. Glaser (1995) reports that anaphoric reference to unspecific *objects* is zero-marked in a lot of Alemannic dialects, including Zurich German:

- (75) *Häsch chli Gäld? Ja, ich ha.*
 have:2S some money yes PERS1S have:1S

Do you have some money? Yes, I have some.

Standard German, on the other hand, uses the indefinite pronoun *welche* to refer to unspecified resumed *objects*, Berne German, to give another example, a preserved pronominal genitive:

- (76) a. (StG) *Hast du Geld? Ja, ich habe welches.*
 have:2S PERS2S money yes PERS1S have:1S which:n

- b. (Berne German) *Häsch chli Gäud? Ja, i han ere.*
 have:2S some money yes PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sn:GEN

Do you have some money? Yes, I have some.

6.3.1.1 Possessive pronouns and related datives

Possessive pronouns can be used predicatively and attributively. They are optional with inalienable possessors like family terms.

- (77) *De Frau gaat s guet.*
 DEF:DAT:f wife go:3S PERS3Sn good

My wife is well.

In predicative use, they are normally substituted by the dative of the personal pronoun:

- (78) a. *Dëë Öpfel isch myne.*
 DEF:m apple be:3S POSS1S:m

The apple is mine.

- b. *Dëë Öpfel isch miir.*
 DEF:m apple be:3S PERS1S:DAT

The apple is mine.

In middle constructions, the possessive pronoun is never used. Instead, the actor-patient is shown by an additional reflexive (which is interpreted as being in dative case):

- (79) *Ër hät sich d Hand proche.*
 PERS3Sm have:3S REFL DEF:f hand break:PART

He broke his hand.

Dative case is connected with benefactivity in a wide sense of the word:

- (80) *Häsch mer en Öpfel?*
 have:2S PERS1S:DAT IND:m apple

Do you have an apple for me?

With first person singular pronouns only, the dative may be inserted in emphatic utterances:

- (81) *Das t mir das nüme machsch!*
 that PERS2S PERS1S:DAT DEM:n no.more do:2S

I hope you won't do that again!

6.4 Sentence modality

According to Maas (1999a), sentences can be viewed as consisting of two parts: a propositional part and the sentence modality. This splitting is a theoretical one, as will be seen below.

Sentence modality, viz., is inserted in a sentence in the following ways:

- By *default* or context.

(82) *Ër isch ggange.*
PERS3Sm be:3S go:PART

He went. (*default*: Factual reading, no indication of the source of the information)

• Adverbials.

(83) *Ër isch glaub ggange.*
PERS3Sm be:3S believe(ADV) go:PART

He went, I think.

• The propositional part is the argument of a verb indicating sentence modality.

(84) *Ich glaub er isch ggange.*
PERS1S believe:1S PERS3Sm be:3S go:PART

I think he went.

In these cases, the argument is often merely juxtaposed to the main clause (s. ex. (84)), without being embedded by the conjunction *das* (s. chap. 6.5).

6.4.1 Negation

The *default* marker for negation is the adverb *nöt*.

(85) *Ich wott di nöt gsee.*
PERS1S want:1S PERS2S:ACC not see:INF

I don't want to see you.

When a sentence contains an indefinite noun phrase, negation is marked by the negative article in front of the noun phrase.

(86) a. *Ich wott kä Kafi.*
PERS1S want:1S NEGART:PL coffee.

I don't want to drink coffee.

b. *Mir händ kä Hëerdöpfel mee.*
PERS1PL have:PL NEGART:PL potato:PL more

We are out of potatoes.

c. *Ich lise kä Zytig.*
PERS1S read:1S NEGART:f newspaper

I don't read a newspaper.

The negative article substitutes both the indefinite article and the zero-article-marking that characterizes indefinite plurals and mass nouns (cf. chap. 4.1.3).

The main reason not to subsume the negative article among the articles, is its floating behavior. However, unlike in e. g. StG, floating of the negative article is not encouraged.

(87) a. (StG) *Kaffee hab ich keinen/nicht.*
coffee have:1S PERS1S not

b. *???Kafi han i käine/nöt.*
coffee have:1S PERS1S NEGART:m/not

I don't have any coffee.

Just as the negative article substitutes *nöt* as the negation marker, it may, itself, be replaced by negative pronouns and negative particles.

(88) a. *Ich ha vo niemerem Kafi überchoo.*
PERS1S have:1S from nobody:DAT coffee get:PART

I didn't get any coffee from anybody.

b. *Ich ha no nie vo öpperem Kafi überchoo.*
PERS1S have:1S yet never from anybody:DAT coffee get:PART

I didn't ever get any coffee from anybody.

It may be convenient to presume both the negative article and negative pronouns and particles like *nöt* 'not', *nie* 'never', *niemer* 'nobody', *nüüt* 'nothing' to be composed of an abstract negation morpheme plus another positive morpheme like *je* 'ever' for *nie* 'never' etc.

As a rule, in a sequence that contains pronouns and articles, only the element in focus bears this abstract negation morpheme. This rule may be recent and go back to Standard German influx. Weber (1948) still described the possibility of sequences with more than one negated constituent.

6.5 Complex sentences

If components have the "wrong" word class, special constructions are necessary. For nouns to be applied as predicates, it is easy. Swiss German can do this via the copula *sy* 'to be'.

If verbs shall be non-predicates, there are two ways. One is morphological: nominalization. This occurs less often in Swiss German than e. g. in Written Standard German.

The other one leads us to another domain of syntax: complex sentences. There are two kinds of components of complex sentences: independent clauses and dependent ones.

(89) a. *Ich ha s gwüsst. Ich ha der s nöt gsäit.*
PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sn know:PART PERS1S have:1S PERS2S:DAT PERS3Sn not say:PART

I knew it. I didn't tell you.

b. *Ich ha s gwüsst, aber ich ha der s nöt gsäit.*
PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sn know:PART but PERS1S have:1S PERS2S:DAT PERS3Sn not say:PART

I knew it, but I didn't tell you.

c. *Ich ha der s nôt gsäit, obwol i s*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS2S:DAT PERS3Sn not say:PART although PERS1S PERS3Sn
gwüsst ha.
 know:PART have:1S

I didn't tell you though I knew it.

Complex sentences that consist of independent clauses may be interpreted as two sentences. By combining them to one, a relationship is established between the two. The kind of this relation is indicated by a conjunction.

Dependent clauses differ in one respect: the main verb is put to the end, yielding a clear SOV order. Some dependent clauses differ only in this specialty from independent ones. However, this ordering is the basis for something else. Dependent clauses may function as non-verbal constituents. They can act as specifiers of noun phrases, as noun phrases, and as adverbials, but only with the verb-final order. I will call the verb-final dependent clauses *embedded clauses*. In this chapter, we will also encounter some other constructions that may be viewed in the same domain.

6.5.1 Clauses as complements

The conjunction of clausal complements is *das*.

If it is neither object nor subject in the main clause, it is often resumed in the main clause by a pronominal element, similar (or vice versa) to the situation in relative clauses — but the specification of function may often be omitted, too.

(90) a. *Ich glaub a diich.*
 PERS1S believe:1S at PERS2S:ACC

I believe in you.

b. *Ich glaube (dr-aa) das t d Waaret säisch.*
 PERS1S believe:1S (DEM:OBL-on) that PERS2S DEM:f truth say:2S

I believe that you are telling the truth.

Indirect questions Some verbs require a special type of clausal complements: it is preceded by *öb* 'whether' and regarded as an indirect question.

(91) *Ich han en gfrööget öb er mi kânt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:ACC ask:PART whether PERS3Sm PERS1S:ACC know:3S

I asked him if he knew me.

Some take indirect questions as arguments only when they are negative:

(92) a. *Ich wäiss nôt öb er mi kânt.*
 PERS1S know:1S not whether PERS3Sm PERS1S:ACC know:3S

I don't know if he knows me.

b. *Ich wäiss das er mi kânt.*
 PERS1S know:1S that PERS3Sm PERS1S:ACC know:3S

I know that he knows me.

The analysis as indirect question is justified by the fact that such clauses may contain unknown participants. In this case, *öb* is replaced by an interrogative element representing this argument. It is followed by *das*:

(93) *Ich wäiss nôt wo das mer is träffed.*
 PERS1S know:1S not where that PERS1PL PERS1PL:ACC meet:1PL

I don't know where we will meet.

Special forms for clausal arguments If the subject is identical to the one of the main clause, the infinitive may be preceded by *z* (cf. also Austin Hale, 1966)⁹:

(94) a. *Es fröit mi das i di töörf käne leere.*
 PERS3Sn enjoy:3S PERS1S:ACC that PERS1S PERS2S:ACC may:1S know:INF learn:INF

b. *Es fröit mi di käne z leere.*
 PERS3Sn enjoy:3S PERS1S:ACC PERS2S:ACC know:INF to learn:INF

I'm glad to make you acquaintance.

Some main clauses allow to distinguish between two conjunctions: *das* and *wänn*. With the former, the complement clause is interpreted as factual, with the latter, it is devoid of factuality. The choice of the conjunction thus fulfils the same function as the subjunctive in Romance languages.

(95) a. *S isch guet das t das machsch.*
 PERS3Sn be:3S good that PERS2S DEM:n make:2S

It is good that you do that. (it is sure that you will do it.)

b. *S isch guet wänn t das machsch.*
 PERS3Sn be:3S good if PERS2S DEM:n make:2S

It is good that you do that. (it is unsure if you will do it or not.)

c. (cf. French) *C'est bon que tu le fasses.*

It is good that you do that. (it is unsure if you will do it or not.)

Formerly, some verbs required the subjunctive (Weber, 1948). This feature has died out, at least in the modern *koiné*. Nowadays, the subjunctive occurs only in reported speech (cf. chap. 6.5.3).

Raising Raising exists in Swiss German, though less often than in English:

(96) a. *Mich tunkt, Schwyzertütsch isch schwäär.*
 PERS1S:ACC think:3S Swiss.German be:3S difficult.

b. *Mich tunkt Schwyzertütsch schwäär.*
 PERS1S:ACC think:3S Swiss.German difficult.

I think Swiss German difficult.

⁹The project on dialect syntax in Swiss German at the German department of the Universität Zürich uses the extent of this restriction as a marker for dialectal diversity.

(97) a. *Ër schynt en guete Mäntsch z sy.*
 PERS3Sm seem:3S IND:m good:m human.being to be:INF

b. *Ër isch schynts en guete Mäntsch.*
 PERS3Sm be:3S seemingly IND:m good:m human.being

He seems to be a good person.

It is not a favorable device in Swiss German, though it is gaining ground due to Standard German influx.

6.5.2 Clausal adverbials

If a dependent clause shall be used as an adverbial in the main clause, there is a set of possible conjunctions, which specify the kind of adverbials. However, there is a *default* conjunction *wo*.

(98) a. *Ich han en gsee won i geschter am*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:ACC see:PART REL PERS1S yesterday at:DEF:DAT
Stadelhofe gsy bi.
 Stadelhofen be:PART be:1S

I saw him when I was at the Stadelhofen (station in Zurich) yesterday.

b. *Ich han en gsee won er amigs gaat go*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:ACC see:PART REL PERS3Sm HAB go:3S go(PRT)
poschte.
 go.shopping

I saw him where he goes shopping.

6.5.3 Indirect speech and the subjunctive

In indirect speech, i. e. clausal arguments to verbs of saying, an additional rule has to be observed: the main verb has to be put into the subjunctive.

The subjunctive is obligatory in Zurich German in reported speech. There is no *consecutio temporum*¹⁰. Reported speech isn't often embedded (cf. chap. 6.4), juxtaposition is clearly preferred. Today, the subjunctive of a lot of verbs may be substituted by the conditional.

(99) a. *Ër hät gsäit er sig dihäime.*
 PERS3Sm have:3S say:PART PERS3Sm be:SUBJ:3S home

b. *Ër hät gsäit das er dihäime sig¹¹.*
 PERS3Sm have:3S say:PART that PERS3Sm home be:SUBJ:3S

c. **Ër hät gsäit er isch dihäime.*
 PERS3Sm have:3S say:PART PERS3Sm be:3S home

d. **Ër hät gsäit er isch dihäime gsy.*
 PERS3Sm have:3S say:PART PERS3Sm be:3S home be:PART

He said he was home.

¹⁰In *SiG*, only some academically trained people use the subjunctive. The conditional is more likely to occur, but the expectable form is the indicative.

e. *Ër hät gsäit er göng häi.*
 PERS3Sm have:3S say:PART PERS3Sm go:SUBJ:3S home

f. *Ër hät gsäit er gieng häi.*
 PEWRS3Sm have:3S say:PART PERS3Sm go:COND:3S home

He said he was going home.

Formerly, the usage of the subjunctive is reported to have been wider, more like in Romance languages (Weber, 1948; Baur, 1997).

(100) †*Si händ pättet das käis Unglück gschächi.*
 PERS3PL have:3PL pray:PART that NEGART:n disaster happen:SUBJ:3S

They prayed that there shouldn't be an accident.

6.5.4 Relative clauses

Relative clauses are a way to refer to *objects* by clauses. They are two kinds:

1. those that act as noun phrases; these are called externally headed.

They start with the markers *was* (or *öppis/das wo*; inanimate *objects*) or *wër* (or *öpper/dëë wo*; animate *objects*).

(101) *Ich ha gfunde was i gsuecht ha.*
 PERS1S have:1S find:PART what PERS1S search:PART have:1S

I have found what I was looking for.

2. On the other hand, there are internally headed relative clauses. They specify information about an *object* already defined by a noun. The reference to this noun is resumed in the relative clause.

If the repeated constituent is subject or object in the relative clause, it is omitted in the latter (alternative interpretation: *wo* is a relative pronoun).

(102) *s Buech won i geschter gläse ha*
 DEF:n book REL PERS1S yesterday read:PART have:1S

The book I read yesterday

If the head of the noun phrase acts as an argument in the relative clause different from subject or object, it is resumed as a pronominal element.

(103) *s Buech wo du geschter verzelt häsch vo dëmm*
 DEF:n book REL PERS2S yesterday tell:PART have:2S from DEM:DAT:n

The book you told about yesterday

¹¹In modern Alsatian, the subjunctive is only preserved if the indirect speech is not embedded, as in ex. (99b), but juxtaposed, as in ex. (99a) (Huck & Bothorel-Witz, 1997). This feature may occur in the most recent Swiss German speech as well, but seldom — the embedded variant is rare anyway.

(104) *de Maa won em geschter s Buech ggëë ha*
 DEF:m man REL PERS3Sm:DAT yesterday DEF:n book give:PART have:1S

The man I gave the book to yesterday

Relative clauses are almost the only way to get attributes out of verbs. There is only one participle (s. chap. 5.5.4), no present participle.

(105) a. (Standard German) *das kochende Wasser*
 DEF:n boil:AP:n water

b. *s Wasser wo chochet*
 DEF:n water REL boil:3S

the boiling water

Relative clauses are a way to specify information about an *object* in the world. Another device is *öppis* z plus the infinitive. It serves to obtain a phrase out of a verb that can be used like a noun.

(106) *Häsch öppis z trinke?*
 have:2S something to drink:INF

Do you have something to drink?

Öppis can be replaced by other forms like *ggnueg* 'enough' etc.

6.5.5 Modal constructions

Modal verbs are combined with the pure infinitive:

(107) *Ich wott läse.*
 PERS1S want:1S read:INF

I want to read.

One modal used to demand an additional *g*-prefix in front of the infinitive, which was dropped if the verb started with an unstressed syllable. This morpheme has fallen out of use.

(108) a. †*Ich mag ales g-ässe.*
 PERS1S can:1S everything g-eat

I can eat it all.

b. *Ich mag ales ässe.*
 PERS1S can:1S everything eat

I can eat it all.

c. *Ich mag mi nöt erinnere.*
 PERS can:1S PERS1S:ACC not remember:INF

I can't remember.

The construction is obligatory. However, it is only allowed if the subjects of modal and propositional verb coincide. Unless, an ordinary embedded clause is applied (formerly, the subjunctive was required in these constructions; this is no longer the case).

(109) *Ich wott das du lisisch.*
 PERS1S want:1S that PERS2S read:2S

I want you to read.

6.5.6 Reduplicative verb constructions

A small number of other verbs are idiomatized for forming complex predicates similar to the modal ones. The propositional verb is added in the pure infinitive. However, in most of these constructions the first verb may appear twice: first in the ordinary inflected form, then in an abbreviated form:

(110) a. *Ich gaane go fische.*
 PERS1S go:1S go(SAT) fish:INF

I'll go fishing.

b. *Ich laan en la fische.*
 PERS1S let:1S PERS3Sm:ACC let(SAT) fish:INF

I'll let him fish.

c. *Ich chume cho schaffe.*
 PERS1S come:1S come(SAT) work:INF

I'll come and work.

In other dialects and in older varieties of Zurich German, *aafaa* would be listed here, too. It is interesting because it contains a satellite.

(111) a. *Es faat aafë rägne.*
 PERS3Sn start:3S start(SAT) rain:INF

It is starting to rain.

b. *Ër wott afen ässe.* (Schobinger, 2001)
 PERS3Sm want:3S start(SAT) eat:INF

He wants to start to eat.

The satellite is part of the abbreviated duplicate. In the inflected verb, it is not repeated. The abbreviated duplicate takes the role of the satellite. Perhaps that's why in modern speech, the verb has fallen out of the inventory of abbreviated duplicates. The propositional verb is juxtaposed as a mere infinitive to the verb and its satellite.

(112) *Es fangt aa rägne.*
 PERS3Sn start:3S SAT rain:INF

It is starting raining.

The abbreviated forms act similarly to satellites as described in chap. 5.1.1.1. So, they may perhaps be viewed in line with satellites.

- (113) a. *Ër isch go fische.*
PERS3Sm be:3S go(SAT) fish:INF
He is gone fishing./He went fishing.
- b. *Ër wott go fische.*
PERS3Sm want:3S go(SAT) fish:INF
He wants to go fishing.
- c. *Ich bi cho schaffe.*
PERS1S be:1S come(SAT) work:INF
I have come to work./I came to work.

The difference is that they are always accompanied by an infinitive. The copula construction is the Swiss German variant of the so-called “absentive” (de Groot, 2000) (for a justification s. below). The “absentive” is neutralized for tense¹² in Swiss German:

- (114) a. (StG) *Er ist schwimmen.*
PERS3Sm be:3S swim:INF
- b. (StG) *Er ist schwimmen gegangen.*
PERS3Sm be:3S swim:INF go:PART
- c. (StG) *Er war schwimmen.*
PERS3Sm be:PRET:3S swim:INF
- d. *Ër isch go schwüme.*
PERS3Sm be:3S go(SAT) swim:INF
- e. **Ër isch go schwüme gsy.*
PERS3Sm be:3S go(SAT) swim:INF be:PART
He is gone/went swimming.

The *go*-construction is used more often than in Standard German, for an obvious reason. In all these constructions, the inflected verb is suppressed. What remains is only the satellite. In the constructions in the sphere of the “absentive” (i. e. the *resultative* ones), the satellite is followed by an infinitive. In Standard German, however (and most other Germanic languages), there is no satellite. The infinitive is all that is left when the inflected verb for ‘to go’ is dropped. That is how the “absentive” construction arises. In the modal constructions, however, the lacking of the satellites leads to the result that the modal is immediately followed by the infinitive. That is what we expect from a modal: to combine with an infinitive. So, the modal *go* construction and an ordinary modal construction are indistinguishable. The motion verb may be added in Standard German, in the infinitive¹³.

¹²However, some speakers accept ex. (114e).

¹³Interestingly, *gehen* ‘to walk’ may be used in this construction, too, if the journey is done by vehicle.

- (115) a. (StG) *Ich muß noch einkaufen.*
PERS1S must:1S yet go.shopping:INF
- b. (StG) *Ich muß noch einkaufen gehen.*
PERS1S must:1S yet go.shopping:INF go:INF
- c. *Ich muess no go poschte.*
PERS1S must:1S yet go(SAT) go.shopping:INF
- d. **Ich muess no poschte.*
PERS1S must:1S yet go.shopping:INF
I have got to go shopping.
- (116) a. (StG) *Ich wollte schwimmen.*
PERS1S want:PRET:1S swim:INF
- b. (StG) *Ich wollte schwimmen gehen.*
PERS1S want:PRET:1S swim:INF go:INF
- c. *Ich ha wele go schwüme.*
PERS1S have:1S want:PART go(SAT) swim:INF
I wanted to go swimming.

6.5.7 Conditionals

There are two ways to indicate a conditional clause: one is by the conjunction *wänn* ‘if’, the other is by fronting the verb; the latter construction is only possible in irrealis conditionals. Irrealis conditionals use the conditional form, realis conditionals the present tense.

- (117) a. *Wänn er mi gseet grüess en.*
if PERS3Sm PERS1S:ACC see:3S greet:1S PERS3Sm:ACC
- b. **Gseet er mi grüess en.*
see:3S PERS3Sm PERS1S:ACC greet:1S PERS3Sm:ACC
If he sees me, I’ll greet him.
- c. *Wänn er mer s gsäit hett hett*
if PERS3Sm PERS1S:DAT PERS3Sn say:PART have:COND:3S have:COND:1S
em ghulffe.
PERS3Sm:ACC help:PART
- d. *Hëtt er mer s gsäit hëtt*
have:COND:3S PERS3Sm PERS1S:DAT PERS3Sn say:PART have:COND:1S
em ghulffe.
PERS3Sm:ACC help:PART
If he had told me, I would have helped him.

Besides conditional constructions, the conditional is used in polite utterances:

- (118) a. *Ich hätt gëörn es Wiispier.*
 PERS1S have:COND:1S like IND:n wheat.beer

I'd like to have a wheat beer.

- b. *Ich wüür gëörn s Fäischter zuemache.*
 PERS1S will:COND:1S like DEF:n window close:INF

I'd like to shut the window.

6.6 Word order

It is disputed if continental southern Germanic languages like Swiss German are SVO- or SOV-languages. They are all so-called V2 languages; this means that the verb is in second position. However, in chap. 4.2 we came across analytic verb forms, with the verb stem in an non-finite form and another verb that got all the endings (the "main verb"). In terms of word order, it is only the latter that is put in second position. The word that contains the verb stem in the paradigm comes at the end of the clause.

What is more, the V2 position as a whole is limited to independent clauses. In embedded clauses, the main verb comes at the very end.

Other word order rules are connected either to a OV (also called dependent-first) or a VO (also called head-first) character of a language. Here, Swiss German shows a mixed image: adjectives are dependent-first, as is the traditional ordering of verbs. However, there are no postpositions, only prepositions (head-first), the genitive construction (with *vo*) that has become more popular is head-first, as well as series of verb forms tend to be nowadays.

- (119) *Si hät sich wele chönen aamälde.*
 PERS3Sf have:3S REFL want:PART can:INF register:INF

She wanted to be able to register.

Adverbials that are not adverbs are usually put in final position, though the position before the final predicate is allowed. The tendency is increasing and yet another sign for the movement towards becoming a VO language.

- (120) a. *Ich ha s Fäischter zuegmacht nach der Aarbet.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:n window close:PART after DEF:DAT:f work

- b. *Ich ha s Fäischter nach der Aarbet zuegmacht.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:n window after DEF:DAT:f work close:PART

I shut the window after work.

- c. *Ich ha nüüt gwüsst vo dëmm.*
 PERS1S have:1S nothing know:PART of DEM:DAT:n

- d. *Ich ha vo dëmm nüüt gwüsst.*
 PERS1S have:1S of DEM:DAT:n nothing know:PART

I knew nothing about it.

So, Swiss German appears as a mixed OV/VO-language, with a historical tendency to become SVO in the end.

The S in SOV or SVO actually stands for the topic. Prototypically, in a subject language (cf. chap. 6.1.1) topic and subject coincide. If another constituent is fronted, the subject comes after the verb, often as a clitic pronoun.

Inthetic sentences, the subject may be in first position (Sasse, 1987; Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997). It is stressed, then. Marked focus can be expressed by fronting as well (rather than by cleft sentences which are rare in Swiss German):

- (121) a. *De Fränz hät s gmacht.*
 DEF:m PN have:3S PERS3Sn do:PART

It was Franz who did it.

- b. *Em Fränz han i s ggë.*
 DEF:DAT:m PN have:1S PERS1S PERS3Sn give:PART

It was Franz I gave it to.

This fronting is standard in wh-questions.

- (122) *Was häsch du gsäit?*
 what have:2S PERS2S say:PART

What did you say?

In yes-no-questions, the verb takes the first position. This V1 position is the marker for yes-no-questions.

- (123) *Isch er Schwyzer?*
 be:3S PERS3Sm Swiss

Is he Swiss?

6.6.1 Indirect and direct objects

In Swiss German, the order of indirect and direct objects is as follows: the basic order is indirect object — direct object. If one of the two is somehow emphasized, it floats to focus position, which usually is the last but one, thus after the other. If both are equally stressed, both become clitic and the dative precedes the accusative¹⁴.

- (124) a. *Ich han em Maa s Buech gschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:m man DEF:n book send:PART

- b. *Ich ha s Buech em Maa gschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:n book DEF:DAT:m man send:PART

I sent the man the book.

¹⁴In Standard German, this works the same. However, Standard German dative pronouns are never cliticized, thus always more stressed than the accusative; so, we get different results.

- c. *Ich han em s geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:DAT PERS3Sn send:PART
 I sent it to him.
- d. *Ich han em s Buech geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:DAT DEF:n book send:PART
 I sent him the book.
- e. *Ich ha s em Maa geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sn DEF:DAT:m man send:PART
 I sent it to the man.
- f. *Ich ha s imm geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sn PERS3Sm:DAT send:PART
 I sent it to him.
- g. *Ich han em daas geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:DAT DEM:n send:PART
 I sent him that.

5.6.2 Adverbs

Adverbs are often in focus, unless, their usual position is after the verb and unstressed arguments.

- (125) a. *Ich han em Maa geschter s Buech geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:m man DEF:n book send:PART
- b. *Ich han em Maa s Buech géschter geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:m man DEF:n book send:PART
- c. *Ich han em Maa s Buech geschter geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:m man DEF:n book send:PART
- d. *Ich ha s Buech geschter em Maa geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S DEF:n book DEF:DAT:m man send:PART
 I sent the man the book yesterday.
- e. *Ich han em s geschter geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:DAT PERS3Sn send:PART
 I sent it to him yesterday.
- f. *Ich han em geschter s Buech geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:DAT DEF:n book send:PART
- g. *Ich han em s Buech géschter geschickt.*
 PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sm:DAT DEF:n book send:PART
 I sent him the book yesterday.

6.6.3 Satellites or separable prefixes

Satellites are usually prefixes to the verb. If the verb moves to second position (due to the V2 rule), the satellite remains in its “original” position at the end of the clause. That is how satellite and verb become discontinuous.

- (126) a. *won i uuf-gstande bi*
 CONJ PERS1S up-get:PART be:1S
 when I got up
- b. *Ich bin uuf-gstande.*
 PERS1S be:1S up-get:PART
 I got up.
- c. *Ich staanen uuf.*
 PERS1S get:1S up
 I get up/I'm getting up.

won i uufgstande bi

ich [bin] uufgstande (bi)

ich [staanen] uuf(gstande) (bi)

6.6.4 Topical clauses

As shown in chap. 6.4, clauses can function as constituents, but still look like clauses. This is especially popular when the main clause doesn't do much more than expressing sentence modality. In these cases, both are merely juxtaposed.

In Swiss German, however, in another construction, the two clauses are combined without the embedding of one of them (Lötscher, 1997). Then, the second is constructed as if the main clause was its topic (maybe it is). The subject of the second follows the verb.

The border between the two clauses is here indicated by |.

- (127) a. *(S isch) schön | bisch da gsy.*
 PERS3Sn be:3S beautiful be:2S here be:PART
 It is nice you were here.

b. *Es hät mi gfröit | isch er zuen is*
 PERS3Sn have:3S PERS1S:ACC be.glad:PART be:3S PERS3Sm to PERS1PL:DAT
choo.
 come:PART

I'm glad that you came to see us.

6.5 Stranding

As opposed to common belief, stranding exists in Swiss German (cf. Fleischer, 2002). However, it is somehow obscured, and it is optional, too.

If a preposition in a sentence shall be combined with an inanimate pronoun, there are the following ways to construct a sentence:

28) a. *Da-vo wäiss i nüüt.*
 DEM:OBL-of know:1S PERS1S nothing

b. *Da de-vo wäiss i nüüt.*
 DEM:OBL DEM:OBL-of know:1S PERS1S nothing.

c. *Ich wäiss nüüt de-vo.*
 PERS1S know:1S nothing DEM:OBL-of

d. *Da wäiss i nüüt de-vo.*
 DEM:OBL know:1S PERS1S nothing DEM:OBL-of

e. *Vo dämm wäiss i nüüt.*
 of DEM:DAT:n know:1S PERS1S nothing

f. *Ich wäiss nüüt vo dämm.*
 PERS1S know:1S nothing of DEM:DAT:n

I don't know anything about that.

The sentences show that stranding is not obligatory. Most of them don't involve the feature. However, there is one stranding example: ex. (128d). The peculiarity is that the pronominal element is copied and thus occurs twice — also with the stranded preposition. This is the only difference to the way northern German would speak, whose stranding behavior is unquestioned (and who copy the pronominal element, too, if the preposition begins with a vowel):

29) a. (StG) *Da weiß ich nichts von.*
 DEM:OBL know:1S PERS1S nothing of

I don't know anything about that.

b. (StG) *Da glaub ich nicht dr-an.*
 DEM:OBL believe:1S PERS1S not DEM:OBL-on

I don't believe in it.

StG-speakers must be aware that stranding with prepositions that are part of argument structure must be distinguished from locative constructions that can be viewed in connection to the comparable prefixes.

(130) a. (StG) *Da geh ich hin.*
 there go:1S PERS1S DIR

b. **Da gaan i de-ane.*
 there go:1S PERS1S DEM:OBL-DIR

c. *Da gaan i ane.*
 there go:1S PERS1S DIR

d. *Ich gaane daa-ane.*
 PERS1S go:1S there-DIR

e. *Daa-ane gaan i.*
 there-DIR go:1S PERS1S

I'll go there.

7 Text

The following text is based on a sound recording made in the phonogramme archives of Zurich university. I thank the institution for their permission to use the recording in this booklet¹. In the text, there are some deviations from the grammar I described throughout the booklet. Remember that the *koiné* or modern Zurich German dialect as I described it in the booklet is not a “real language”, but rather an open set of possible forms. Also someone from Zurich will not obey all the rules I presented; s/he may use forms that originally stem from other dialects or Standard German. In the text, the number of loans from Standard German is relatively high, maybe due to its rather formal character.

- 131) *De Jürg Fleischer und iich sitzed i der Uufnamekabine vom Phonogrammarchyv vo der Universität Züri. De Jürg Fleischer isch jetz aktiven Assistänt am Phonogrammarchyv, iich sälber han Ändi sechzger Aafangs siebezger Jaar näbet myneren anderen Aarbet d Assistänz a dere Forschigsstel versee, und ich denk es wär jetz schön, Jürg, wänn du maal de-mit wüürdisch aafange und verzele was s Phonogrammarchyv hüüt isch.*
 DEF:m PN and PERS1S sit:PL in DEF:DAT:f recording.booth of:DEF:DAT:n phonogramm.archives of DEF:DAT:f university Zurich DEF:m PN be:3S now active:m assistant.professor at:DEF:DAT:m phonogramme.archives PERS1S self have:1S end sixty:GEN begin:GEN seventy:GEN year:PL beside POSS1S:DAT:f other:DAT:f work DEF:f position.as.assistant.professor at DEM:DAT:f research.institution hold:PART and PERS1S think:1S PERS3Sn be:COND:3S now beautiful Jürg if PERS2S once DEM:OBL-with will:COND:2S begin:INF and tell:INF what DEF:n phonogramme.archives today be:3S

Jürg Fleischer and me are sitting in the recording booth of the phonogramme archives of Zurich university. Jürg Fleischer is one of the current assistant professors at the phonogramme archives. I was an assistant professor at this institution, myself, in the end of the 60ies and begin of the 70ies, on top of my other professional activities. Jürg, it would be nice if you would start telling about the current situation of the phonogramme archives.

- 132) *Also hüüt is Phonogrammarchyv, wänn me mit dem Organisatorischen aafangt, de philosophische Fakultät yverlybt, also mir sind es Inschtituut wy zum Byschpil es düütsche oder es romaanische Seminaar, sind aber natüürlich sээр chli, also mir hundert Assistänzprozänt, wo me uf zwäi Lüüt jetz*
 well today be:3S:DEF:n phonogramme.archives if one with DEF:DAT:n organizational:DAT:n begin:3S DEF:DAT:f philosophical faculty incorporate:PART so PERS1PL be:PL IND:n research.institute like to:DEF:DAT:n example DEF:n German:n or DEF:n Romance:n seminar be:PL but of.course very small so PERS1PL have:PL a.hundred percent.of.position.as.assistant.professor REL PERS:1PL on two people now

¹In this text, StG stands for Standard German phrases.

glych uufteilt händ, nämlich uf de Thomas Gadmer und miich, und was mir inhaltlich mached, mir sind im Prinzip Dokumentationstell. Mir händ d Uufgab, vor allem Dialäkt, aber au anderi, wi me hüüt säit, Varietäten vo de vier Landesspraache in Toondokument festzhalte, und da de-zue mached mir äigeni Uufname, respektive de Thomas und iich sind jetz äigentlich di erschte Generation, wo sich es bitzeli weniger mit em Yspile vo äigenen Uufname bschäftiget, sondern mee mit em Ediere von öisen elteschten Uufname. Das isch das Projäkt, wo me im Momänt graad intensiv dr-aa sind und wo mer hoffentlich innert Bälde zumene guete Abschluss au chönt bringe, nämlich en Edition vo de Wachsplatte, also so genanti Phonogramm, wo öisem Inschtituut letschlich ä de Name ggëe händ, wo i de Jaar vo nüünzänüün bis driüüzwänz in Zämenarbet mit dem Phonogrammarchyv der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien ygspilt woorde sind. Das isch es rächtes schööns, also, wie soll me sägen, e schööni Samlig vo verschidene Uufname. Di mäischte de-vo chömed us de düütschspraachige Schwyz, es hät aber au paar Uufname dr-unter us de wälsche Schwyz, das häist also Uufname us de italiänische Schwyz und us em rëtoromaanische Berych, und daa dr-um, da hät s gwüssi wi soll me säge Raritäte, byschpilswys di rëtoromaanische Mundaart us em Samnaun, wo churz de-vor aber
 equally shared:PART have:PL viz. on DEF:m PN and PERS1S:ACC and what PERS:1PL as.regards.content make:PL PERS1PL be:PL in:DEF:DAT:n principle documentation.center PERS1PL have:PL DEF:f task before all:DAT:n dialect:PL but also other:PL like one today say:3S variety:PL of DEF:DAT:PL four national.language:PL in sound.recording:PL to:document:INF and DEM:OBL DEM:OBL-to make:PL PERS1PL own:PL recording:PL or.rather DEF:m Thomas and PERS1S be:PL now in.fact DEF:f first:f generation REL REFL a.bit less with DEF:DAT:n record:INF of own:DAT:PL recording:PL engage:3S but more with DEF:DAT:n edit:INF of POSS1PL:DAT:PL old:SUP:DAT:PL recording:PL DEM:n be:3S DEF:n project REL PERS1PL in:DAT:n moment just intensive DEM:OBL-at be:PL and REL PERS1PL hopeful inside short.time to:IND:DAT:m good:DAT:m completion also can:PL bring:INF viz. IND:f edition of DEF:DAT:PL wax.record:PL so so name:PART:PL phonogramm:PL REL POSS1PL:DAT:n institute ultimately also DEF:m name give:PART have:PL REL in DEF:DAT:PL year:PL from 1909 until twenty.three in cooperation with DEF:DAT:n phonogramme.archives DEF:GEN:f(StG) Austrian:GEN:f(StG) academy(StG) DEF:GEN:PL(StG) science:PL(StG) Vienna record:PART become:PART be:PL DEM:n be:3S IND:n quite:n beautiful:n so how shall:3S one say:INF IND:f beautiful:f collection of different:DAT:PL recording:PL DEF:PL most:PL DEM:OBL-of come:PL from DEF:DAT:f German.speaking:DAT:f Switzerland PERS:3Sn have:3S but also some recording:PL DEM:OBL-among from DEF:DAT:f Romance:DAT:f Switzerland DEM:n be.called:3S so recording:PL from DEF:DAT:f Italian:DAT:f Switzerland and from DEF:DAT:m Rhaeto.Romance:DAT:n area and DEM:OBL DEM:OBL-because.of there have:3S PERS3Sn certain:PL how shall:3S one say:INF rarity:PL for.example DEF:f Rhaeto.Romance:f dialect from DEF:DAT:n Samnaun REL short DEM:OBL-before but

würki uusstorben isch. Also hütt redt me in Samnaun ja nume no e really die.out:PART be:3S so today speak:3S one in Samnaun ABTP only yet IND:f bairisch Mundart, und das sind also so gwüssi, wi söll me säge, Bavarian:f dialect and DEM:n be:PL thus so certain:PL how shall:3S one say:INF Müschterli, wo zäiged, das s Phonogrammarchyv zum Byschpil specimen:DIM:PL REL show:PL that DEF:n phonogramme.archives to:DEF:DAT:n example au sээр wөrtvoli Aarbet cha läischte als Dokumentaatiionsstell für Sprache also very valuable:f work can:3S provide:INF as documentation.center for language:PL und Dialäkt, wo dän irgendwän emal nümen i dere Form vorhande sind. and dialect:PL REL FUT sometime once no.longer in DEM:DAT:f form exist:PART be:PL

Well, starting with administrative matters, the phonogramme archives have become part of the faculty of arts, just like e. g. the German and the Romance departments. It is, of course, quite a small department, we have got one full position for an assistant professor; this is shared among two people, viz. Thomas Gadmer and myself. We are a documentary center. Our task is to document especially dialects or other, as we call them nowadays, varieties of the four national languages in recordings. Therefore, we make recordings ourselves. To be honest, Thomas and me are the first generation that is less busy producing new recordings, but rather editing the oldest recordings we have got. This is the project we are currently deeply involved in. We hope to be able to accomplish this task soon with good results, i. e. with an edition of the wax records, the so-called phonogrammes, which originally dubbed our institution, and which were recorded in the years 1909–1923 in collaboration with the Austrian Academy of Science and Arts, Vienna. That is a very nice collection of different recordings, most of them coming from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. There are some recordings from Romance Switzerland among them, as well, including some from the Italian- und Rhaeto-Romance-speaking parts of the country. Among them, there are some curioes, like the Rhaeto-Romance dialect of Samnaun, which had really died out shortly before (sic!) — nowadays, they speak a Bavarian dialect. Those are some examples to show that the phonogramme archives can do a valuable job as a documentation center for languages and dialects that are facing extinction.

(133) Won iich Ände vo de sächzger Jaar das Archyv als when PERS1S end of DEF:DAT:PL sixty:GEN:PL year:PL DEF:n archives as Assistänt ha müese zügle, vom Stockerguet a de assistant.professor have:1S must:INF move:INF from:DEF:DAT:n Stockergut at DEF:DAT:f Künschtlergass i de Nöibou da usse a de Freie Straass, daa Künschtlergasse in DEF:m new.building there outside at DEF:DAT:f Freie Strasse then han ich natüürlich au die Wachsplatte müese zügle, und dy have:1S PERS1S of.course also DEM:PL wax.record:PL must:INF move:INF and DEM:PL sind doozmaal zum Täl verschimmet gsy, und es hät no be:PL at.that.time to:DEF:DAT:m part get.moldy:PART be:PART and PERS3Sn have:3S yet alti Phonograaphe ghaa und me hät gsäit me chöni villiicht old:PL phonograph:PL have:PART and one have:3S say:PART one can:SUBJ:3S perhaps die Platte emaal uf denen alte Phonograaphe abspile. Iich DEM:PL record:PL once on DEM:DAT:PL old:DAT:PL phonograph:PL play:INF PERS1S ha s nie gwaaget, iich ha s nie gschafft, und have:1S PERS3Sn never dare:PART PERS1S have:1S PERS3Sn never accomplish:PART and mir sind der Mäinig gsy, die Uufname seiged verloore. PERS1PL be:PL DEF:GEN:f opinion be:PART DEM:PL recording:PL be:SUBJ:PL lose:PART

Jetzt sind die dank ene moderne tächnische Bearbäitig now be:PL DEM:PL thanks.to IND:DAT:f modern:DAT:f technical:DAT:f treatment am Phonogrammarchyv z Wien, sind die wider höörbaar gmacht at:DEF:DAT:n phonogramme.archives in Vienna be:PL DEM:PL again audible make:PART woorden. Wie isch dän d Toonqualität vo denen Uufname? become:PART how be:3S then DEF:f sound.quality of DEM:DAT:PL recording:PL

When I was an assistant professor at the archives in the end of the 60ies, I had to move the archives from the Stockergut in the Künstlergasse to the new building in the Freie Strasse; then, I had to move the wax records as well. They were partly moldy, and there were old phonographs, and we said we could perhaps play the records on the old phonographs. I never dared to, I never did it, and our opinion was that these recordings were lost. Now, thanks to a modern technical treatment at the phonogramme archives in Vienna, the recordings have been made audible again. How is the quality of the sound of these recordings?

(134) Also die cha me vilicht mit äim Adjektyv beschrybe: S isch well DEM:PL can:3S one perhaps with one:DAT:n adjective describe:INF PERS3Sn be:3S berauschend im Sinn vo, das es sээр vil Hintergrundgrüüsch noisy in:DEF:DAT:m sense of that PERS3Sn very a.lot background.noise hät. Aber es isch doch soo, das me no öppis verstaat, und me have:3S but PERS3Sn be:3S ABTP so that one yet something understand:3S and one mues sich das äifach vorstele: Das sind Uufname, die händ must:3S REFL DEM:n simply imagine:INF DEM:n be:PL recording:PL DEM:PL have:PL zum Täl über nüünzg Jaar uf em Buggel und wüürklich sind us to:DEF:DAT:m part over ninety year:PL on DEF:DAT:m hunch and really be:PL from der Aafangszyt vo de Tächnig vo de Toonuufname, also DEF:DAT:f starting.time of DEF:DAT:f technics of DEF:DAT:PL sound.recording:PL thus das isch vo dem hër scho e chlyneri Sënsatioon, und mir PERS3Sn be:3S of DEM:DAT:n away already IND:f small:COMP:f sensation and PERS1PL händ d Beobchtig gmacht, das es e paar Uufname git, wo have:PL DEF:f observation make:PART that PERS3Sn IND:f some recording:PL give:3S REL wüürklich sээр gueter Qualität, also, wo men au cha nach really very good:GEN:f quality thus REL one also can:3S according.to hüütige Maasstäab relatyv gnau phonetischi Transkriptioone mache, today's:DAT:PL measurement:PL relative precise:PL phonetical:PL transcription:PL make:INF und de-näbet git s ander, daa isch s äigentliche and DEM:OBL-aside give:3S PERS3Sn other:PL there be:3S DEF:n actual:n Sprachsignal wüürklich eso schwach, das me mues froo sy wänn me no cha linguistic.signal really so weak that one must:3S glad be:INF if one yet can:3S navolzie, was überhaupt gretd woorden isch. Also d Qualität isch retrace:INF what as.a.whole speak:PART become:PART be:3S thus DEF:f quality be:3S au sээр unterschiedlich, und mir händ d Beobchtig gmacht, das also very different and PERS1PL have:PL DEF:f observation make:PART that äigentlich di alerelteschten Uufname, also us em Jaar nüünzänüün in.fact DEF:PL very.old:SUP:PL recording:PL thus from DEF:DAT:n year 1909 und nüünzää, das die fascht besser sind als die, wo dän spöötter and 1910 that DEM:PL almost better be:PL than DEM:PL REL then late:COMP ygschpilt woorde sind. Mir nämend aa, das des äinersyts record:PART become:PART be:PL PERS1PL presume:PL SAT that DEM:n on.the.one.hand

daa de-mit z tue hät, das me am Aafang äigetlich d
 DEM:OBL DEM:OBL-with to do:INF have:3S that one at:DEF:DAT:m begin ABTP DEF:PL
Uufname nume stationäär irgendwo z Züri gmacht hät und nachher eener
 recording:PL only stationary somewhere in Zurich make:PART have:3S and later rather
Exkursioone gmacht hät, wo me de Phonograaph dän au transportiert
 excursion:PL make:PART have:3S REL one DEF:m phonograph then also transport:PART
hät, und daa de-mit sind dänn di iüssere Bedingige vilicht
 have:3S and DEM:OBL DEM:OBL-with be:PL then DEF:PL external:PL condition:PL perhaps
e chli schlächter woorde, andersys hanget s au
 a.little.bit worse become:PART on.the.other.hand be.connected:3S PERS3Sn also
äifach mit em Chrieg zäme: Wäret em erschte Wältchrieg hät
 simply with DEF:DAT:m war SAT during DEF:DAT:m first:DAT:m world.war have:3S
me nume no Wachs von ere schlächtere Qualität überchoo, und es mag
 one only yet wax of IND:DAT:f worse:DAT:f quality get:PART and PERS3Sn may:3S
sy das das au de-mit z tue hät, das dän di spööteren
 be:INF that DEM:n also DEM:OBL-with to do:INF have:3S that then DEF:PL late:COMP:PL
Uufname e chli schlächteri Qualität uufwysed.
 recording:PL a.bit worse:f quality show:PL

Well, we can sum it up in one word, perhaps, they are noisy (word play in Swiss German). That is to say there is a lot of background noise, but still you understand something. Just imagine that the recordings are partly over ninety years old, they are really from the starting time of technical sound recording. So, it is kind of a sensation. We have made the observation that some of the recordings are of a very good quality, so you can make very precise phonetical transcriptions, even for today's standards. On the other hand, some recordings are of such a weak quality that it is difficult to retrace the subject of the talks. So, quality is really different in the recordings. We have made the observation that the very first recordings, from the years 1909–1910, almost tend to be better than those that were recorded later. We assume that this is due to the fact that the first recordings were made on a steady place somewhere in Zurich, whereas later they made excursions, transported the phonograph, so that the external conditions became worse. Besides, it could be connected to the First World War. During the war, wax of a worse quality was only available, and maybe it is due to this that later recordings were worse.

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