

Language Contact at the Market – Patterns and routines in multilingual encounters at an urban street market in Berlin


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The Maybachufer Market

- Vibrant local outdoor market in multi-ethnic Berlin-Neukölln selling groceries, street food, household items, jewellery,...
- Dominant languages: German, Turkish, English; + a wealth of additional languages and varieties

Empirical Basis



Spontaneous language data from audio/video recordings at four different stalls (82h)



Sociolinguistic field notes, participant observations



Interviews/discussions with sellers & customers

Findings

- Recurring innovative structures/patterns at different linguistic levels, rather than perceived linguistic 'chaos'
- Developments pick up intra- and interlinguistic tendencies

References: Schwinn, Horst (2012). Leckerer Kuchen oder leckerer Schnitzchen? Zur unflektierten Verwendung eines attributiv gebrauchten Adjektivs. In *Grammatische Stolpersteine digital. Festschrift für Bruno Strecker zum 65. Geburtstag*, Marek Konopka & Roman Schneider (Hgg.), 55–64. Mannheim: Inst. für Dt. Sprache. / Wiese, Heike & Kathleen Schumann (2020): *NP variation in a highly diverse setting: evidence from a multilingual Berlin street market*. Talk given in the lecture series of the DeMiNeS (Deutsch-Mittelmeerisches Netzwerk Sprachwissenschaft), Aristotle University of Thessaloniky.

Language contact at an urban street market leads to variation in grammatical and social interactional structures:

The emerging innovative patterns in (morpho)syntax, identity construction and code-switching prove highly systematic

Frische Brot, lecker Brot, taze Brot!

Bittschön Madame!

Die Material sehr schön!

Gel Abila, gel!
Angebot, Angebot, Angebot! **Almanya-**Ware on Euro!

Adjective Inflection: 3 innovative inflection patterns

a) N + uninfl. Adj.	b) Uninfl. Adj. + N	c) Default –e
<i>Brokkoli billig</i>	<i>lecker Brot</i>	<i>frische Brot</i>
→ Restricted to market crying	→ Restricted to (non-) canonical bare NPs	→ Independent of gramm. context; 86% in bare NPs
→ Coordination structure? (Wiese & Schumann 2020)	→ No nominal bracket → no agreement? (cf. Schwinn 2012)	→ Choice of least specific suffix as default
→ Similar patterns in other contexts of German		

Copula omission

Copula *sein* 'be' can be omitted in **predicational copular sentences** (in contrast to Standard German)

	dropped	overt
predicational: <i>Wie teuer diese Pfanne?</i> (n=72) 'How expensive [is] this pan?' <i>Ware nicht da.</i> 'Goods [are] not there.'	81%	19%
specificational: <i>Das ist frische Blätterteig.</i> (n=41) 'This is fresh puff pastry.'	7%	93%

Forms of address

- Addressing in different languages: *Abla* (Tur. 'elder sister'), *Madame*, *Habibi* (Ar. 'my dear'), *junge Dame* (Ger. 'young lady'), *Schwester* (Ger. 'sister')
- New and non-canonical forms
- Chosen according to social identity/ethnic belonging, presumed through appearance, clothing, social and linguistic behaviours
- Fixed and fluid categorisations (i.e., larger sociological categories, locally emerged identities and context-specific interactional roles)
- Used often regardless of the respective language of communication

Code-Switching

<h3>Commercial motivation</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Switching to a language according to how the addressee's identity is constructed → Use of specific languages or multilingual expressions according to language attitudes 	<h3>Structural peculiarities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Concatenated expressions from different languages → Use of solid phrases without knowing the meaning of single elements involved → Expressions often restricted to linguistic (market) routines, e.g. greetings, numbers, terms of address
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