Linguistic variability in highly diverse urban settings: Anything goes?

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SFB 1287 Limits of Variability in Language

Setting

Popular, bi-weekly street market, Berlin-Neukölln

Visitors: - local residents (≈46% migration background)
- Berliners from other boroughs
- tourists from all over the world

Sellers: - Berlin-based
- mostly multilingual, some 1st generation immigrants

Languages
- 49 languages spoken (at least)
- German and English = lingua franca
- most frequent: German, Arabic, Turkish, English

Data

Audio/video recordings
- 4 different stalls, 82 hours

Supplemented by
- detailed **speaker information** for sellers
- **pre-intervies** with sellers
- observations from **ethnographic study** (cf. İrem Duman)
- sociolinguistic **field notes**
- **discussion groups** with sellers
- **mini interviews** with ≈200 customers

Additional data
- **experimental studies** (mono- & bilingual speakers)
- comparison with further **corpora**

Superdiversity **Linguistic repertoires**
Parallel grammars **de Switching**
Jargon **Metrolingualism**
Polylanguaging **Coactivation**

Market at Maybachufer, Berlin-Neukölln

Recurring patterns

Linguistic variation

Gender/Case marking

*is **schlechte** Wetter*
is   bad   weather
'It's bad weather.'

*Hast du **eine gute** Glück gehabt.*
have your a   good luck had
'You were very lucky!'

Optionality of copula

Diese Essen umsonst.
this   food   free
'This meal is for free.'

Nur diese mit Käse gefüllt.
only those with cheese filled
'Only those are stuffed with cheese.'

Optionality of determiners

Ja, ist Thermohose.
yes is thermal.pants
'Yes, these are thermal pants.'

Soll ich das in Tüte packen lieber?
shall I this in bag pack   rather
'Shall I wrap this up for you?'

Wenn passt nicht, dann können Sie umtauschen.
if   fits not   then can   you exchange
'If (it) doesn't fit you can exchange (it).'

Classifiers

ein Euro zwanzig Stück
one euro twenty CL

bi tane Tüte
one CL   bag

[Turkish: underlined]
[Arabic: bold]

Code switching

Frische Brot, lecker Brot, taze Brot!
fresh   bread yummy bread fresh bread

Real-Pfanne, kullu ʻalā gleiche Preis!
Real-pan   all   on   same   price
'Pan from "Real", all at one price!'

A: *Nasılsın?*
'How are you?'

B: *Al-ḥamdu li-llāh und dir?*
'Praise be to Allah, and you?'

Cardinal constructions

- classifiers (CL): frequent use of *Stück* (Ger.) and *tane* (Tu.), lit. 'piece'

PROD-KIND	[PRICE]	< >	[QUANTITY]	PROD-KIND
	NUMBER (CURRENCY)		NUMBER (UNIT)	
	ein Euro		*(ein) Stück*	
	fünf Stück		*dreinzwanzig Euro*	
Brokkoli	*zwei Stück*		*eins fünfzig*	
	zwei Stück		*eins fünfzig*	*Brokkoli*
Mango	*Schale*		*ein (Euro)*	
	Kiste		*drei (Euro)*	*Mango*
	zwei Schale		*drei (Euro)*	*Cherimoya*

Deflection

- non-canonical adjectival inflection: default morpheme schwa (or no inflectional morpheme at all):

bis nächste Mal;   das ist frische Blätterteig;   sehr gut Preis
until next   time   this is fresh   puff.pastry   very good price

Forms of address towards customers (cf. İrem Duman)

- are chosen according to constructed ethnicity:
  - Turkish: *teyze* 'aunt', *abi* 'brother', *abla*:

Abla, acht Euro Pfanne
sister eight euro pan

  - Arabic: *Madame*: *Pyjama acht Euro, **Madame***
pyjama eight euro madam

  - German: *junge Dame* 'young lady', *Madame*

Code switching: serves commercial purposes (cf. Serkan Yüksel)

Modeling

Urban market's jargon as an integrative linguistic practice
- with access to a spatially determined but principally open range of linguistic resources
- liberal use of individual *ad hoc* solutions
- guided by local customs of language choice and dominance
- centering around a shared core of recurring patterns
  (cf. Wiese, to appear)

Probabilistic models of coactivation?
- blended representations of linguistic items from different languages
- simultaneous, gradient coactivation of multiple mental representations
  (cf. Goldrick, Putnam & Schwarz 2016)

References

Goldrick, Matthew, **Putnam**, Michael, & **Schwarz**, Lara. 2016. Coactivation in bilingual grammars: A computational account of code mixing. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 19. 857-876.

Wiese, Heike. To appear. Contact in the city. In Raymond Hickey (ed.), *Handbook of Language Contact.* New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

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