Grammatical systems without language borders

Lessons from free-range language

Heike Wiese

Conceptual Foundations of Language Science

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1 By way of introduction

I have always understood myself as coming from a monolingual background, and I used to believe I grew up in a linguistically more or less homogeneous environment. – Northeim, the place where I spent most of my childhood and adolescence, is a small town in a rural area of Lower Saxony, South of Hanover, with not much industry and accordingly very little labour immigration. However, I later came to realise that in fact I grew up in the midst of linguistic diversity. For one, there was intense language contact between High German and Low German. At the time I grew up in Northeim, standard German, which is a High German variety, already dominated most of public life and was also the language of school. However, Low German, the earlier regional language, was still spoken regularly by the older generation (although it was rapidly receding, and my locally born friends had mostly only a passive knowledge of it from listening to their grandparents).

In addition to this contact-linguistic dynamics between High and Low German, this was a time of intense dialect contact and dialect levelling in the area through an intake of German dialects from the East. I was born in 1966, just a bit over 20 years after the end of WW2, and Northeim was close to the inner-German border. As a result, a substantial proportion of the population were refugees from such areas as East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia. This even included an entire village whose inhabitants had come from Silesia together. In addition, there were refugees from the GDR who had just made it across the border before the 'iron curtain' came up, including both my mother and my father, who had each come to West Germany in the 1950s as teenagers with their parents, from Thuringia and East Berlin, respectively.

This made for a dynamic linguistic mixture, grounded in a population with diverse linguistic backgrounds and repertoires. However, this was not something that was openly acknowledged, and we all behaved as if we spoke just one and the same variety of one language, German, reflecting the strong monoglossic ideologies dominating the society.

Today I live in Berlin, in a neighbourhood that is known for its linguistic diversity, Kreuzberg, and I have a multilingual family with a British husband and with two daughters who grew up with English and German, plus a smattering

of Turkish from their babysitter and their friends (I will use a few examples of this in this book). While I am well aware of the rich linguistic diversity of my current life in Berlin, it is only recently that I realised that my environment in small town Lower Saxony was linguistically diverse as well.

This change of perspective in my own biography somehow parallels that in our field, in particular when it comes to structural linguistics and grammatical analysis, which is where I come from – an area where we have typically been targeting homogeneous speech communities and monolingual speakers. The roots of this can already be found in such earlier structuralist idealisations as Saussure's focus on one-to-one correlations of language and place as the "forme idéale" (de Saussure 1916: Part 4, Ch. 2, §1) or the Chomskian "ideal speaker-listener" (Chomsky 1965). Today, this is changing, with more and more empirical approaches in structural linguistics that also take into account linguistic diversity and variability.

However, language in multilingual contexts is often still confined to specialised domains of contact linguistics. Furthermore, there is hardly any meaningful interaction of structural approaches with current sociolinguistic models of language that take linguistic diversity and multilingual settings as their point of departure.[1] Findings from this area have little impact on structural models, and vice versa.

This separation of the two research lines has led to results that look irreconcilable on first sight. Core insights from grammatical and sociolinguistic analysis support two perspectives on language that seem to be fundamentally opposed to each other: structural findings point to linguistic coherence and grammatical systems, while sociolinguistic findings indicate linguistic fluidity and reveal languages and their boundaries as ideological constructions. How can they both be right? We seem to be faced here with some kind of 'quantum linguistics' paradox (to borrow some STEM prestige from another discipline) that calls for a closer look, and, if possible, a resolution within an account that can capture both insights. In this book, I hope to convince you that this can and should be done, and that both sides can benefit from closing this gap.

This gap is something that has been bothering me for a while, since I kind of have a foot in both fields, sociolinguistics and grammatical analysis. My initial background is in formal linguistic architecture and the syntax-semantics interface. Living in Berlin-Kreuzberg, I then got interested in a way of speaking I heard young people use in the street that seemed to display some interesting

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[1]Earlier examples for the benefits of integrating sociolinguistic and structural perspectives come from approaches to syntactic variation as sociolinguistic markers that paid attention to vernaculars and microvariation (see, e.g., contributions in Cornips & Corrigan eds. 2005).

grammatical patterns. I published some articles on this and summarised central findings in a book (Wiese 2012b). To account for the grammatical characteristics I had observed, I described this way of speaking as a new German dialect that I called "Kiezdeutsch" '((neighbour-)hood German'), using a term that some of the adolescents I worked with had suggested in an interview. The book was written in German and aimed at a broader, non-specialist audience. As such, it quickly gained a lot of interest and was taken up in national (and later also international) media, sparkling a public debate that lasted over months. In the context of this debate, I experienced something many researchers whose work went public know, namely not only positive feedback, but also personal attacks and – as is a common experience for women who are in the public eye – a barrage of verbal insults and even some violent threats (see Rampton ed. 2014).

As disconcerting as this was at first, it had some positive consequences for me, since it opened my eyes for sociolinguistics: on closer examination, the emails and online comments on Kiezdeutsch made for interesting data on language attitudes and ideologies,[2] and something I analysed as "proxy racism", a projection of racist marginalisation onto the linguistic plane (Wiese 2015).[3]

The interesting grammatical and sociolinguistic patterns I found through my work on Kiezdeutsch led to my current research focus, which is on language in urban diversity, and it broadened my disciplinary outlook, with my work today targeting both grammatical and sociolinguistic domains. With the approach I develop in this book, I hope to further the integration of these fields, as mentioned above, by reconciling core insights on linguistic structure on the one hand and on linguistic fluidity on the other hand.

In the following, first chapter (Chapter 2), I discuss the paradox we seem to be facing: named languages and their boundaries aren't real (they are just ideological constructions), but at the same time they can be associated with grammatical systematicity and reflect actual linguistic structure. In order to solve this, I suggest a linguistic architecture that allows us to acknowledge grammatical systems without committing ourselves to language borders, based on a concept of communicative situations, short "com-sits" (I promise that this will be the only abbreviation you will need in this book!). The second chapter (Chapter 3) introduces the concept of "free-range language" for settings of linguistic diversity that are particularly challenging for assumptions of bound grammatical systems, and describes four central examples for such settings. The next three chapters

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[2]The data is available through an open-access corpus, KiDKo/E, a subcorpus of the Kiezdeutsch Corpus, www.kiezdeutschkorpus.de.

[3]Cf also Dirim's (2010) analysis of "(neo-)linguicism" in the public debate on multingualism in Germany.

(Chapter 4–Chapter 6) discuss three relevant lessons we can learn from such settings: (I) communicative situations support linguistic differentiation; (II) such differentiation provides the basis for grammar, hence grammatical systematicity is grounded in communicative situations, rather than determined by the boundaries of named "languages"; and (III) languages come in as optional social indices that can signal belonging. The final chapter (Chapter 7) summarises the results and integrates the findings on communicative situations, grammatical systems, and languages.

2 A quantum-linguistics paradox – and its solution

2.1 Fluid registers and grammatical systems

There is a small café in my neighbourhood, Berlin-Kreuzberg, where I sometimes have a glass of tea in the morning. The other day, I saw the following sign there:

English translation:
Breakfast

Toast
Salad
Simit

Figure 2.1: Breakfast offer in a small Kreuzberg café

At first sight, this sign is unremarkable. It lists, in German, the food on offer for breakfast, and the spelling is in accordance with standard orthography – except, that is, for <Tost>: In standard German orthography, this would be <Toast>, a spelling that reflects the English origin of this word. In German, a "Toast" is a specific kind of bread, namely white bread of usually rectangular shape that is eaten toasted. The German pronunciation is [tʰoːst], with a monophthong [o], which means that the <oa> spelling is unusual, marking it as a loanword: following the general rules of phoneme-grapheme correspondence in German, the spelling should be <Tost> (or, alternatively, <Tohst>, with an <h> to mark vowel length).

So, the spelling on the sign could indicate a further integration into German; this would then reflect an internal motivation that also produced, e.g., the spelling <Keks> from initial English <cakes>.

Note, though, that *toast* has also been borrowed into Turkish, and in Turkish the spelling is <tost> already, given the even stronger phonemic orthography of Turkish. This provides us with an alternative explanation. Kreuzberg is a multilingual neighbourhood where Turkish is a salient heritage language, and this café serves a lot of Turkish-German customers and offers a range of Turkish specialities, including the *Simit* (a Turkish sesame ring) mentioned at the bottom of the sign. So, using the Turkish spelling could be flagging a Turkish-German identity, e.g., for marketing reasons.

In this case, the sign could be interpreted as integrating elements from German, namely *Frühstück* and *Salat*, and from Turkish, namely *Tost*, plus one that works in both, namely *Simit*, which has the same spelling in Turkish and (as a Turkish loanword) in German.

So, with <Tost>, we see a noncanonical spelling that could be internally motivated, or it could reflect crosslinguistic mixing. Or it could be both, with two sources of support reinforcing each other. This is what makes a setting like that of the café interesting from the point of view of language variation and linguistic architecture. In such everyday settings, there is less normative pressure from "standard" language and orthography, which means that speakers[1] can feel freer to follow their own linguistic style and their sense of what fits best in a certain communicative situation, and this also includes making use of linguistic resources in a way that transcends conventional language borders. This suggests integrated speaker repertoires based on "multi-competence" (Cook 2016), that is, a compound system encompassing and blending elements from different sources.

The kind of language use we observe in urban cafés, markets, inner-city neighbourhoods and similar settings challenges assumptions of homogeneous speech communities and monolingualism, and along those lines, the idea of separate fixed codes. In this spirit, influential sociolinguistic approaches reject the notion of distinct "languages" and linguistic borders, as illustrated by the following quotes [my emphasis, H.W.], characteristic for what Pennycook (2016) called "the trans-super-poly-metro movement":

> A serious consideration of the ways in which ideas about language have
> been constructed and invented forces us to consider anew not only emer-

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[1]For the sake of brevity, I use the term "speaker" here to refer to language users in general, including sign language users, but also writers.

gent language mixes but the terms in which we think about them. [...] neologisms such as *translanguaging*, *polylanguaging* and *metrolingualism* have been used to **take us beyond the assumed frameworks of bounded languages** (Pennycook 2018: 3)

we have to **abandon the traditional notion of separately structured languages** (Canagarajah 2018: 34)

we **challenge** one of the most widely held views of language as a social, human phenomenon, namely **that 'language' can be separated into different 'languages'**, such as 'Russian', 'Latin', and 'Greenlandic' (Jørgensen et al. 2011: 22)

Translanguaging [...] **challenges the conventional understanding of language boundaries between the culturally and politically labelled languages** (e.g. English, Chinese). (Li Wei 2016: 3f)

There is now a substantial body of work on ideologies of language that **denaturalizes the idea that there are distinct languages**, and that a proper language is bounded, pure and composed of structured sounds, grammar and vocabulary [...]. **Named languages – 'English', 'German', 'Bengali' – are ideological constructions** (Blommaert & Rampton 2011: 3–4)

Note that the last statement goes a step further than rejecting traditional linguistic boundaries: it also challenges the assumption that a language is "composed of structured sounds, grammar and vocabulary". As someone who is interested in grammatical analysis, I found this somewhat disconcerting, since it seems to threaten the foundations of analysing language structure and linguistic systems. In fact, Pennycook (2010: 114), in line with such challenges, commends us to "move away from the attempts to capture language as a system".[2]

Meanwhile, in a different part of the discipline it is business as usual. The field that would be most affected by this, namely grammatical analysis including theoretical syntax, morphology, semantics, and phonology, has carried on seemingly untouched by such challenges. The field has certainly moved on from assumptions of monolingualism and homogeneity implicit in such earlier structuralist

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[2]An ontological perspective on this difference is developed in Demuro & Gurney (2021) who argue that different linguistic approaches (re-)create different realities, involving languages as objects (in line with traditional structural approaches) vs. practices and assemblages (in line with current sociolinguistic approaches to languaging and linguistic repertoires).

idealisations as the "ideal speaker-listener" that I mentioned in the introduction. Yet, this does not mean that bound languages as a basis of analysis have been reconsidered in any way. The general attitude seems to be to ignore such contestations and to happily continue targeting structural patterns within distinct linguistic systems.

This holds not only for grammatical research on individual languages, but can also be found in language contact research. In that domain, structural linguistic findings support assumptions of separate varieties and languages, for instance when Page & Putnam (2020: 2) conclude that "Indian English is a distinct variety of English", or when MacWhinney (2019: 8) characterises some linguistic effects in heritage speakers as an "intrusion of an L2 form when speaking L1".

So, why have accounts of linguistic fluidity and multi-competence and contestations of bound languages had little or no impact beyond what in social media would be called "our own bubble"? I think there are two major reasons for this. One is the sociology of linguistics as a discipline – people tend not to talk enough to each other across subfields, and if results in another field challenge the very foundations of your work, it might be easier to just dismiss them than to engage with them seriously.

The second reason, though, is probably grounded in linguistic evidence, and is something we should actually take into acount in sociolinguistics. This is the fact that grammatical results do, after all, point to internal organisation and coherence, and to the workings and interaction of distinct linguistic systems. Hence, from this perspective, there seems to be little to compel us to do away with linguistic systems. This suggests that such an engagement across subdisciplines could be fruitful, and that it should actually cut both ways.

As a simple example, take the grammatical integration of the word *Computer* into German (spelled with a capital <C> since all nouns are capitalised in standard German orthography). Traditionally, we would say that this is a loanword in German that has been borrowed from English. However, in order to avoid committing ourselves to bound languages and linguistic systems at present, let us phrase this a bit more neutrally. In this vein, we can say that this is a word that is commonly used in the context of elements societally marked as "German" but is comparably new in this context. To mark its source, we can add that the word was already used in the context of elements societally marked as "English" before that, and that its uptake in the new, "German" context is based on that earlier, "English" use.

Now, what has happened in this new context is that the noun's grammatical behaviour has changed:

- The pronunciation is something like [kɔmˈpjuːtɐ], with a different vowel in the first syllable and a vocalised [r] in the last coda (I marked those in **bold**).

- It has gained gender: it is "**der** Computer" (masculine) in German.

- It uses a zero allomorph to mark plural: "the computers" translates as "die Computer", with no overt ending on the noun, a common choice for nouns ending in *-er* in German (let us not get into German plural marking, though – a domain notorious for its abundance of irregular forms and exceptional patterns ...).

- It inflects for case. For instance, its dative plural form is "den Computer**n**".

It will come as no big surprise when I tell you that this kind of behaviour is in accordance with what we see in other elements societally marked as "German". So, what happens when we take an element from one context to another is that its grammar changes to fit the new context.

This, then, suggests two different grammatical systems corresponding to what is commonly known as "English" and "German": when *computer* enters German, it changes in a way that points to the workings of a system that absorbs new elements and brings them in line. – For the Star Trek fans among us, a collective comes to mind that integrates newcomers along the lines of "You will get grammatically assimilated. We will add your linguistic distinctiveness to our own."

This "Borg"-like tendency for assimilation is not restricted to German, of course, but happens generally in such cases, and as Poplack (2018) argues, this even holds for nonce borrowings, that is, instances of spontaneous lexical transfer by individual speakers.

Such integration, then, illustrates the workings of grammatical systems. It provides evidence for the linguistic reality of systematicity and coherence within traditional "language" boundaries. At the same time, though, as discussed above, sociolinguistic findings provide evidence for linguistic practices that systematically transcend such boundaries.

This looks like we are left with two competing and equally justified perspectives. In fact, Blommaert & Rampton (2011), while reminding us that "[n]amed languages – 'English', 'German', 'Bengali' – are ideological constructions", speak, in the very same paper, of a "mix of Chinese, Korean and English" and of "translations from Chinese to English". The first point challenges named languages, but the next two quotes then seem to reintroduce them, since a mix of elements from different named languages, and translations from one to the other do, after all,

imply distinct named languages. While this seems contradictory at first, I think that it actually makes a lot of sense, because named languages and their boundaries are both: ideological constructions and a reflection of actual structure.

This is what I characterised as something like a "quantum-linguistics" paradox above. We are presented with two perspectives that seem to be impossible to reconcile, yet are equally supported by linguistic evidence.

2.2 Reconciliation via "com-sits"

How can we solve this paradox, then? How do we bridge the gap between sociolinguistic and grammar-theoretical insights into language? In what follows, I am going to reconcile the two perspectives by integrating findings on linguistic multi-competence with those on grammatical structure and coherence. As mentioned in the Introduction, an important element of my account is the notion of communicative situations, which I abbreviate as "com-sits", as an intuitive shorthand for the kind of concept spelled out here.

As the foundation for this, I understand communication as a social activity through which meaning is (co-)constructed and which typically centers around language production and perception. This definition is broadly compatible with Gumperz' (1981) definition of "communicating as the outcome of exchanges involving more than one participant" and of communicative competence as "the knowledge of linguistic and related communicative conventions that speakers must have to initiate and sustain conversational involvement". Like Gumperz', our definition captures the interactive aspect of communication, by marking it as a "social activity". It goes beyond Gumperz' definition by further characterising this activity as meaningful, highlighting the construction and exchange of meaning that is central to communication. The construction of meaning in communication is a shared activity between interlocutors, and such "meaning" covers not only propositional meaning (what contents do interlocutors exchange?), but also social meaning (what do they communicate about themselves and their relationship?).

The specification that this is centered around language production and perception is not really necessary, since communication can also be nonlinguistic. However, for our purposes, this specification is useful, since we intend to target language use. Note, though, that the competence necessary for linguistic communication does not only relate to grammatical knowledge, but crucially also to knowing which linguistic options are appropriate in an encounter (see also Ruuska 2019). This is an aspect that is central to capture the different choices speakers make in different com-sits.

Based on our definition of communication as a specific kind of social activity, we can now define com-sits as the setting of this activity:

> **Definition**
>
> A *com-sit* ("communicative situation") is the setting of communication, understood as a social activity, typically centered around language production and perception, through which meaning is (co-)constructed.

Following Piñango (2019), we can understand a situation as a conceptual representation of a state or event that is organised algebraically. This means that a com-sit is always about speakers' representations of what is going on in a communication, that is, about how they perceive it and make sense of it (see also Malinowski 1923, Firth 1957, Halliday 1978 on the "context of situation"). Different com-sits are then distinguished by their different characteristics as perceived by speakers. This can be broadly understood as involving everything that is socially relevant for a given communication, including such aspects as audience or topic (see Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985). Hence, a com-sit is dynamic in conversation, rather than fixed. This is not primarily about the physical aspects of a setting, but about their social and cultural relevance: a situation as it is socially perceived and evaluated. If we think of Goffman's (1964: 135) definition of a social situation as an "environment of mutual monitoring possibilities" that support encounters with "mutual openness to all manner of communication", we can understand com-sits as a subset of such encounters or as a specific perspective on them: com-sits are special in that they provide a view on the actual communication in a social situation.

Com-sits will be an important element of our account. In Chapter 4, I will discuss them in more detail, when I show that they serve as a basis for the differentiation of linguistic systems, as the first lesson to be learned from free-range language. At this point, I will also discuss the relation of com-sits to registers (and I will show how they allow for a unified view on linguistic resources that are traditionally regarded as languages, dialects, and registers). The second lesson, in Chapter 5, will be that com-sits can serve as an anchor of grammatical systems, drawing on the co-occurrence of elements in such com-sits. Taken together, this means that the notion of com-sits will enable us to develop a linguistic architec-

ture that does not need bound languages as a point of departure, but can still account for grammatical structure. As the third lesson, in Chapter 6, will show, this does not mean that we do away with languages altogether: they can come in as social indices. Crucially, though, this makes them an optional add-on, rather than the foundation of grammar.

To give you an idea of where we are going, Figure 2.2 outlines the key features of the approach I am going to develop. The important point is the primacy of com-sits; we start from communicative situations as the primary component.[3] In com-sits, speakers make use of different linguistic resources, with certain linguistic elements co-occurring in certain com-sits.

socially constructed
"languages", "dialects"

social indices

coherence, systematicity

↑

co-occurence of elements

↑

Communicative situations
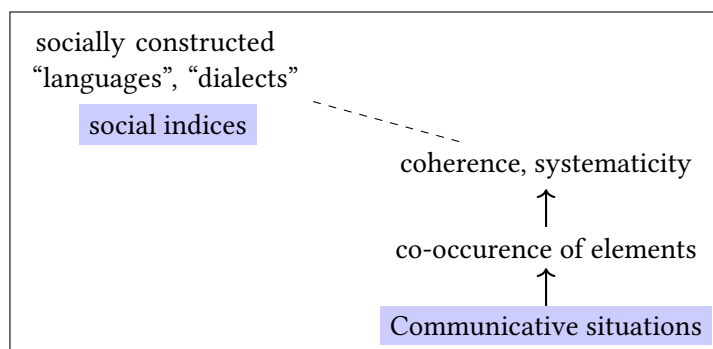
Figure 2.2: Outline of the approach

We can think of such elements as lexical entries in the sense of a Tripartite Parallel Architecture (Jackendoff 1997; 2002), that is, tuples of information from different grammatical and pragmatic levels that can be more or less complex and abstract. A simple example would be a lexical entry for a word like *tomato* that identifies, at the grammatical level, its phonological representation, its syntactic category, and its semantic contribution. A more complex and abstract example would be the representation of mass/count coercions that takes a count noun and yields a mass noun, for instance getting us from *tomato* in "There is a tomato on the kitchen counter" to *tomato* in "There is tomato in the soup.". In this case, our lexical entry would not contain a specific phonological representation, since it represents a more abstract rule and can be applied to count nouns in general (I will spell this out in more detail for the example of *chicken* in 2.3 below). Hence, in the Tripartite Parallel Architecture, lexical entries do not just represent lexical words, but also more abstract grammatical patterns.

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[3]As a shorthand, I rendered com-sits as a box in Figure 2.2, but note that they are to be understood as dynamic and processual in communication, in line with our definition above.

The co-occurrence of linguistic elements supports coherence and internal structure: elements that frequently co-occur form part of a system. Depending on the societal macro context, such systems can then be socially indexed as named languages or dialects.

As emphasised above, the last feature is optional, not compulsory: named languages, dialects, etc. are social constructions that might or might not emerge, depending on the speech community and/or the societal macro context in question. Named languages can have a social reality and impact speakers' linguistic experiences and practices,[4] but it is important to keep in mind that this is not necessarily the case in all settings. Such languages are, after all, a relatively recent invention. As Makoni & Pennycook (2006: 1) remind us, "languages were, in the most literal sense, invented, particularly as part of the Christian/colonial and nationalistic projects in different parts of the globe". A striking example is the way some Sub-Saharan African dialects and languages were manufactured by missionaries and colonial administrations (e.g., Makoni et al. 2007 on Shona). If we understand com-sits as the basis for linguistic patterns, we can capture this by leaving named languages optional and recognising them as social constructions.

2.3 An illustration

Now that I have sketched the general outline of where we are heading, let me illustrate this by spelling out some characteristics for an example that also includes cross-linguistic interactions. Let us consider the English word *chicken*. In the approach I sketched, we can account for it with the following lexical entry:

$$
\left.\begin{array}{ll}
\text{PHON:} & \text{/ˈtʃɪkɪn/} \\
\text{SYN:} & \text{N}_{\text{count}} \\
\text{SEM:} & \text{CHICKEN} \\
\text{COM-SIT} & \in E
\end{array}\right\} \textit{chicken}^{\text{E}}
$$

Figure 2.3: Entry for English *chicken*

The first three lines look more or less like what we would ordinarily see, representing the phonological, syntactic, and semantic representation of the word. PHON gives us the IPA representation, SYN the syntactic category, and SEM the meaning, with CHICKEN standing for the concept of the bird in question.

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[4]I will discuss this in more detail in §6.1 below.

This, then, is all pretty much standard. The new bits come in with the last line, the COM-SIT representation. That line supplies an additional type of information as part of the lexical entry: an identification of the relevant com-sits for this element. In our case, the com-sit is not restricted by any specific situational features, but is characterised as part of all com-sits indexed as "English" (that is what the "E" stands for). *chicken* is generally used in situations that are associated with "English" as a socially constructed named language.

This illustrates that com-sit representations can involve language indices, and for *chicken*, this is all we need, given that there is no further specialisation for this word. The language index is inherited by the lexical element as a whole, as shown by *chicken*[E] on the right, representing the lexical item as part of those elements that are indexed for "English". This might look a little bit like the language tags used in the code-switching literature (cf. the discussion in MacSwan 2017). Note, though, that in our model, these are not tags that refer to a language as an independent object. Rather, languages themselves are understood as social indices, that is, they are socially constructed in the sense of, e.g., Silverstein (2003). We will discuss the implications of languages as social indices in more detail in Chapter 6, in connection with the third lesson to be learned from free-range language.

Com-sit specifications can also involve other kinds of social meaning, such as pointing to particular interlocutors. For instance, English *beddy bye-bye* or German *Wauwau* (lit. "bow-wow", 'doggie') would both be characterised as part of com-sits involving small children. We will encounter such examples in Chapter Chapter 4, as a basis for the first lesson to be learned from free-range language.

The way I have modelled the com-sit contribution in my example fits into a Tripartite Parallel Architecture, which is close to Construction Grammar. However, the com-sit feature is not wedded to one specific kind of approach to linguistic architecture and grammatical theory, but can be implemented in others as well. For instance in HPSG, com-sits could be captured as part of the social meaning specification suggested by Asadpour et al. (2022), who integrate such specifications within a conventional implicature (CI) feature.

Note that in the representation above, at the syntactic level, *chicken* is characterised as a count noun, as in "There is a chicken / there are chickens in the yard." When you saw this, it might have occurred to you that *chicken* can also be used as a mass noun in English, as in "There is chicken in the soup." This second usage does not need to be listed in the lexical entry for *chicken*, though, since it reflects a general option, namely the possibility of mass/count coercions that I mentioned above, that is, general patterns that turn count nouns into mass nouns (or vice versa). When used as a mass noun, *chicken* undergoes a "grinder"

coercion that effects both the syntactic and the semantic level. Semantically, the concept CHICKEN gets enriched by a GRINDER function that takes an object as its input and yields a substance as its output, namely the edible parts of this object – in our case the chicken meat.[5] Since this is a general pattern, it should not be listed in the specific entry for *chicken*. Instead, we capture it by its own entry, which is more abstract than that for lexical words:

$$
\left. \begin{array}{ll} \text{SYN:} & N_{count} \rightarrow N_{mass} \\ \text{SEM:} & s \rightarrow \text{GR}(s) \end{array} \right\} [\textit{grinder coercion}]
$$

Figure 2.4: Entry for grinder coercions

This entry captures a general pattern that is not restricted to English,[6] and involves the GRINDER concept described above, represented by the function GR that takes the initial semantic representation (s) as its argument. As such, this derivation can be applied to anything that could be conceived as edible, including such unconventional examples as (1).

(1) […] a mother termite concerned over her child: Johnny is very choosey about his food. He will eat book, but he won't touch shelf. (Gleason 1965: 136)

What should go into lexical entries is a restriction when this pattern can *not* be applied because it is blocked lexically, as is the case for such English nouns as *cow* or *pig*, which have "grinder" counterparts (*beef, pork*) that are different lexical items, based on old French loanwords.

This is not all there is to *chicken*, though. What I especially like about *chicken*, and the reason why I chose this particular item, is that it can also be used in German, as a comparably recent loanword with some interesting features. Here is a photo of the menu at a diner in my neighbourhood in Berlin, where they are

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[5]What counts as edible parts – and, more generally, whether it is ethically defensible to perceive of animals in terms of foodstuff – is a cultural aspect, and the interpretation and availability of such mass-coerced nouns can accordingly differ in different sociocultural groups and settings. For a more detailed discussion and an overview of mass/count coercions and the "Universal Grinder", cf. Pelletier & Schubert (1989), Wiese (2012a).

[6]This is a slight simplification since the syntactic representation is restricted to languages with a nominal count/mass distinction like that in English: in languages with predominantly transnumeral nouns that do not require this distinction at the syntactic level, the SYN representation would be 'N → N' (see Wiese 2012a for a detailed discussion, including such typologically different languages as Persian, Turkish, or Mandarin).

offering "Chicken im Brot", that is, chicken in a sandwich (lit. 'Chicken in-the bread'):

Figure 2.5: *Chicken* as a new loanword in German

As a loanword, *Chicken* doesn't actually get "loaned" or "borrowed", of course, but more like replicated.[7] This replication involves modification: *Chicken* gets integrated into the new system, picking up local habits, so to speak. This is what we discussed for *Computer* as another English-based loanword in German, and we can visualise such an integration as in Figure 2.6 (with the English context represented at the top in purple, and the German at the bottom in green).
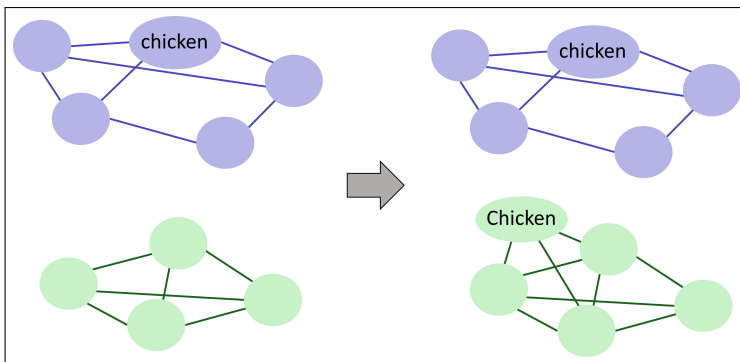
Figure 2.6: Loanword integration: *Chicken* gets copied from English to German

As can be seen in the bottom right image, German has now gained an additional element, and this element gets integrated into the new system, it becomes part of the network in this new domain. We can account for this through a lexical entry for German *Chicken* as in Figure 2.7.

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[7]That the metaphor of "borrowing" is absurd here was already pointed out by Haugen (1950). Matras (2020: Ch.6.1.) summarises the terminological discussion and suggests the term "replication".
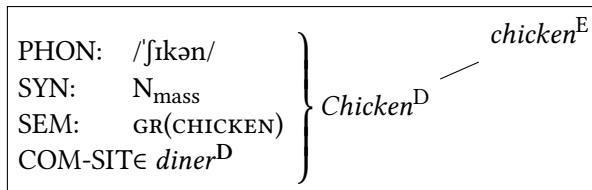
Figure 2.7: Entry for German *Chicken*

This entry is characterised as part of elements that are socially constructed as "German" (index "D"), but it still includes a link to the English source, which accounts for the fact that *Chicken* is still recognisable as a loanword from English (which distinguishes it from older English-based loans in German, for instance, *Keks*, which has lost its link to *cakes*). As you will have noticed, there are quite a few differences to the entry for English *chicken*. At the phonological level, we get a representation streamlined to the German phoneme system and syllable structure (avoidance of /tʃ/ in the onset, and vowel reduction to schwa in unstressed secondary syllables). This is what you would expect when an element enters a new system, and that was, after all, why we discussed such patterns as evidence for the reality of grammatical systematicity.

The next lines, though, cannot be motivated by grammatical restrictions of German: nothing forces nouns to be mass here, as evidenced by the large number of nouns that are not. Among them are many that regularly undergo grinder coercions similar to *chicken*, notably including also its German counterparts, namely *Huhn* or (male) *Hähnchen*.[8] This parallelism is, in fact, the relevant point here – and this is also why I gave you that longish spiel about grinder coercions earlier: we already have a lexical item in German that covers the count noun usage, and with *Chicken*, we now have a new item that is specialised for the corresponding mass usage. Hence, this is a development that is kind of similar to the borrowings from French into Middle English that resulted in English *pork, beef, mutton*, etc.

Huhn or *Hähnchen* have lexical entries that closely correspond to that for English *chicken*, where they are characterised as count nouns that refer to countable entities (viz. chickens). Like English *chicken* (and unlike present-day English *pig, cow*, etc.), they can also undergo grinder coercions through the derivation sketched in Figure 2.4.

In contrast, German *Chicken* already includes this derivation as part of its lexical entry: it refers to the result of this grinder coercion right away, and it accord-

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[8] *Hähnchen* is a (more or less lexicalised) diminutive form of *Hahn* 'cock', 'rooster'. Since nominal gender is determined by the morphological head, that is, in this case the suffix *-chen*, which is neuter, *Hähnchen* is grammatically neuter despite referring to males.

ingly is a mass noun in its lexical entry. Hence, it can be used for a substance like chicken meat offered in a sandwich, as illustrated above, but not for a countable object, i.e., not for a chicken. For the latter, we must still use the older German terms, *Huhn* or *Hähnchen*. A good illustration for this is the diner menu again: if we look at the broader picture, we see that they use *Chicken* for chicken meat in all kinds of dishes, in a sandwich, as kebab, dürüm, etc., but they refer to half and whole chickens as *Grillhähnchen* 'roasted / grilled chicken' (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8: *Chicken* as a "grinder"-specialised mass noun in German

The obligatory, lexicalised grinder enrichment of German *Chicken* goes together with a specification at the level of com-sits: the use of *Chicken* is restricted to diners, and this is captured in Figure 2.7 by characterising the COM-SIT representation as part of diner settings that are indexed for German. Thus, you will find the word used in the little diner where I took the photo, but not in fancy restaurants. (I did once spot it in a non-diner context, namely on the menu signboard in Potsdam University's mensa, but I think this rather underlines the point, given that mensa food is, regrettably, rather close to the food in diners, and not to that in fancy restaurants.[9])

The reason for this specification might be an association with US-American fast food chains in Germany, which probably represent the com-sits that served as a source for the borrowing of *Chicken* in the first place (think *chicken burger*, *chicken nuggets*, etc.). Hence, we might want to further specify the link to the English source that is included as part of the lexical entry for *Chicken* in Figure 2.7: in order to be more precise, we could add the grinder specialisation to *chicken*[E], plus a COM-SIT characterisation as "US-American fast food chain".

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[9]This said, note that such COM-SIT entries are not set in stone, but can change, reflecting the dynamic character of com-sits (see the discussion of com-sits in 2.2 above).

Such a cross-linguistic link is not only a pointer to a source of borrowing that is still active in current use. It can also be a basis for higher-order indexicality involving stereotypes of certain settings, speech communities, languages, etc. For instance, in the case of American English, these higher-order indices can associate lexical elements with such concepts as "globalisation", "urbanity", or "coolness".

What these associations are, depends on the cultural context, and this can be influenced by historical and political contingencies. A good example for this comes from a recent lexical development in Albanian. As Jusufi (2022) shows, there are a number of new loanwords from German, for instance *luft* from German *Luft* 'air', or *blicbllank* from German *blitzblank* 'spick and span', which are used systematically, but have not made it into dictionaries yet and do not underly norming or standardisation.

Now, if you were surprised by these loans, asking yourself whether Albanian didn't have words for air or cleanliness already and wondering why they would feel the need to import this from German, you would be perfectly justified, of course. The explanation is that these loan words are more specialised in Albanian than their German sources are, similar to the specialisation of German *Chicken* compared to its English source. Albanian *luft* does not refer to just any old air, but only to that in car tyres, and *blicbllank* is what you call a car polish that is shiny clean, but not, say, your kitchen table – even though in German, *Luft* is just air, and a kitchen table can be described as *blitzblank* (I wish ours could …). Hence, while in Albanian the core semantics of these elements is still AIR and SHINY CLEAN, they have gained additional meaning components. This is based on the specific com-sits in which they occur: the setting of automobile repairs.

The background for this development is that there has lately been substantial migration to Germany and back to Albania by speakers who work with automobile technology, bringing German technical terms with them. This has made German what Jusufi (2022) calls a "Lingua Tecnica", a modern lingua franca for technology (except digital technology, which is associated with English), and in particular for car-repair settings. The specific com-sits for new loans from German have supported a higher-order indexicality, with associations of "(non-digital) technology" for the language.

Such examples show that linguistically diverse settings can throw a spotlight onto the dynamics of com-sits and language indices. These kinds of settings are less subject to monoglossic constraints and will be our prime source for the three lessons on grammatical systems without language borders to be discussed in Chapter 4 through Chapter 6. Before we go there, let me briefly explain why I understand language use in such contexts as "free-range" language, and what kinds of contexts support this.

3   What is the point of "free-range" language?

3.1 What is free-range language?

Sociolinguistic perspectives on linguistic fluidity and multi-competence are drawing on linguistically and socially diverse settings. Such linguistic fluidity is particularly evident in settings that are less restricted by monolingual hegemonies and standard language ideologies. These kinds of monoglossic ideologies might dominate the societal macro context, but they will exert less of their power in some settings. As a result, what counts as appropriate language use will be more open to variation. Speakers will feel more at ease using nonstandard forms and accessing a broader range of options from their linguistic repertoires.

Take Germany as an example. At the societal macro context, we find a strong monolingual habitus (Gogolin 1994) and a monolingual bias (Kachru 1994; Cook 1997) towards German, making this a highly dominant majority language (Gogolin 1994; Fuller 2012; Wiese 2015). In public life, be it when you go shopping, talk to your kid's teacher, ask a stranger for the way, ring up a plumber, apply for a new passport, or go to your local bank, it is totally acceptable, and in fact strongly expected, to behave as if German was the only language there is. This can go so far that at a university where I used to work, the administration insisted on sending German-language emails to two colleagues in the US who had kindly agreed to serve as external examiners for a PhD defense, causing me no small embarrassment, since these colleagues did not speak German and were doing the committee work as a favour, without any reimbursement – two issues that the administration was well aware of.

This might be an extreme case, but it illustrates how strong this monolingual habitus is: people routinely act as if everyone is monolingually German, all other languages getting basically erased. What is more, this monolingual habitus is complemented by a strong standard language ideology (Durrell 1999; Davies & Langer 2006; Davies 2012) which constructs only a certain hegemonic variant (oriented at middle-class language use) as correct and proper German, with the

effect that linguistic choices become even more limited, especially in more formal settings.

However, despite this overwhelming monoglossic dominance, at the meso level of local settings we find a number of instances where these ideologies exert less of their power. For instance, at many street markets, you will find yourself in the middle of flamboyant linguistic diversity, with sellers and customers using a lively mixture of languages and dialects. Young people in inner-city neighbourhoods can draw on a large range of different heritage languages and make good use of this in their peer-group interactions, which has, among other things, led to an interesting new dialect, Kiezdeutsch. The urban hipster scene supports cafés where staff might approach you in English rather than German (to the chagrin and outspoken indignation of some conservative politicians, who complain about this in angry letters to local newspapers). And if you could see the messages that my daughters exchange via digital platforms with their friends, you would certainly not associate this with monolingual standard German.

In these settings, speakers obviously feel less constrained in their choices than the societal macro context would lead us to expect. Challenging societal monoglossic restrictions, such settings constitute linguistic *hétérotopies* in the sense of Foucault (1967), that is,

> counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. (Foucault 1967 / 1986: 24)

As a result, these settings permit more (socio-)linguistic variation, supporting a special dynamics both at levels of linguistic practices and choices and of linguistic structure. This makes them particularly suited to contribute to our understanding of fluid registers and their relation to grammatical systems.

I understand language in such settings as "free-range", using a metaphor from organic farming: just as chickens are not meant to be cooped up in tiny cages, I believe that the monolingual and standard-language confines going back to 19th century European nation-state building are not a suitable setting for language. If we want to learn about characteristic patterns of chicken behaviour, we could do better than looking at factory hens.[1] Along the same lines, if we want to study language and its dynamics, it would be more promising to look at settings that

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[1]Note that "free-range" chickens aren't truly free, but still part of animal husbandry. I use the metaphor here to signal fewer restrictions (not necessarily no restrictions, see below), similar to other popular uses of "free-range", for instance in the "free-range children" / "free-range parenting" movement.

are less restricted by policing and censoring along "purist" lines oriented towards an imagined monolingual standard variety.

Note that the metaphor of "free-range language" does not mean to imply a view of language as an object: just as it is not the eggs, but the chickens who are actually free-range, it is not language, but the speakers who can express themselves freer. "Free-range language" in this sense is to be understood a bit like "open air sports", that is, as a rule-based activity, not a fixed object.

We might recognise free-range language settings as more natural, and this is what is often assumed for linguistic practices understood as trans- or polylanguaging that we see there (e.g., Ag & Jørgensen 2013 on polylanguaging as a more natural state). However, whether such practices actually feel more natural for speakers depends on their linguistic biography and the society they grew up in. And as Jaspers (2019) points out, it can also be reasonable and positive to restrict this free range, depending on a community's goals, for instance, if speakers want to preserve a minority language.

So "free-range" does not necessarily mean more natural in any given cultural context. What it does mean is that there is less power of the kinds of monoglossic hegemonies found in much of Europe and the countries impacted by European colonialism (including former European settler colonies, such as the US or Australia). Since these monoglossic ideologies are a very specific and historically recent phenomenon,[2] it might be misleading to restrict ourselves to language use dominated by them. In contrast, free-range settings might give us a better idea of how language ordinarily works, outside such historical idiosyncrasies.

This is why I focus on free-range language in this book and examine what insights might be gained from this. I am going to look at such settings from the point of view of com-sits, exploring what this perspective might contribute to our understanding of language use and linguistic systems, and the integration of grammatical structure and linguistic fluidity.

In the remainder of this chapter, I describe four characteristic kinds of settings for free-range language that will inform our account: urban markets, heritage language settings, multiethnic adolescent peer-groups, and digital social media. As my examples above illustrated, language use in these kinds of settings is more free-range in the sense of being less dominated by monolingual and standard

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[2]As Pavlenko (2023) points out, even in European nation-states, the ideological link between one language and one nation for a long time contrasted with the multilingual societal reality, and it was not before the 20th century with its large-scale "linguistic and ethnic unmixing" (Pavlenko 2023: 34) that the linguistic reality on the ground became more monolingual – thus making the multilingual urban diversity we presently see in Europe seem special, when it really only brings back some normalcy.

language ideologies. At the same time, the settings complement each other in illustrating different aspects of linguistic diversity and fluidity and thus give us different handles on free-range language: markets constitute linguistically diverse spaces characterised by trade encounters that often take place between strangers; heritage languages draw on the intimate settings in bilingual families; multiethnic adolescent peer-groups are part of urban youth culture; and language use in social media is, unlike the other examples, mostly written rather than spoken, but still part of informal communication outside standard language confines.

Note that these settings are not isolated from their societal macro context and its language-ideological hegemonies, and the linguistic diversity and openness that characterises them will be in contrast to – and affected by – widespread monoglossic ideologies. This is what makes them counter-sites in the sense discussed above: they are special in allowing more freedom from monoglossic restrictions, but they do so within societies that can still be very much governed by these. Again, the "free-range" metaphor can shed light on this: free-range chickens are not living in a natural state outside animal husbandry, but they are living a more natural life than factory chickens. Along the same lines, free-range language settings are not altogether free of the language-ideological restrictions dominating their societal macro context, but the impact of such hegemonies will be lessened in these multilingual contexts.

This distinguishes the free-range language settings that I focus on in this book from settings of multilingualism in pre-industrial societies, so-called "small-scale multilingualism": multilingual settings mostly in the Global South, "in areas of the globe that have been spared from Western settlement colonies" (Lüpke 2016: 35) and are not impacted by hierachical relationships between named languages. These settings are interesting in showing patterns of egalitarian and balanced multilingualism. Treating such setting in depth would go outside the scope of this book, but I will give pointers to multilingual patterns similar to our examples of free-range in some places.[3]

3.2 Free-range language settings

3.2.1 Urban markets

Markets are magnets for diversity; they have always been places where people from different social and linguistic backgrounds come together, transcending the

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[3]For an overview of small-scale multilingualism settings see Lüpke (2016), Pakendorf et al. (2021) and contributions to Dobrushina et al. (2021) (eds.).

boundaries of socially constructed "languages" and "ethnicities". This has made them a particularly suitable setting for research into linguistic fluidity, multi-competence and metrolinguism: urban markets are a hotbed of linguistic and social mixing and integration, and this is particularly true for urban street markets, with their more informal character (Hiebert et al. 2015; Pennycook & Otsuji 2015, 2019; Adami 2018).

When I first learned about the exciting findings coming from such research, I immediately thought of the Maybachufermarkt, a street market where we often go for grocery shopping. The Maybachufermarkt is an open-air market at the border of Berlin-Neukölln and -Kreuzberg, two inner-city neighbourhoods where people routinely engage with a large variety of linguistic resources in their daily life. This includes German as the societally dominant majority language, but also a diverse range of heritage languages, with Turkish, Arabic, and Kurdish as the most salient but by no means the only ones, plus English as the language of globalisation and tourism.

Set in this context, the Maybachufermarkt is characterised by a great linguistic openness: people liberally mix and match linguistic elements in communication, and the market's linguistic diversity has become something of a selling point (cf. also Heller 2010 on the commodification of language). Customers include people from the neighbourhood who do their daily shopping there, but also Berliners from other parts of the city and a fair amount of tourists, and people who work at the stalls express a multilingual pride that somewhat counteracts the strong monolingual habitus that is dominant at the macro level of German society (Wiese 2020a). This is also evident in the market's linguistic landscape (cf. Duman Çakır 2023): while German, as the societal majority language, is still highly visible, it is complemented by a range of other languages, as illustrated by this sign that offers "men's shirts" in German, Turkish, and Arabic (Figure 3.1).[4]

English translation:
Men's shirts

fine/heavy rib
100% cotton

3 piece
5,-€/Euro

4 piece
6,-€/Euro

Figure 3.1: Multilingual sign at a market stall

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[4] *Stück* etc. ('piece') is used as a classifier here; I will analyse this in §5.2.

3 What is the point of "free-range" language?

Situated at the waterways of the Landwehrkanal, the market initially started, in the late 19th century, as a farmers' market for produce from the Spreewald area in Brandenburg, South of Berlin. After the division of Germany in the mid-20th century, West Berlin including Neukölln and Kreuzberg was cut off from the surrounding countryside, which put an end to the market. However, it managed to reinvent itself in the 1970s thanks to new Berliners who had immigrated from Turkey as part of the so-called "Gastarbeiter" generation and started what soon became known as the "Türkenmarkt" ('Turks' market'), offering produce from Turkey and South Europe. Today, this is still a dominant part of the market, but by no means the only one, and there are also stalls selling, for instance, organic farmers' produce from Brandenburg and Poland, Greek delicatessen, Ghanaian street food, incense sticks and New Age candles, haberdashery, or children's clothing.

This makes the market an exciting place to investigate linguistic diversity, and this is what we did in a project that I ran together with several collaborators as part of a larger research cluster.[5] In particular, we set out to see whether despite the large linguistic variability we observe at the market, there might still be restrictions pointing to linguistic systems. As a basis for our investigation, we recorded sales interactions at different market stalls over the course of several months, conducted interviews with sellers and customers, ran focus group discussions with cooperating sellers on different (socio-)linguistic patterns we had observed in the spontaneous data, collected pictures of all stall signs to capture the linguistic landscape of the market, and one of us, İrem Duman Çakır, conducted an ethnographic study where she worked at one of the stalls for several months.

Here is a short transcript from a sales interaction at a mokka stall that illustrates the kind of integration of diverse linguistic resources that we found to be characteristic for the market (cf. Yüksel & Duman 2021). The interaction involves a customer (C), the seller at the mokka stall (S1), and her colleague from a neighbouring stall (S2). The customer is a tourist from Israel visiting Berlin; seller S1 was born in Turkey and came to Germany in 1993, at the age of 14; her colleague S2 was also born in Turkey, where he grew up in the Southeast with many Arabic-speaking friends; he came to Germany in 1998 at the age of 34.

(1) *Sales interaction at the Maybachufermarkt*
     C: *How much is it?*
     S1: *Ehm, sechs fünfzig. Six Euro forty cent.*
         ahm six   fifty
     C: *Six Euro, six Euro …?*
     S1: *Sechs Euro fifty cent, sechs fünfzig. Italiano?*
         six   six   fifty   Italian?
     C: *Nein, Israel.*
         no   Israel
     S1: *Was?*
         what
     C: *Israel.*
     S1: *İsrail ehm [name] abi*
         Israel ahm S2   brother
         Arapçada altı elli   neydi?
         in_Arabic six fifty what_is?
         Arapçada altı elli   ne?
         in_Arabic six fifty what?
     S2: ستة   *Euro* نص
         [siːte]   [nusˤ]
         six   Euro a_half
     S1: ستة *Euro* نص
         six Euro a_half
     C: *[laughs]*
     S1: *Auch nicht?*
         also   not?
     C: *Wir haben nicht Arabisch.*
         we have   not   Arabic
     S1: *Nicht Arabisch?*
         not   Arabic?
     C: *Hebräisch.*
         Hebrew
     S1: *Hebräisch, ah, noch schlimmer. Das könnwa nicht.*
         Hebrew   ah even worse   that can.we not
     C: *Hebräisch ist eh* והצי   שש
                          [waχet͡si   ʃeʃ]
         Hebrew   is ah (six a_half)
     S1: שש והצי
         (six a_half)

I am sure this short segment will already have shown you why I love this market. It illustrates how sellers and customers put all their linguistic resources into service in order to make communication happen. In this endeavour, the language hierarchies of the larger society are suspended: this is not about everyone trying to speak German as the majority language, but aligning with each other and learning from each other (note how S1 repeats the Hebrew phrase, presumably committing it to memory for possible future use). This is hence in contrast to the linguistic hegemonies of German society, and more like the egalitarian multilingualism known from settings of small-scale multilingualism.

In the transcript, I have colour-coded elements according to different "languages" here, with purple and green used for English and German again, plus pink for Italian, red for Turkish, brown for Arabic, and blue for Hebrew. Note, though, that speakers show little or no concern about separating and isolating elements along the lines of such "languages". In this setting, languages are not used to construct borders, but to probe into each others' linguistic multi-competences. Speakers use language labels in order to find out what commonalities the communication can build on, and these commonalities are expanded as the communication unfolds and speakers learn from each other, adding to their linguistic resources as they go.

This kind of language use, I think, is free-range at its best, and one could write a whole paper on this segment alone. In the current book, I am going to look at such language use from the point of view of com-sits and see what the patterns we observe can tell us about grammatical systems and named languages in the face of linguistic fluidity that transcends language borders.

3.2.2 Heritage language settings

Heritage language settings are characterised by multilingualism in the family and ethnicity–language ties that distinguish them from the larger societal context. Heritage speakers grow up with an additional family language that is typically associated with immigration experiences in an earlier generation and that is not the majority language of the larger society.[6] Since languages in heritage settings face less overt policing than when they serve as national, majority languages, heritage language settings participate in the dynamics of free-range language and will thus inform our approach on grammatical systems and com-sits.

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[6]See, e.g., Montrul & Polinsky (2019). Note that since there is no clear linguistic cut between a "dialect" and a "language", this can in principle also include speakers of different dialects brought into a new setting in the course of immigration. For our present purpose, I will concentrate on heritage speakers of societally constructed "languages".

Two examples that I will use in this book are Turkish as a heritage language in Germany, and German as a heritage language in Namibia. In the first case, the heritage language is spoken in a society characterised by a monolingual habitus and, accordingly, a dominant majority language (German), as described above. This is the kind of macro setting that has usually been targeted in heritage language research so far, reflecting a research bias in our discipline that renders such monolingual-habitus societies as the US or Germany as the norm.[7]

Given this macro context, Turkish is mostly restricted to informal communication, especially within the family. However, Turkish is one of the largest heritage languages in Germany, and there is a vital heritage community supporting it, and as a result in some neighbourhoods one can also hear Turkish in less intimate settings, e.g., in shops, in the schoolyard, and – as illustrated in the previous section – at some urban markets. Under conditions of a monolingual societal habitus, this deviation from an expected norm is then particularly salient – so much so that one sometimes finds claims (in the public discussion, but also in some linguistic publications) to the effect that children growing up in such neighbourhoods do not encounter any German before they attend school.

This seems to be a case of perceptual erasure, though (Wiese, Alexiadou, Scarvaglero, et al. 2022): a closer look at the actual linguistic practices shows that German is, in fact, widespread. For instance, in my neighbourhood in Berlin-Kreuzberg, which is nicknamed "Little Istanbul", referring to its large Turkish-heritage community, German is a common language not only in shops, in cafés and in the street, but also on playgrounds and in heritage-Turkish families, where it typically becomes dominant among children as soon as they attend kindergarten (which most do by the age of 3). The societal monolingual habitus is so strong that you could not raise a young child without any exposure to German even if you tried (and why would you?). At the same time, it means that multilingual practices are highly salient (and get perceptually overrepresented) when they occur, and the widespread use of German gets perceptually erased.

The second example I will focus on differs from this in an interesting way: Namibian German is a heritage language that is integrated in a setting of societal multilingualism. In Namibia, English is defined as the only "official language", but in addition there are 13 recognised "national languages", and many more that are used in Namibian society (Wiese et al. 2017; Shah & Zappen-Thomson 2018; Zimmer 2021). Other than, e.g., Germany and the US, and similar to most African countries, Namibia embraces its societal multilingualism and is much more open to linguistic diversity. Multilingual practices, including code-switching and language mixing, are accepted as a normal part of everyday life.

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[7]For a critical discussion see Wiese, Alexiadou, Allen, et al. (2022), Kerswill & Wiese (2022a).

German was introduced into Namibia in the course of colonialism when what was then called "German South-West Africa" (1884-1915) was intended as a settlement colony of the German Empire. German was the language of colonial administration and German settlers. As such, it was associated with the colonial seizing of land and colonial crimes including a genocide against the local populations of Herero and Nama.[8] When Germany lost its colonies after WW1, a lot of the German settler population remained in Namibia, providing the basis for a German-speaking community.

Today, German is the main household language for 1% of Namibia's population, with a heritage language community of about 20,000 speakers. Given the multilingual societal habitus, for one, German is not restricted to informal contexts, but is also used in German-language schools, media, churches, and clubs. Secondly, German heritage speakers are generally at least trilingual and regularly use Afrikaans and English besides German in their daily lives. Afrikaans used to be the official language during the South-African Mandate over Namibia until independence in 1990, and is still a common lingua franca in interethnic communication. English, as the official language since independence, is considered ethnically neutral and somewhat associated with education. In addition to these two widespread languages, some heritage-German speakers also have some competences in other Namibian languages such as Herero, Nama/Damara, or Oshivambo.[9]

Heritage languages, in particular in monoglossic societal macro contexts, will often be unfavourably compared to their national counterparts in the sending countries of the first, immigrant generation. Monolingual bias and standard language ideologies can make characteristics of heritage language use seem deficient, e.g., Turkish in Germany compared to that in Turkey. In the past, heritage language research has often approached them from a deficit perspective, with assumptions of "errors", "attrition", and "incomplete acquisition" compared to a native speaker model that was restricted to monolinguals and often implied standard language norms (see criticism in, e.g., Rothman & Treffers-Daller 2014; Flores 2017; Wiese, Alexiadou, Allen, et al. 2022).

This is changing, though, and recent findings emphasise that heritage languages are especially suited to contribute to our understanding of language varia-

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[8]It took over 100 years, until 2021, before the German state formally acknowledged this genocide, see https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/-/2463396 for the Foreign Office's statement [last accessed June 20th, 2023].

[9]Although this is much less common given the societal division along "racial" lines, which is still strong even three decades after the end of Apartheid. On the positive side, the interest in learning these languages seems to be greater in the younger generation, which might indicate a positive future trend.

tion and change (e.g., Wiese 2013; Yager et al. 2015; Boas 2016; Kupisch & Polinsky 2022; Wiese, Alexiadou, Allen, et al. 2022). In line with this, in this book I will approach them as an example of free-range language that can shed a light on the dynamics of grammatical systems and sociolinguistic alignments.

3.2.3 Multiethnic adolescent peer-groups

One of the things I like so much about my neighbourhood in Berlin is its great linguistic and social diversity. Kreuzberg is an old inner-city working-class neighbourhood and a part of West Berlin that found itself blocked off on three sides by the Berlin wall in 1961. This made it less attractive economically, but the low rents attracted an influx of people both from West Germany and from abroad: artists and political activists who were looking for an alternative lifestyle as well as immigrants of the so-called "Gastarbeiter" generation who came to work in Germany. This has made for a lively mix of people and their cultural and linguistic resources, and today Kreuzberg is renowned for its vibrant atmosphere of diversity (which, at the time of writing, it has still managed to sustain – despite the challenges of gentrification it has been facing ever since the wall came down and it suddenly found itself in the centre of a reunited Berlin rather than at the outer fringes of West Berlin).

Urban neighbourhoods like this bring together a range of dialects and heritage languages whose roots go back to the immigration of earlier generations. Young people who grow up in such neighbourhoods find themselves as part of a new generation for whom such diversity is a normal part of daily life. Kreuzberg adolescents, whether they acquired an additional heritage language in their family or not, routinely access a much broader range of linguistic resources than most of their parents or grandparents will have done when growing up, and there is a fair amount of local pride in this. Here is a photo I took of a playground wall that illustrates this, with the phrase "our playground" in German, Turkish, and English, above a large graffiti saying "Kreuzberg":

Figure 3.2: Multilingual wall at a Kreuzberg playground

The new generation of young people who grow up in such neighbourhoods systematically transcends linguistic and ethnic boundaries.[10] In such multiethnic adolescent groups, we find new ways of speaking: new urban vernaculars (see Rampton 2010) that are used in peer-group situations. I have characterised these vernaculars as "urban contact dialects" (Wiese 2013, 2022), bringing together perspectives of variety and style that target structural patterns and sociolinguistic choices, respectively (see also Quist 2008 for such an integration).

I first encountered such a way of speaking when sitting on a bus in my neighbourhood and overhearing young people talking to each other across rows. They spoke mostly German, but integrated a number of new loanwords, and I also noticed some unusual grammatical patterns, and I immediately became hooked. This led to a number of research projects, where we described this new way of speaking as "Kiezdeutsch", a term that some speakers had used in an interview (as mentioned in the Introduction).

Several of the examples of free-range language in multiethnic adolescent peer groups will come from Kiezdeutsch, but this is, of course, not the only such urban contact dialect. Well-known other examples are *Multicultural London English* in the UK, *Sheng* in Kenya, or *Camfranglais* in Cameroon.

The earliest accounts of such varieties in urban Europe came from Scandinavia, through the pioneering work of Ulla-Britt Kotsinas (1988) in Stockholm and, based on this, Pia Quist (2000) in Copenhagen. This was followed by a range of research projects, in particular in North-West Europe, including the UK, Norway, the Netherlands, France, Germany, and others.[11] Comparable urban contact dialects have also been described for a range of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Senegal, South Africa, Cameroon, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, and others.[12]

Early accounts of such vernaculars in Europe described their grammatical characteristics in terms of errors, simplification and reduction compared to standard language,[13] but this picture has changed, and it is now evident that these urban dialects can contribute to our understanding of linguistic variation and speakers' options.[14] Let me illustrate this for one of my favourite structural phenomena, namely word order variation in the left periphery of Kiezdeutsch (and similarly in urban contact dialects based on some other Germanic languages).

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[10]Note that ethnicity is to be understood as a social category (Wiese 2022).

[11]For overviews see Cheshire et al. (2015), contributions in Kern & Selting (eds.) (2011), Quist & Svendsen (eds.) (2010) , Nortier & Svendsen (eds.) (2015), Kerswill & Wiese (eds.) (2022b).

[12]For overviews see Kießling & Mous (2004), contributions in Nassenstein & Hollington (eds.) (2015), Mensah (ed.) (2016), Mesthrie et al. (eds.) (2021), Kerswill & Wiese (eds.) (2022b).

[13]See Wiese (2009) for a critique.

[14]For an overview see contributions in Kerswill & Wiese (eds.) (2022b).

In addition to the conventional German verb-second order in main declaratives, Kiezdeutsch allows patterns as in (2), where the finite verb is preceded by an adverbial and a subject:

(2)   Kiezdeutsch (KiDKo, MuH9WT)[15]

>   *danach   sie hat misch AUCH geblockt*
>   afterwards she has me   also   blocked
>   "After that, she blocked me, too [in a social network]."

In earlier accounts, such patterns were described as a replacement of the German XV_{fin} order with SVO (e.g. Auer 2003), and Auer (2013: 37) claimed that this "intervenes deeply in the structures of autochthonous German in its standard and nonstandard forms" [German original, my translation, H.W.].

Closer analysis showed, though, that what we see here is not so much a somewhat "allochthonous" restructuring to SVO, but rather a variation on verb-second that fits well into German: a verb-third pattern that follows the general outline of German sentences and keeps the characteristic German verb bracket intact (hence, it is 'has me blocked' rather than 'has blocked me' in (2) above), motivated by information-structural preferences.[16] Not surprisingly, then, this pattern has subsequently also been found in language use outside Kiezdeutsch.[17]

Rather than bringing an alien element into German, such patterns put a spotlight on the actual range of variation within presumed "strict verb-second" languages, and can thus inform syntactic theory[18] and our understanding of the interface between syntax and information structure.[19]

This, then, underlines what makes free-range language so useful for us: it highlights the range of possibilities – at structural as well as sociolinguistic levels – and prevents us from mistaking a specific condition of language, namely language use under monoglossic constraints, as the normal case and/or an exhaustive picture.

3.2.4 Digital social media

Digital social media are a locus of informal writing outside codified norms (e.g., Androutsopoulos & Busch 2020). The internet has become an important site for

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[15]Corpus data from KiDKo, see www.kiezdeutschkorpus.de. Capitalisation indicates main stress.
[16]Wiese (2009, 2011, 2013).
[17]Wiese & Müller (2018), Bunk (2020).
[18]te Velde (2017), Walkden (2017), Bunk (2020).
[19]Wiese (2011), Freywald et al. (2015), Wiese et al. (2017, 2020).

maintaining and managing social relationships (McCulloch 2019), and this has made digital media a rapidly evolving and particularly fertile ground for the development of new communicative patterns. These patterns integrate the dynamics of informal language into the written mode, including such new graphic elements as emoji (e.g., Dainas & Herring 2021).

Unlike the other three settings for free-range language, digital social media does not necessarily involve speakers with a multilingual family background. However, the fact that constraints of standard language and codified orthographic rules are substantially loosened means that speakers also use a broader range of linguistic options and resources. In today's globalised and interconnected world, this typically does not only mean more linguistic variation per se, but it also includes crossing traditional language borders. Have a look at the following examples, taken from WhatsApp messages by young people in Germany:[20]

(3) Adolescents' messenger communications in Germany

    a. da   ist ja dieser parkplatz,   you know? [DEmo53FD]
       there is MP this   parking_lot you know
       'There's this parking lot, you know?'

    b. lol bis   gleich 🤠🤠   [DEmo84FD]
       lol until soon   [COWBOY HAT FACE EMOJI, 2x]
       'lol see you soon.'

The speakers – or rather writers – of these messages come from monolingual family backgrounds, that is, they have not grown up with an additional heritage language, but generally used only German at home. Nevertheless, they routinely integrate English elements into their messages, and we often find loans from other languages as well. Some of these are used internationally, transcending linguistic borders, and I will characterise them as "translinguistic" elements below (Chapter 5). This also includes such graphic markers as the emoji in the second example, which are not associated with a specific language to begin with. In the example above, they can be analysed as graphic discourse markers, and such occurrences can broaden our understanding of the expression of textual and (inter-)subjective discourse relations (cf. Wiese & Labrenz 2021).

My initial interest in such digital messaging was much less ambitious: as part of a larger research unit (the RUEG group), we wanted to elicit register-differentiated data in formal and informal situations and cover language use in both the

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[20]From the RUEG Corpus, see https://hu.berlin/rueg-corpus. "MP" = modal particle

spoken and the written modality, and we needed something to fill the "informal-written" slot. Once we looked at the data we got there, though, it quickly became obvious that such language use is fascinating in its own right, and in particular as an example of free-range language that involves graphic as well as verbal patterns.

In the following three chapters (Chapter 4 – Chapter 6), I will now discuss three main lessons that can be learned from investigating such free-range settings, for our understanding of grammatical systems and their foundation in view of linguistic fluidity and the status of "languages" as social constructs.

4 Com-sits support linguistic differentiation

4.1 Com-sits and language development

I lately came across an Instagram post on "How does a new language start?",[1] which went like this:

> You know what makes no sense to me? How does a new language just start? Do two guys just get together one day and just be like:
>
> Guy 1: 'You know what dude? Fuck this!'
>
> Guy 2: 'You're right! Fuck this!'
>
> Guy 1: 'Tre wa de hana bl rbl wawa guna?'
>
> Guy 2: 'A bana hibs lr bla rbleya.'

This is not meant seriously, of course. – We do not expect people to suddenly realise that they don't like their present language and then to start speaking a completely new one out of nowhere. If we look at how new ways of speaking actually emerge, free-range language settings can give us a good idea. What we find here is that people start using some novel words and grammatical patterns that might eventually establish a new variety, but they do not do so across the board. Rather, these novel elements are used in certain communicative situations, they are associated with characteristic com-sits.

Take urban contact dialects, like Kiezdeutsch, as an example. In these cases, we have a new generation of speakers that grow up in a multiethnic and multilingual setting, and they express or perform this aspect of their identity when speaking in peer-group situations. The monolingual habitus dominating German society

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[1]post by shaney.duffy; https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cec2seDPqUD/?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y= (last accessed: Sept 1st, 2022). The original post is a video, for which I provide a transcript here.

renders German the main source for Kiezdeutsch, but there are some characteristic ways in which it deviates from spoken standard-close German.

This is evident in the lexicon, for instance. First, we find markers of youth language, e.g., *Alter* (lit. 'old.one'), used as a term of address. Second and partly overlapping with this, there are elements from global English, such as *lol* as a discourse marker (which we also saw in one of the WhatsApp messages I quoted in (3) above), *cringe* as an evaluative term, or *sus* ('suspect', from the online game 'Among Us'). And finally, highlighting the multilingual setting of Kiezdeutsch, speakers integrate elements from a range of different heritage languages, e.g., Turkish *lan* (lit. 'guy') as a term of address, or *canım* (lit. 'my soul') as a term of endearment.

This specific mixture is not used in just any random setting; for instance, it does not turn up in conversations with parents or towards teachers (Wiese 2013; 2022). It is reserved for peer-group situations and is characteristic for this specific com-sit.[2] The following quotes highlight this, one from a speaker in Germany on his use of Kiezdeutsch, and a strikingly similar one from a young woman in Tanzania on her use of the urban contact dialect there (translations by me and Reuster-Jahn & Kießling 2006, respectively):

(1)   Speakers on com-sit specialisation of urban contact dialects

  a. Germany (Wiese 2012b: 213)
      "At home with my parents, I speak more respectfully. After all, they are the ones who created me, whereas my friends are the ones whom I met, so I speak differently to them."

  b. Tanzania (Reuster-Jahn & Kießling 2006: 16)
      "I can't speak in that way to my father, but in the back-yard we use this language."

Such linguistic differentiation can then lay the foundation for the emergence of new varieties in a specific com-sit. Within speakers' general repertoires, linguistic elements are overall connected as part of (generic) language. Through their distribution over different com-sits, though, they get differentiated into different linguistic ecologies. As the example of Kiezdeutsch shows, this can lead to the formation of new varieties, and I will get back to this point in more detail in Chapter 5. What is relevant for us at present is that com-sits support linguistic differentiation, and this is particularly obvious in multilingual contexts of language development.

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[2]See also Wiese & Pohle (2016) for an example of *grammatical* patterns specialised like this.

We can see this also in first language acquisition. This is a bit different from the formation of new varieties, since in individual development, elements already bring their different com-sit associations with them. A young child's task is then – among others – to figure out this com-sit distribution. Children manage to achieve this through clues they get in social interaction, and they are pretty good at it, differentiating their linguistic resources according to com-sits from early on. For an illustration, let me spell this out for the case of my daughters, when they started out linguistically.[3]

Before our first daughter, Carlin, was born, my husband and I – like many parents in the Global North – planned to look after her just the two of us, which we felt confident we could do, having read everything on baby care that we could lay our hands on. Once she was born, though, it very quickly became clear that we were pretty much clueless and urgently needed help. This is where Kadriye came in. A mother of a friend's colleague and already several times a grandmother, immigrated to Germany from Turkey in her thirties, she was looking for a part-time job and was willing to rescue us. From Carlin's second month of life, Kadriye became her third main caretaker several times a week.

Hence, Carlin had three adults in her life to provide her main first linguistic input: Kadriye, my husband and myself. Kadriye usually spoke Turkish to Carlin, my husband (who is British) used English towards her, and I spoke mostly German. We hence formed a multilingual household with a range of different "groups" of interlocutors in the sense of Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985), including three different groups of an adult with Carlin, plus different ones consisting of several adults with Carlin and of adults only.

We can now understand these "groups" as aspects of com-sits. As such, they reinforce systematicity. In our case, com-sits also differentiate along language borders. However, this is, of course, not what the picture looked like for Carlin, who did not have a concept of such social constructs as "German", "English", and "Turkish" yet. This is something that would come in later (I will talk about this possibility in Chapter 6).

The foundations for the linguistic differentiation were laid by the mostly monolingual parenting strategy we employed (we did not know better at that time), reflecting the monolingual societal habitus that is generally dominant in the Global North (see Fuller 2018). This can be quite different in the Global South (de

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[3]Given the history of the field of first language acquisition, I should emphasise that I am describing this to illustrate, using a concrete example, the point of com-sits (vs. socially constructed languages) from a developmental perspective, not as a case study on multilingual acquisition (see Clark 2019 for an overview of research on first language acquisition, including early diary studies on researchers' own children).

De Houwer 2021), but also in vital heritage communities even within strongly monolingually oriented societies. For instance, Carlin's childhood friends from heritage-Turkish families experienced much more language mixing in their families, and as a result were much more familiar with translanguaging practices from early on.

If, for the sake of simplicity, we look at single words again, to take just the expressions for 'dog' and 'tea' as an example, the kind of linguistic input Carlin would get would consist of words like *tea*, *çay*, *doggie*, *Wauwau*, etc., as part of (generic) language. From the point of view of com-sits, though, these elements were distributed over settings with different people. She will have encountered the words *doggie* and *tea* in com-sits with her father; *Wauwau* and *Tee* with me, and *kuçu kuçu*, and *çay* with Kadriye. And she might have noticed that her father and I also used *tea* when we talked to each other, but that we said *dog*, rather than *doggie* in those com-sits; that Kadriye and I used *Hund* and *Tee* with each other, and that this was also what I used in com-sits with most others; and that when Kadriye talked to our next-door neighbour, they used *köpek* and *çay*.

So, Carlin encountered elements from English, German, and Turkish with different adults, and in each case, this could include some "baby-talk" elements specific for com-sits with her, different from what the adults used in conversations among themselves. Hence, the organisation into com-sits can support differentiation along societally constructed language borders, but also along the lines of such registers as, for instance, informal vs. more formal language, or baby- vs- adult-directed speech. Figure 4.1 illustrates what this might have looked like from Carlin's point of view. In this figure, different interlocutors identify different com-sits (note that this is a simplification for illustration: these are not the only relevant aspects of com-sits, of course).

Hence, different com-sits pick out different linguistic elements, supporting their differentiation. As a result of this differentiation, the connections between elements co-occurring in the same com-sits are strengthened: *tea*, *doggie* etc. become elements of systems, represented by the networks of lines connecting them (we will have a closer look at this in Chapter 5). This development of a more systematic state through selective strengthening of connections mirrors the typical characteristics of a learning process.

In principle, some elements can also remain shared even among systems that might later become associated with different "language" indices. For instance, for Carlin the phrase *bye bye* will not have been restricted to com-sits with her father, since this is something used (as a loan from English) with small children in Turkish and German as well. Accordingly, she encountered *bye bye* across the board, including in com-sits with her babysitter (i.e., in the same contexts as
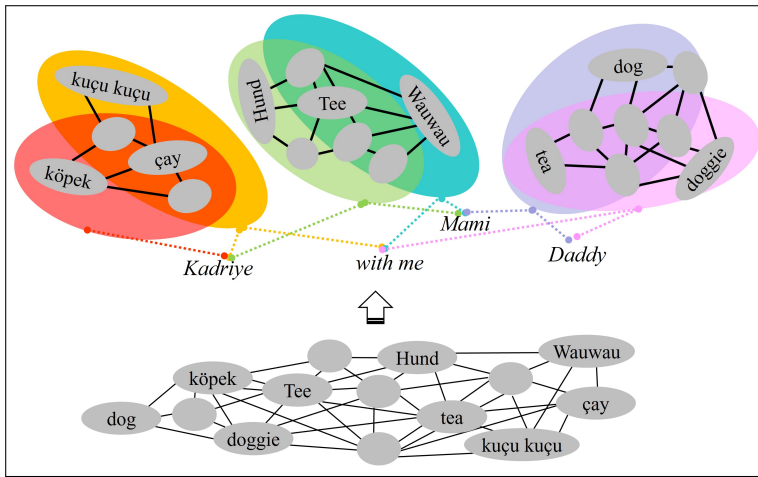
Figure 4.1: Development of linguistic systems in com-sits with different interlocutors

kuçu kuçu and *çay*) and with me and others (i.e., in the same contexts as *Wauwau* and *Tee*). Such a phrase can then later develop into an element of baby-directed registers shared between systems indexed as "English", "Turkish", and "German".

In addition, there can be also some unconventional mixing of elements across com-sits. When Carlin was 16 months old, we moved to New Haven in the US for a year. While we lived there, at the age of about 1 ½ years, she started using a construction that seemed to be underspecified with respect to com-sits involving me vs. my husband (and other English-speaking adults): a demonstrative pattern "ohtsa [noun]". My guess is that she got this construction from kindergarten, where teachers would look at picture books with the children, point to a picture, and then often go "Oh! It's a ..." and then name the animal etc. on the picture.

What is relevant for our discussion here is that Carlin would use her *ohtsa*-construction with nouns from both English and German, for instance going "ohtsa woogie" to a bird (*woogie* > German *Vogel* 'bird'), "ohtsa ameis" for animals around a tree, such as ants or squirrels (*ameis* > German *Ameise* 'ant'), but also "ohtsa beeps" when she saw grapes (*beeps* > English *grapes*), or "ohtsa doggie" for a dog. Hence, she used this pattern across the board. Presumably at this stage, the com-sit distinctions were not yet strong enough for her in this case to lead to complete differentiation, and allowed some mixing.

This is in line with what we generally know from research with young children growing up in bi- and multilingual environments. Children start distinguishing

different linguistic systems early on,[4] and in speech perception, bilinguals seem to distinguish their languages from the first year of life.[5] This does not necessarily mean that the linguistic systems are kept totally separate, though, and, e.g., priming studies suggest that there might also be some crosslinguistic overlap.[6]

Note that our approach to com-sits allows for both shared representations and separations along socially constructed "language" borders: linguistic elements and patterns can participate in one as well as in more than one system that emerged in a specific com-sit. What is important from the point of view of com-sits is that young children show evidence for systematic linguistic choices according to interlocutor and other situational factors early on in the acquisition process.[7]

This highlights that linguistic elements are learned within com-sits and with their com-sit association, as part of what Gumperz (1981) described as communicative competence.[8] This does not mean that children's choices will be adult-like right from the start, since some early deviations and idiosyncrasies are a natural part of the acquisition path. Recognising com-sits as the basis for linguistic differentiation allows for both: the early emergence of separate systems out of a pool of linguistic resources as well as some mixing and overgeneralisation along the way.

Apart from unconventional mixing, we might also see idiosyncratic deviations when children pick up on characteristics of com-sits other than the conventionally associated ones. An example of this is the common observation that young children in multilingual families sometimes avoid using their heritage language in certain com-sits that they perceive to be wrong for it, reflecting their limited experience with the heritage language so far. For instance, a child growing up in Germany with a Croatian-speaking mother and aunt might refuse to speak Croatian to male interlocutors, since they understand it as a register that is specialised for com-sits with women.

A somewhat extreme, but not uncommon, case was when at the age of three our younger daughter, Inya, seemed to consider English a linguistic quirk of her father, restricted to com-sits with him alone. Her experience had been that Daddy

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[4]See, for instance, Meisel (1989), De Houwer (1990); (2021), Genesee (2019).

[5]Serratrice (2018).

[6]For recent findings and overviews see, for instance, Serratrice (2022), Gámez et al. (2022) on morphosyntax; Engemann (2022) on semantics. See Genesee (2019) for an overview of evidence for differentiated grammatical systems from early stages of development.

[7]For an overview of findings on language choice in bilingual interaction see de De Houwer (2018), who shows that such selective choices are evident as early as in children's 2nd to 3rd year.

[8]See also Møller (2019).

spoke that way, and most people also used this way of speaking when interacting with him, but not in other situations. So, when our British in-laws came visiting, Inya refused to speak English to them because she found it awkward to use the "Daddy register" with anyone else – even when it became clear they did not understand German. While this was an idiosyncratic identification of relevant com-sit characteristics, it in fact underlines the conventional and hence community-oriented nature of com-sits: such deviations put a spotlight on learner hypotheses that will be revised in later development, with more exposure to language use reflecting the conventional patterns, similarly to grammatical hypotheses from earlier acquisitional stages.

In the case of our daughter, this kind of development was evident in a transition from her idiosyncratic understanding of relevant com-sits to a more conventional one. While first, she understood the relevant com-sits as those that are "with Daddy", later she learned to use this register in all com-sits that are socially constructed as appropriate for "English". This kind of transition can be supported through explicit labelling by adults. An example of this comes from a conversation transcribed in Stavans & Porat (2019: 133–134), between a young multilingual child ("R", age 3;8) and her grandmother ("GM"); the girl speaks Hebrew to her grandmother, who answers in Spanish (translation by Stavans & Porat 2019):

(2) Constructing English as a named language

R: *Safta, at yodaat, ani yodaat ledaber basafa shel hagdolim.*
"Grandma, do you know, I know (how to speak) the language of the grownups."

GM: *¿De veras? A ver, ¿qué sabes decir?*
"Really? Let's see, what can you say?"

R: *Ani yodaat lehagid shalosh milim.*
"I know how to say three words."

GM: *A ver, ¿cuáles palabras sabes?*
"Let's see which words you know?"

R: *"Yes", "no", "goodbye"*
"'Yes', 'no', 'goodbye'"

GM: *Aha, sí ese idioma se llama inglés.*
"Oh, yes that language is called English."

So, for this girl, words like *yes*, *no*, and *goodbye* are elements of language use between grown-ups, they are associated with com-sits among adults for her. The grandmother then constructs this as a named language, "English", thus setting

the ground for a broader com-sit association that is conventional in the girl's larger society and involves this language index.

This being said, if an unconventional com-sit identification occurs widely and systematically, it might also become conventionalised, rather than undergo revision. If we assumed children to be the drivers of this, this would be a scenario parallel to what, in some generative approaches, has been hypothesised for "transmission failures" as a source of grammatical change.[9] The primary location of such changes in child acquisition has subsequently come under criticism, though,[10] and sociolinguistic studies point to adolescents as a central group for language change, with innovation rather than non-target hypotheses playing a key role.[11] This is plausible for the level of com-sits as well.

In young people, unconventional com-sit identifications can be seen, for instance, when lexical elements associated with informal com-sits are also used in more formal ones, or when elements from written com-sits in social media are also used in spoken interaction. In both cases, this points to a generalisation of the associated com-sits, and this generalisation can be taken up in the broader society and become conventionalised. This has just happened, for instance, for *lol*, which has crossed the boundary between written and spoken com-sits and is now increasingly used in speech as well.

An example of another kind of com-sit change comes from the "language mixing" sometimes observed in multilingual adolescent peer groups. We can now characterise this as a development where elements associated with different named languages (e.g., "Turkish" and "German") and initially different com-sits (e.g., talking to parents at home vs. talking to a teacher at school) can be used within the same com-sit (hanging out with friends). Such scenarios can support diachronic change at the level of com-sits, and we can now understand this com-sit development as the basis for grammatical change in language contact, for instance for the emergence of new mixed languages (see the discussion of urban contact dialects in the Global South in Chapter 6 below).

4.2 How do we distinguish com-sits? A look at registers

Free-range language settings hence highlight that com-sits support a differentiation of linguistic resources, and in addition, they also underline the dynamics of

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[9]Cf. Lightfoot (1991), Kroch (2001).
[10]Cf. Meisel (2011) for a discussion.
[11]Eckert (2000), Tagliamonte (2016).

this process. What speakers pick up as the relevant characteristics of a com-sit can be variable over time and across different social groups.

When we model com-sits as part of lexical entries, we want to capture only those that have a differential linguistic impact, then.[12] But what does this mean exactly, how can we identify a com-sit and distinguish it from another, how can we pinpoint what is relevant in a given com-sit? To answer this question, a look at register studies can be informative, since we can regard register variation as the linguistic reflection of com-sit differences. In their influential approach to linguistic registers, Biber & Conrad (2009: 6) define a register as "a variety associated with a particular situation of use", and propose that to investigate registers, one needs to look for associations of linguistic differences with situational characteristics.

While these linguistic features constitute registers, the situational characteristics can now be understood to identify com-sits, making com-sits and registers two sides of a coin: registers represent the linguistic side, com-sits the situational one; as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Registers
linguistic level:
different ways of speaking

Com-sits
situational level:
different settings
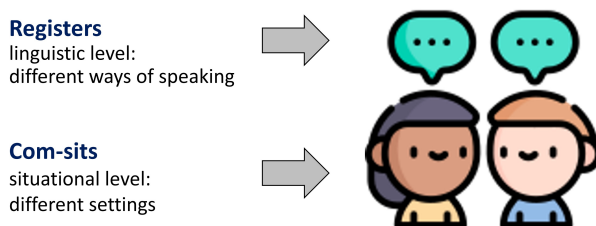
Figure 4.2: Com-sits and registers

As we saw in Figure 4.1 above, com-sits can differentiate such registers as baby- vs- adult-directed speech, but they also differentiate what is ordinarily understood as different languages, e.g., English, German, or Turkish. Furthermore, different com-sits can also differentiate between ways of speaking that are commonly regarded as different dialects of one language. An example is discussed in Sharma (2018), who analyses the bidialectism of an Indian-American actor and shows how he uses American English with a US audience, but Indian English with an Indian one.

In our approach, both named languages and dialects can now also be understood as registers. The key is the choice of linguistic resources for different com-

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[12]Cf. already Halliday (1978: Ch. 1.5), who emphasises that we need to describe a "relevant" situation, that is, concentrate on "those features which are relevant to the speech that is taking place" (p.29).

sits. What form these resources take does not need to be restricted any further: we do not need to make categorical differences between, say, "languages", "dialects", and informal vs. formal "registers". Instead, we can capture them under a unified perspective as registers, understood as systematic linguistic choices associated with different com-sits.

If we look at the sociolinguistic literature on multilingual settings, we see that this is in line with, e.g., Pennycook's (2018) call to allow for languages as registers. This sets different languages on a par with different language varieties and styles. Accordingly, it has been suggested not only in language acquisition and contact linguistics,[13] but also in generative grammar,[14] to regard everyone as multilingual in the sense that they choose from a broader linguistic repertoire. Along these lines, Montanari & Quay (2019) apply the concept of translanguaging to supposedly monolingual speakers as well, given that they can integrate different varieties of a language in their linguistic practice. In the same vein, Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) draw a parallel between those linguistic choices that signal acts of identity and belonging in multilingual communities and those in monolingual ones, with the only difference being that the varieties in multilingual communities (viz. different socially constructed "languages") might be more distinct than those in monolingual ones.

This is how Michelle Obama put it in her autobiography when describing her linguistic repertoire at a time when she had her first job after university in a Chicago law firm:

> I thought of myself basically as trilingual. I knew the relaxed patois of the South Side and the high-minded diction of the Ivy League, and now on top of that I spoke Lawyer, too. (Obama 2018: 94)

Under our unified approach, such linguistic variation can now consistently be understood as different registers that are chosen according to different relevant com-sits.

An important methodological question is then: How can we pinpoint what characteristics are relevant; what are the situational characteristics that distinguish one com-sit from another? The answer is that there is in fact no definite answer to this, and intentionally so: the situational characteristics that distinguish one com-sit from another are those that speakers pick out as relevant, and

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[13]For instance, Tracy (2014), MacSwan (2017).
[14]Roeper (1999).

what counts as relevant can turn on a range of different aspects, including cultural, social, and psychological factors. Hence, there is no extensive list as a definition of com-sits, but rather a principally open set, and what is relevant from this set is an empirical question.

Methodologically, this means that if we observe speakers using different ways of speaking, we need to check whether these differences are routinely associated with different situations. If so, then these are indeed different com-sits that support register distinctions. The next step is then to find out which characteristics of these situations are the ones that support different ways of speaking, and this will give us the relevant com-sit characteristics. Not coincidentally, this is the same challenge that young children face in language acquisition: figuring out what the key characteristics are that distinguish one com-sit from another (Is it the interlocutor, e.g., Daddy? Or the location, e.g., at home vs. in the shop?).

So, com-sits identify the relevant situational contexts for register distinctions, and it is an empirical question what is relevant. For this empirical investigation, we can draw on findings from register studies that can give us a first idea as to what might be promising candidates for this.

In a way, this is parallel to what we do in grammatical analysis, and this parallelism might help to further elucidate the issue of com-sit characteristics, so let me spell this out for an example. When we want to identify a syntactic context, for instance when we want to determine what is the relevant context for bare NPs, this is likewise an empirical question, and we have to look at the data: In what contexts are determiners optional? Based on what we have learned from similar investigations, we will already have some ideas of what might be promising candidates, for instance characteristics of semantic class (e.g., animacy), information structure (e.g., topichood), or definiteness. So, when we are looking for the relevant contextual characteristics for bare NPs, we would probably start checking such grammatical and pragmatic features. Note, though, that this does not mean that we would categorically restrict our investigation to these features; rather we would remain open to unexpected ones, and it would actually be particularly interesting to find a novel domain.

Similarly, when investigating situational characteristics that might be relevant for com-sits, we should be principally open, since it is an empirical question what is relevant for a certain way of speaking. At the same time, just like in syntax, we already know based on previous observations that there are some general situational characteristics that will often pop up as relevant.

Key candidates for such parameters that we know from register research are (in-)formality and the relationship between interlocutors on the one hand, and spoken vs. written mode on the other hand. In addition, register research has

identified mode and tenor of discourse,[15] its narrative vs. non-narrative nature,[16] or speaker constellation and social distance.[17] The latter can be seen as possible specifications of the (in-)formality parameter, which illustrates another important point: just as there is no closed set of relevant situational characteristics, there is also no fixed level of categorisation. Depending on what we want to capture, we might relate to broader categories or to finer-grained distinctions between com-sits. This also means that differences between com-sits are not rigid, and that they have permeable "borders". Hence, when we speak of a specific com-sit, this is an abstraction for analysis, parallel to what we do to capture register variation.

Another aspect of registers that can shed light on com-sits is that registers are not idiosyncratic, but shared in their essentials across language users in a community. This is emphasised, e.g., by Lüdeling et al. (2022: 3), who define register as "those aspects of socially recurring intra-individual variation that are influenced by situational and functional settings". In keeping with our discussion above, the "situational and functional settings" in this definition correspond to the situational characteristics (including functional aspects) relevant for com-sits, and the intra-individual variation of registers captures the fact that the elements co-occurring in a particular com-sit are part of larger speaker repertoires. What is interesting now is that this variation is required to be socially recurring, which is in line with Agha's (2004) notion of "enregisterment". This relates to our understanding of communication as a social activity. As such, communication is an interaction between speakers that is guided by social conventions. This means that speakers refer to a social community as the frame for what the relevant characteristics are.[18] Accordingly, we can understand a sociolinguistic community of practice as one that is based on shared patterns in com-sits.

What speakers pick up as the relevant characteristics of a com-sit affects how they see the way of speaking that they associate with that com-sit, it has an effect on the social meaning they attribute to that register. This can guide their choice of linguistic resources and the way they integrate them into their own style in different contexts. Such relevant characteristics can also change over time. An example of this are the com-sits associated with urban contact dialects that emerge among adolescents in multiethnic and multilingual neighbourhoods.

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[15]See, e.g., Neumann (2014), Halliday (1978).

[16]Biber (2014).

[17]Maas (2010).

[18]Note that this does not mean that there cannot be any individual differences within a community. For instance, as Adli (2017) shows for Parisian French, speakers' lifestyle (toward "orthodoxy" vs. "heterodoxy") can influence the way they act linguistically in formal vs. informal settings.

Typically, the com-sits associated with such dialects are initially restricted to these specific settings, that is, relevant characteristics are urbanity, youth, and ethnic and linguistic diversity. Further on, such dialects can loosen their association with a specific community and setting and spread to broader contexts, for instance, generally to com-sits among adolescents or to informal urban settings. From the point of view of com-sits, we can capture this as a broadening of the com-sit base when less specific situational characteristics become relevant. As a result of such broadening, such ways of speaking can take on new social meanings. At first, an urban contact dialect might have been associated with multiethnicity in urban youth culture, optionally with such additional speaker stereotypes thrown in as masculinity or street toughness. Once their com-sits broaden, the social meaning of such dialects changes as well, and they might then indicate "urbanity" in general, or, linked to this, "modernity" or "coolness", as has been described for examples from Africa as well as Europe.[19]

Com-sit deviations can also carry social meaning. For instance, if we use elements linked to child-directed com-sits with adults, this is associated with some kind of infantilisation. Accordingly, baby talk can be used to make someone look insignificant and ridicule them, but it can also be used to signal intimacy among lovers.

As another example, expressions that are associated with highly informal com-sits might be neutral there, but can take on a pejorative meaning if they are used in more formal ones. For instance, in German, if you ask a friend for a cigarette, you could call it a *Zigarette*, but also colloquial *Kippe*, but the latter would be impolite when you talked to a shop owner. Similarly, in English you might suggest having a little *nosh* when you are out with friends, but when you then go to a restaurant, you would normally not use this term for food with the staff there. This is not restricted to words, but can also be observed for grammatical distinctions, for instance for the difference between formal and informal forms of 2nd person pronouns (as in French *vous* vs. *tu*, or German *Sie* vs. *du*). In 2003, a politician of the German Greens found himself facing a 2000€ charge for addressing a police officer with the informal "du" rather than the formal "Sie" form, which the court ruled was an insult since the officer was not a friend of his.

Conversely, expressions that initially have a pejorative meaning might get neutralised in specific informal com-sits. This often happens in youth language, and examples for such allegedly "rude" words are often quoted in the public discussion of urban contact dialects (sometimes involving righteous indignation about some perceived decline of manners).

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[19]Cf., for instance, Kießling (2005) on *Camfranglais* in Cameroon; Kerswill (2014) on *Multicultural London English* in the UK; Wiese (2022) for an overview.

We can now capture such patterns with reference to com-sits:

(3) Social meaning of com-sit shifts

    a. From baby talk to adult talk

        $CS_{LE} \in$ babytalk, LE $\subset$ {…, addressee=adult} |

        P. P $\in$ {speaker I^n addressee, speaker I^p addressee[lover], …}

    b. From informal com-sits to formal com-sits

        $CS_{LE} \in$ informal, LE $\subset$ formal |

        P. P $\in$ {speaker I^n SEM_{LE}, …}

    c. From unspecific com-sits to particular informal com-sits

        $CS_{LE} \in$ {MUY, …} |

        P. P $\in$ {speaker I^n SEM_{LE}} ▸ P $\in$ {speaker I SEM_{LE}, …}

In these patterns, LE stands for a lexical item (in the general sense we are using this here, i.e., including more abstract patterns), CS for its com-sit, SEM for its semantics, and P for its pragmatic contribution. I is an expressive interval as defined by Potts (2007); I^n is a negative interval, I^p is a positive one, and I without a superscript is neutral, that is, not marked as either negative or positive. MUY identifies multiethnic urban youth as an example for a peer-group setting among adolescents, illustrating the possible neutralisation of pejorative terms in this kind of com-sit, where ▸ indicates that the common, pejorative pragmatics are replaced by a neutral one.

Hence, the formalisations in (3) can be read as something like (a) "For a lexical item whose characteristic com-sit is part of babytalk and which occurs with an addressee who is an adult: the speaker expresses a negative evaluation of the addressee, or a positive one of an addressee who is their lover." (b) "For a lexical item whose characteristic com-sit is part of informal ones and which occurs in a formal setting: the speaker expresses a negative evaluation of its referent." (c) "For a lexical item whose characteristic com-sit is part of multiethnic urban youth settings (and some others): the speaker's evaluation of its referent can change from negative to neutral."

Another aspect of com-sits that urban contact dialects highlight is that com-sits support the emergence of grammar. These urban contact dialects are not just characterised by a bunch of words, of course: their elements are integrated grammatically. Hence, linguistic elements can organise into different systems through their association with different com-sits. Let us have a closer look at this in the following chapter now.

5 Grammar is grounded in com-sits

5.1 Becoming birds of a feather

Com-sits distinguish linguistic elements, and these elements can then form separate systems. Crucially, they do so through their co-occurrence in specific com-sits, not because they are associated with different "languages". Frequent co-occurrence supports the emergence of coherence within a linguistic ecology. If we look at elements like *doggie*, *tea*, or *çay* as the linguistic resources that a young child might access, we can understand them as part of a general "feature pool". This is a metaphor that has been used to describe the diverse linguistic resources that speakers can access in contact situations: a pool of features coming from different sources.[1]

When the elements of such a feature pool form different systems through their differentiation into com-sits, they support something more like a "feature *pond*".[2] The "pond" metaphor emphasises that what we see here is a network of interdependent features, a linguistic ecology that brings forth interconnected linguistic patterns at different levels.

Urban contact dialects like Kiezdeutsch are a good example for this. As we have seen, Kiezdeutsch is a language use that developed in specific com-sits, namely in peer-group situations of multiethnic urban youth settings. The linguistic characteristics of Kiezdeutsch are not just lexical, but also include grammatical patterns. For instance, as described in Chapter 3.2, we find additional word order options that are not part of standard German. Some other features that have been described for Kiezdeutsch are bare local NPs and new light verb constructions. A closer look at such patterns shows that they are not just co-occurring in the relevant com-sits, but that they are also interrelated and integrated into a new, coherent system.[3] Hence, the association with a characteristic com-sit supports the emergence of a grammatical system.

This is in accordance with approaches such as Pennycook's (2010) who takes coherence to emerge from sedimented linguistic practices. In our approach, the

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[1]Cf. Mufwene (2001), Cheshire et al. (2011).
[2]Wiese (2013); (2022).
[3]Wiese & Rehbein (2015).

basis for such coherence is the systematic association of linguistic practices with different com-sits. The 'pond' metaphor captures the way linguistic elements form systems based on their interaction in such different com-sits. Within this metaphor, we can think of different com-sits as contributing different environmental conditions that favour certain elements over others, and speakers as something like the gardeners in such settings, with an active role in the creation of such ponds.

This means that the "pond" metaphor allows us to capture speakers' selective choices from a broader range of linguistic resources in different com-sits and, crucially, it allows us to do this without neglecting systematic relations within linguistic systems. This way, we can acknowledge grammatical patterns and systematicity at levels of linguistic form, rather than speaking of "errors" whenever something is not part of standard language.[4] The "pond" metaphor captures that something systematic is going on, with patterns that are not just reinvented every time someone says something: while language, as a social practice, is variable and, in this sense, fluid, it is at the same time also restricted by social constraints.

Taking the metaphor a bit further, the impact of local weather and overall climate on a pond can stand for sociolinguistic influences at the meso level of the local setting (for instance, multiethnic urban youth) and at the macro level of society, respectively. I will discuss this in Chapter 6 below for the example of local pride of ethnic and linguistic diversity ($\rightarrow$ 'weather') and a monolingual habitus dominant in the country as a whole ($\rightarrow$ 'climate'). Both meso and macro levels can influence what part of linguistic resources are used in a certain com-sit. Vice versa, the feature pond in this com-sit, that is, the linguistic system emerging here, can also influence the sociolinguistic context. To remain in our metaphor, think of the way a pond might impact the surrounding meteorological conditions.

As Ben Rampton (p.c.) pointed out, the lines of influence are multi-directional: linguistic form can shape situated use, and situated practice can affect cultural ideology. Accordingly, com-sits can also impact how language ideologies play out, or, as Fuller (2018: 120) puts it, "there is situational variation in how ideologies are made manifest."

Note that the "pond" perspective does not imply that "languages" are the source of grammatical systematicity. An important point in the scenario I developed here is the primacy of com-sits over languages. Under this view, linguistic elements are initially not used in one com-sit rather than in another because they

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[4]Cf. Wiese (2013) for a critique of such a deficit perspective in earlier sociolinguistic accounts of multiethnolects.

belong to different languages. Instead, they might be represented as belonging to different languages because they are used in different com-sits. This puts, so to speak, the saying of "Birds of a feather flock together" on its head. Elements can obtain the same "language" or "dialect" feathers because they occur together, not the other way round; in other words: Those who flock together become birds of a feather.

Remember that the way com-sits support different language use is not idiosyncratic, but plays out within a speech community.[5] In this sense, grammar, as Höder (2018) points out, is bound to a community. However, the grammatical systems that emerge from such usage are not globally linked to a community, but to specific com-sits. For instance, as discussed in 4.1 above, the grammatical characteristics of Kiezdeutsch will not pop up in any language use by adolescents in urban multiethnic areas, but only when they are chatting informally in peer groups. That is, Kiezdeutsch grammar does not emerge at the overall level of the speech community per se, but in specific com-sits within that community.

In settings of small-scale multilingualism, the relevance of com-sits can be highlighted by geographical links that some traditional cultures draw for different kinds of language use. For instance, for Australia, Pakendorf et al. (2021) describe some examples with conventions about what language use is suitable for a specific region which also included the requirement to know the expressions for the flora and fauna in the language use associated with the respective territory; Merlan (1981: 146) discusses the "use of language varying with locale" and illustrates this with an example from story-telling where two totemic figures who were travelling together changed into another language when entering another geographical region. She argues that such associations between place and language can remain stable over time, even if the "personnel" changes, that is, independently of the (dis-)continuity of speaker groups.[6]

Taken together, such phenomena show that grammatical systems are grounded in com-sits and do not require bound languages and linguistic borders (and possibly not even specific communities). Some free-range language settings take this even further, with language-agnostic grammatical patterns, that is, patterns that do not involve any "language" specification at all. Examples for this "grammar without language" phenomenon come from two very different com-sits: urban markets and digital social media.

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[5]See our discussion of Lüdeling et al. (2022) in Chapter 4.2 above on "socially recurring" patterns.

[6]See also Khanina (2021) for linguistic associations with geographic or territorial social groups (rather than ethnicities) for the nomadic people of the Lower Yenisei in northern Siberia.

5.2 Grammar without "languages": What market cries and emoji have in common

I have always been interested in number assignments (e.g., Wiese 2003), and a market is, of course, a great place to investigate these, since numbers play an important role in sales interactions. In our project on the Berlin Maybachufermarkt, we found a large range of variation in the way sellers offered their products. I illustrate this with some examples in (1) below. I transcribed all number words as Arabic numerals to make it easier to read. The other words are nouns referring to fruit or vegetable that you will probably recognise (possibly apart from Turkish *roka* 'rocket'), numeral classifiers (German *Stück* lit. 'piece', and Turkish *tane* lit. 'grain') and container nouns (German *Schale* 'bowl', *Kiste* 'box', and *Packung* 'package', and Turkish *kasa* 'box'). To make it more reader-friendly, I marked all vegetable nouns by italics, and classifiers and container nouns by bold script. As in the market example in Chapter 3.2, I distinguished elements by colour according to different "languages" here: English is marked in purple, German in green, and Turkish in red (in case you overlook it: the "1" in the last example is English).

(1)   Offering produce at the Maybachufermarkt: some examples

      2 **Stück** 1,50 *Brokkoli*
      2 **Schale** 3 *Cherimoya*
      Kiste 3 Euro *Rucola*
      Kiste 3 *Mango*
      Avocado **Kiste** 3 Euro
      roka **kasa** 4 Euro
      Brokkoli 3 **Stück** 1,50
      Cherimoya 2 **Schale** 3
      Mango **Schale** 1 Euro
      Mango 3 **Schale** 2
      2 Euro 4 **Stück**
      1 Euro **Stück**
      1 2 **tane**
      5 **Stück** 23 Euro
      2 **tane** 10 Euro
      4 **Schale** 2 Euro
      2 **Stück** 15
      Stück 1 Euro
      Packung 2 Euro
      2 **tane** 16
      1 **Stück** 50 Cent

At first glance, this kind of variability might give the impression that "anything goes" here, but a closer look reveals a recurring pattern in this linguistic diversity. This pattern involves three main components: an expression for the kind of product, one for its quantity, and one for the price. The way these elements are combined is not random, but organised by a number of rules restricting their syntactic categories, their positions, and their presence or optionality:

- The expressions for the product kind are nouns; the product quantity is expressed by a cardinal numeral followed by either a classifier or a container noun; and the price, by a cardinal numeral followed by the currency.

- The expressions for product quantity and price are adjacent, while the one for the product kind goes in the periphery. Their linear order with respect to each other is variable: we can have first the quantity and then the price, or the other way round, and the expression for the product can either be in the left or in the right periphery.

- The expressions for the product kind and for the currency are optional. The numeral in the expressions for the quantity and for the price can be left out if it refers to 'one'.

This, then, indicates a systematic linguistic pattern that emerged in the comsit of sales interactions at the market. Interestingly, this pattern can be used for elements across "language" boundaries. As illustrated by the examples above, there might be some defaults: in our data, elements associated with German are dominant, followed by Turkish, and then English. However, in principle elements from any language are possible here, and, as we saw in the passage in (1) above, the range of possible resources can be continuously broadened as speakers add new elements to their repertoire (e.g., Hebrew numerals in (1) on page 27). The last example in (1) illustrates that speakers can also combine elements associated with different languages, e.g., English and German in *one Stück fünfzig Cent*.

We can capture this with the following lexical entry for this pattern (Figure 5.1).

SYN: Coord$_1$

Coord   N$_6$

QP   QP

Q$_2^0$ N$_3^0$ Q$_4^0$ N$_5^0$

SEM: TRADE$_1$ (#$_2$(UNIT$_3$(KIND$_6$)), #$_4$(CURR$_5$))
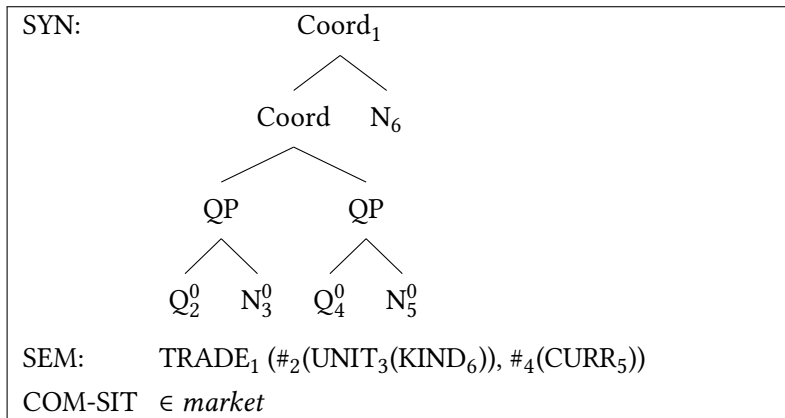
COM-SIT ∈ *market*

Figure 5.1: Entry for offering-produce pattern on the market

Lower indices in this entry indicate links between syntactic and semantic components. The syntactic structure represents a coordination, which accounts for the flexible order of elements with respect to each other and their adjacency within the pattern. We have two quantifier phrases with cardinal numerals (Q^0) and simple nouns (N^0) as head adjuncts, which are linked to the semantic representation of numbers (#) and either a unit of quantity (UNIT) or a currency (CURR). Units of quantity are individuals identified by classifiers, or they are containers identified by container nouns.[7] These quantifier phrases form a coordination that is then, at the next level, coordinated with another noun (N) that semantically refers to the kind of product (KIND).

This grammatical pattern is associated with the market, and it has some characteristics that distinguishes it from what we are used to in, for instance, German and Turkish, two dominant market languages with typologically different numeral constructions. It involves a number of simple nouns that do not receive number marking. This does not only hold for the classifiers involved, which wouldn't get number marking in German or Turkish either (as is typical for classifiers in general). It also holds for container nouns and for vegetable nouns, which would receive plural in standard German, although not in Turkish. This behaviour might hence be influenced by Turkish, which is one of the dominant market languages, and it might be further supported by general cross-linguistic tendencies for nouns to be transnumeral.[8] A feature that sets the *offering-produce* pattern apart from both German and Turkish numeral constructions, as well as

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[7]For a detailed discussion of the semantics of numeral constructions, see Wiese (2003).

[8]Cf. Wiese (2019).

from the other languages frequently heard at the market, is its status as a co-ordination that supports adjacency but no deeper syntactic dependencies. This might be something underlying other characteristic grammatical patterns at the market as well,[9] suggesting a converging market grammar.

This "market grammar" was confirmed by speakers' judgements that we elicited in our focus group discussions with cooperating sellers. Using examples of German product nouns and container nouns that are often used at the market, we asked them whether one could also say "zwei Mango**s**" ('two mango**s**') or "zwei Kiste**n**" ('two box**es**'). This use of standard German plural forms got roundly rejected for the market setting, with negative answers as the following (my translation):

(2) Can one also say something like "zwei Mangos" or "zwei Kisten"?
    - Not "Mangos". "Mango"!
    - Nobody says "Mangos" here!
    - "Kiste"! That's how one talks on the market.
    - No plural on the market!

Hence, what we find here is a systematic grammatical pattern associated with a particular com-sit, the market. This confirms our view of com-sits as the basis for linguistic systematicity: the com-sit of the market supports the emergence of characteristic patterns, a "market grammar" with its own rules, options, and restrictions.

In the case of the *offering-produce* pattern, the grammar is agnostic with respect to the "language" of the elements that follow these rules, and accordingly I did not include a language index for the entry in Figure 5.1 above. This is, then, the place where the "anything goes" bit comes in: the choice of elements with respect to their linguistic affiliation is principally open – there might be some defaults, but in general you use whatever works in communication. Hence, what we have here is grammatical structure without a language specification. This underlines the primacy of com-sits I discussed above, highlighting an important point: we don't need languages for linguistic systematicity, it is com-sits that engender grammatical systems. As a result, grammatical systems can transcend "language" borders.

This lack of "language" restrictions can also be found at the level of individual lexical items. In settings of contact between closely related languages, the linguistic integration can be such that not all elements can be associated with

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[9]Wiese & Schumann (2020). See Schumann et al. (2021) for a discussion of other grammatical phenomena on the market.

one specific source language. Pecht (2021) described this for *Cité Duits*, a Dutch-Maaslands-German contact variety that is a bit like an historic example of Kiezdeutsch: Cité Duits emerged among the children of immigrants in the coal mining district of Eisden in Belgian Limburg in the 1930s and served as a marker of identity in a linguistically diverse community. As Pecht (2021) shows, Cité Duits developed its own grammatical characteristics and, at the lexical level, included a number of elements that are not discernibly either Belgian, German, or Maaslands, but cross such boundaries. This further emphasises that languages are optional and that linguistic elements can do without a language index.

Another case in point comes from digital social media. In this type of free-range language use, we find a number of new graphic elements, including emoticons and emoji. These elements can be used referentially – an example would be if I texted you about using my 💻 for writing this book, or about my 🐕 who is lying under my desk while I do this. In a more interesting, and much more frequent use, though, emoji have pragmatic, non-referential functions, as illustrated by the following example from the data we collected in the RUEG group.

(3) WhatsApp message to a friend (German original on the left; idiomatic translation on the right):

Dikka Brat du weißt nicht grad was passiert ist ja...einfach eine Frau ist über Rot gefahren und ein auto hat sie erwischt 😭 ...einfach so traurig ja...Autofahrer hilft ihr zwar aber er könnte auch bremsen 😬 . Andererseits ist die Frau dumm. 13:44	'Man, bro, you don't know just what happened yes...simply a woman crossed the red light and a car got her 😭 ...simply so sad yes...Car driver is helping her all right but he could also brake 😬 . On the other hand, the woman is dumb.'

In examples like this, emoji can be understood as graphic discourse markers:[10] they do not contribute to the truth value of an utterance and their contribution is not at the referential level, but rather at the level of discourse. In this usage, emoji can fulfil different kinds of discourse functions that can be characterised as intersubjective (e.g., conveying a positive social persona), subjective (e.g., sadness or expressing a sympathetic stance towards the contents), and textual ones (e.g., marking narrative boundaries).

When you look at my translation into English, you will notice that I did not translate the emoji. This reflects what I called their *translinguistic* status: they are elements with no specific "language" affiliation, transcending linguistic borders.

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[10]Wiese & Labrenz (2021).

Interestingly, their grammar is the same across German and English. They appear dominantly after sentences or, more generally, communicative units (since such messages do not require full syntactic sentences), and this is also the position of the two emoji in our example. Emoji can also appear as lone items, that is, people might send just an emoji, with no additional text. This is often in reaction to a message, so in a broad approach, we can subsume this under the right-peripheral pattern. In addition, they can be used in the left periphery of a communicative unit, but this is less frequent.

We can account for these options with an ordered set < (CU)__ , __ CU > where the first element represents the more dominant choice. In this representation, "__" marks the position of the emoji, and "CU" stands for a communicative unit. Hence, this tuple captures that emoji appear typically after a communicative unit ("CU __"), but can also, less frequently, appear in front of it ("__CU"). Emoji as lone items can be captured by marking the first "CU" as optional (indicated through round bracketing). An entry for these translinguistic graphic discourse markers could hence look like in Figure 5.2.

PHON:	[unicode], e.g., 😊 or 😁
SYN:	< (CU) __, __ CU >
PRAG:	intersubjective, subjective, textual discourse functions
COM-SIT	∈ *digital-social-media*

Figure 5.2: Entry for emoji

This gives us a lexical entry for emoji in general. The phonological representation stands for the different unicode definitions that identify individual emoji. The choice of individual elements and their specific pragmatic range can differ, for instance for age groups: I gave two variants of the 'smiling face' emoji as an example, where the first variant seems to be more typical for the Boomers among us, while the second is currently preferred by the younger crowd (… at least by those of them that are still using emoji and have not switched to emoticons in order to distance themselves from the emoji-enthusiastic older generation).

Different usage patterns can also occur in different cultural contexts, and in principle also for different language contexts, of course. The important point is that a specific language affiliation is not necessary for the linguistic systematicity we observe here. Just like the market cries above, this free-range language use shows us that it is the com-sit that calls the shots: the com-sit (in this case digital social media) is the basis for the emergence of linguistic systematicity, in

written as much as in spoken language, and the fact that patterns can also remain agnostic with respect to languages makes this particularly salient.

So, what is the point of languages and dialects, then? Do we do away with them altogether, just sticking to registers and be done? The next chapter shows that free-range language also points to an important function of languages, namely as social indices.

6 "Languages" index belonging

6.1 Languages as optional social indices

The elements co-occurring in particular com-sits form linguistic systems; they are integrated with each other through grammatical patterns. This is all that is needed for grammatical systems to work, and accordingly, this is all that we get in some settings, as witnessed, for instance, at the Maybachufermarkt. However, in other settings, the system that comes out of such co-occurrences takes on a language index, and this index can then become a salient feature of the individual linguistic elements themselves.

Different elements are now not just associated with each other through such co-occurrence in com-sits, but as members of the same "language". As such, they can retain this index if they are used in new com-sits. For instance, as mentioned in 4.1 above, for my daughter, *tea* developed from one of the words she used in com-sits with Daddy to an "English" word, and as such it would be appropriate with anyone with whom she was expected to speak "English". And when *bye bye* takes on the "English" index, this does not, in principle, prevent it from being used in the context of "German" (in the same settings as, e.g., *Wauwau* and *Tee*) or "Turkish" (together with, e.g., *kuçu kuçu* and *çay*), but that will then be a marked usage: an English word used in German or Turkish.

Typically, "language" indices will be based on general, more abstract com-sits. The same "language" index usually holds across systems that are associated with a range of more specific com-sits, for instance encompassing both informal and formal settings and/or different named "dialects". In general, we will find a stronger separation and fewer shared elements in (macro) contexts with a monolingual habitus and standard language ideology, that is, with stronger ideologies of linguistic purism.

The development of a "language" index is an optional one, but one that has powerful social implications. "Languages", including language borders and named languages, can play an important role for negotiating and marking social groups and affiliations. The link between group affiliation and language was also at the bottom of European nation-state building, with its nexus of "one country – one

nation – one language", which is what got us settled with our present idea of bound languages in the first place.

This is by no means a natural or automatic development, but rather one that depends on a societal macro context that supports such constructions, often backed by purist language ideologies that reinforce linguistic borders.[1] "Languages" then emerge as social indices. This involves a second-order indexicality in the sense of Silverstein (2003), or a marker in Labov's (1972) distinction of indicators vs. markers.[2] A first-order index or Labovian indicator emerges when elements are used together in the same com-sits. Once this co-occurrence takes on a meaning of itself, this can establish a second-order index.

In a further development, we can also find Labovian stereotypes or higher-order indices in the sense of Silverstein, which can emerge when such varieties are then associated with specific social groups as their speech communities. Linguistic elements carrying a certain language index can then signal associated stereotypes of group prestige or belonging. This can also involve *iconisation* in the sense of Irvine & Gal (2000), where the language is perceived as having such stereotypical features as well, thus iconically reflecting the social group it is associated with. The association of a language or dialect with certain groups can also be exploited, for instance, in patterns of "crossing" in the sense of Rampton (1995).

In 1750, when Voltaire was in Prussia, he wrote in a letter to the Marquis de Thibouville:

> Je me trouve ici en France. On ne parle que notre langue. L'allemand est pour les soldats et les chevaux. (Voltaire 1750)

> ['I find myself in France here. One speaks only our language. German is for soldiers and horses.']

This quote, which is pretty well known in Germany, neatly brings together some of the aspects of languages as social indices. First of all, language use is separated along the borders of named languages, and these are associated with different nations or countries. So, when French is dominant somewhere, one feels oneself 'in France'. Second, as somebody from France, one belongs to the social group that owns this language, it is 'our language'. Finally, the com-sits where

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[1] Cf. also Krämer et al. (2022) on 'language making'; Heller & Duchêne (2016) on language as a commodity in late capitalism.

[2] Cf. Johnstone et al. (2006) for an integration of the two systems.

one encounters a language might reflect well or badly on it. So, restricting German to com-sits with 'soldiers and horses' is a bit of a put-down, since soldiers are associated with stereotypes of being subordinate and rough and horses are non-human. Taken together, this makes French as a language, and by association the French as a nation, come away as superior and more cultivated than German (which is also why this quote is usually cited somewhat self-deprecatingly in Germany).

19th century European nation-state building also threw in standard language ideology as a further restriction to what the "language" associated with a nation should be about.[3] This can be understood as a case of ideological recursion of monoglossic ideologies:[4] monolingual ideologies restrict language use to one "language" at the first level, and standard language ideology restricts this language to a specific variety at the next level.

Note, though, that this further restriction is not a necessary ingredient for languages as social indices. The use of a language as a means to build unity through external borders can also be observed in the absence of standard language ideology and prescriptivism. A striking example is the free-range language setting of Yiddish in Israel. As Assouline (2017: Ch.1.4.1; 2021) describes, the ultra-orthodox (Haredi) community in Israel who speaks Yiddish as the main family language does not enforce any linguistic standardisation, but rather accepts a wide range of variability: "Speakers do not usually attribute any socio-cultural value to 'correct' language" (Assouline 2017: 18). Yet, this does not prevent the use of language as a marker of belonging and solidarity. Yiddish textbooks for girls do not prescribe a specific dialect, leaving it, e.g., open which grammatical gender to use for certain nouns, and girls are told that it does not matter how they speak, as long as they do it the way their family does, using Yiddish in contrast to the larger Israel Jewish society, which is dominantly Hebrew-speaking (Assouline, p.c.). It is the use of Yiddish, that is, of elements and patterns indexed as "Yiddish", that signals belonging, not necessarily the observance of a specific kind of standardisation.

In our research on the Maybachufermarkt we found that the use of different "languages" served as a linguistic marker of alignment and solidarity with different ethnic groups. In her ethnographic study, İrem Duman Çakır observed that ethnicity-language ties played a key role in the language that sellers chose to approach passers-by. Based on people's outer appearance and their perceived accent, they made hypotheses about group membership and ethnic belonging and

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[3]Cf. Hüning et al. (2012).
[4]Irvine & Gal (2000); Fuller (2018).

then aimed to use a customer's "own language" in order to engage them in a sales interaction.[5] In such practices, languages are used to index different ethnicities.

This can also trickle down to individual expressions. As Duman (2019) shows, an important distinction at the market is that between speakers constructed as Turkish or Arabic Muslims, and others. Sellers who perceive themselves as belonging to the first group use different forms of address towards female customers from this in-group than to outsiders. Female passers-by perceived as in-group members will be addressed as *abla*, which is associated with Turkish (lit. 'older-sister'). Using *abla* signals respect ('older') and mutual belonging ('sister'), and it is the second aspect that is reinforced through its sociolinguistic association with Turkish. Towards passers-by perceived as outsiders, a seller will use *Madame*. This is a term of address that is used in Turkey as well and also signals respect. Unlike *abla*, though, it is a loanword that is not closely linked to Turkish, but rather has a more neutral association. Duman Çakır describes that it became clear how important these markers are when she once inadvertently transgressed this rule during her ethnographic research. While working as a seller at one of the market stalls, she addressed a passer-by as *Madame*, and got the indignant response "Ne Madamı? Türküm ben!" 'Why "Madame"? I am a Turk!' (Duman 2019).

Such observations point to the use of languages as social indices even in free-range settings that offer speakers a large degree of freedom to transcend culturally defined language borders, a kind of language use that has been captured by the concept of "translanguaging".[6] According to Li Wei (2021), humans might have a "translanguaging instinct", that is, an instinct to use language as a fluid repertoire that does not obey the boundaries of named nation-state languages. However, in the "languagised" societal macro contexts that are dominant today, languages as bound entities can be real in speakers' minds and as part of speakers' competences.[7] Our socialisation into languagised societies means that language indices become a familiar means for us to signal group membership, belonging and social identities.[8] Language borders can then take on a life of their own, segregating linguistic resources. As a consequence, in certain settings, crossing such borders might not feel necessarily more natural, and such practices as translanguaging might have to be (re-)learned.[9]

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[5]Cf. Duman (2019), Schulte & Duman (2019).

[6]See, for instance, García (2009), García & Tupas (2018).

[7]Cf. Jaspers & Madsen (2019).

[8]Cf. Møller (2019).

[9]Ruuska (2019).

The naming of languages and dialects can lead to further establishing them. In the case of urban contact dialects, this has sometimes been criticised as deliminating and essentialising fluid practices,[10] and this is certainly a danger that any labelling brings with it (including such emic labels as, e.g., *Kiezdeutsch* or *Sheng*, and their subsequent use by linguists). However, from a perspective of languages as indices, it can also contribute to empowering speakers:[11] a label can help establish a new linguistic index that gives prestige to a dialect as a legitimate variety, counteracting perceptions of "broken language". I am following my colleague Philip Krämer from Free University Brussels on Twitter, and among his many insightful postings I noticed one where he draws a parallel between languages and food that highlights this point:[12]
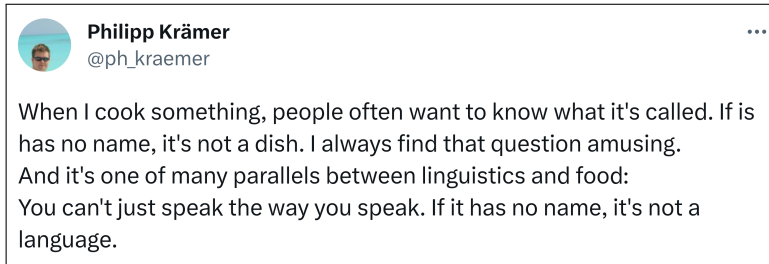

Philipp Krämer
@ph_kraemer

When I cook something, people often want to know what it's called. If is has no name, it's not a dish. I always find that question amusing.
And it's one of many parallels between linguistics and food:
You can't just speak the way you speak. If it has no name, it's not a language.

Figure 6.1: Labelling effects on language and food (https://twitter.com/ph_kraemer/status/1430209710393856001? Aug 24th, 2021)

6.2 Language mixing can index multilingual identities

While elements associated with specific bound languages can signal belonging to a certain group, mixing such elements can in turn signal belonging to a multilingual and/or multiethnic group. This is something we observed at the Maybachufermarkt, too. As I mentioned earlier, the market has gained a reputation for being linguistically and ethnically diverse. This is a source of pride among sellers, and it is also good for business, since it attracts customers from all over Berlin as well as tourists who come to enjoy the vibrant market atmosphere. In this setting, language mixing can be used for a higher-order indexicality to the highly diverse speech community that is associated with the market.

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[10]Cf. Jaspers (2008), Androutsopoulos (2011), Cornips et al. (2015).

[11]See also Wiese (2015).

[12]Cf. also Krämer (2017) on patterns of delegitimising multiethnolects and creoles in public debates.

In their market cries, sellers exploit this with a practice that Yüksel & Duman Çakır (*to appear*) analysed as "commercial code-switching". In this practice, sellers express the same meaning with elements from different named languages, for instance going "taze Brot, frische Brot". Semantically, this just means 'fresh bread, fresh bread', which would be kind of redundant. However, from the point of view of language indices, it is more informative: while *Brot* (German for 'bread') is repeated verbatim, 'fresh' is expressed by two different words, *taze* and *frisch*, which are associated with Turkish and German, respectively. This can serve a double purpose. Individually, each of these elements indexes a different language and by so doing, signals a different ethnic group; by using both, the seller can thus cover a larger group of potential customers passing by. Over and above this, though, juxtaposing these elements in one market cry indexes the multilingual and multiethnic market community, drawing on local pride and supporting an atmosphere that is good for commerce.

Such a pattern is also visible in some shop signs in the multilingual area surrounding the market. Here is an example from a pharmacy:

Figure 6.2: 'Pharmacy' signs in Turkish and German in Berlin-Kreuzberg

Again, we get two words with the same meaning: *Eczane* and *Apotheke* both mean 'pharmacy'. Since in addition, the symbol for a pharmacy is clearly visible on the door (the red "A" with the aesculapian snake), we probably would not need a translation for people to understand what the store is about. The main point is the social indexing: *Eczane* and *Apotheke* are indexed for Turkish and German, respectively, and having them side-by-side signals a validation of multilingual repertoires and the different ethnolinguistic groups associated with Turkish and German. Accordingly, this is a common occurrence in this area, with pharmacies,

shops, and offices putting a range of multilingual signs in their windows to attract customers.

An interesting case of this kind of indexing outside commercial settings can be found in Namibian German. In an investigation of a Facebook group of German-Namibians in Germany, Radke (2021: 468) quotes the following post:

(1)   Miskien.Perhaps,vielleicht, may bee… its raining?

In this case, the same meaning, 'perhaps', is expressed several times, through elements indexed for three different languages, Afrikaans (*miskien*), English (*perhaps*, *may bee*), and German (*vielleicht*). We can now analyse this practice as a group marker that works similar to the commercial code-switching at the Maybachufermarkt. Just like at the market, from a purely semantic point of view such "repetition" would be pointless, but it makes sense from the perspective of languages as indices. Indexing, in the same utterance, three languages – and in particular these three languages – points to the linguistic repertoire characteristic for German Namibians, and thus can serve as a higher-order index to this group. That the pattern is semantically redundant is then not pointless, but instead reinforces the sociolinguistic point.

In Namibia, heritage speakers of German form a close-knit group that finds itself sociolinguistically somewhat drawn in two opposite directions:[13] the ethnic German identification supports linguistic purism and the exclusive use of German in demarcation to other ethnic groups in Namibia, while the local Namibian identification supports language mixing and borrowing. The latter can also be in demarcation to the "Jerries", that is, us folks from Germany. Hence, when German Namibians find themselves in diaspora in Germany with its strong monolingual habitus, the second pattern becomes more relevant, and such language mixing can then become a strong in-group marker.

Translinguistic integration can also signal belonging to a new group that transcends ethnic boundaries. An example are linguistic practices among multiethnic adolescent peer groups. In such settings, drawing on linguistic resources associated with different heritage languages can signal belonging to a new, multiethnic group.[14] Accordingly, a general feature of the urban contact dialects that emerge in such settings is the integration and mixing of elements from different languages.

If we compare such dialects in different societal macro contexts, we find an interesting difference related to the strength of monolingual hegemonies there.[15] In

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[13]Cf. Wiese & Bracke (2021), Leugner (2022).

[14]Wiese 2022; cf. also Jungbluth (2016) on bilingual acts of identity expressing biculturality.

[15]Wiese (2022), Kerswill & Wiese (2022a).

societies with a general multilingual orientation, for instance Kenya, Cameroon, or 19th century Finland, the integration of elements across language borders can be more elaborate, so that the urban contact dialect can constitute a new mixed language. In societies more dominated by a monolingual habitus, such as Germany, the UK, or Tanzania, such developments are held back, and urban contact dialects typically constitute vernaculars of the majority language. This indicates that the com-sit impact is mediated by the societal macro context – or, if you remember our "pond" metaphor from Chapter 5.1: the local weather is influenced by the region's overall climate. (2) gives two examples, from Camfranglais and Kiezdeutsch, to illustrate this:

(2)   Language mixing in urban contact dialects

   a.   Camfranglais (Kießling & Mous 2004)

        On a   kick   mon agogo.
        one has stolen my   watch
        'My watch got stolen.'

   b.   Kiezdeutsch (Wiese & Polat 2016)

        Du bringst Teller Meller … Vallah.
        you bring   plates
        'You bring plates and stuff.'

Again, I have used colour-coding to mark elements associated with different languages: English is purple, German green, and Turkish red again; in addition, French is marked in blue and Hausa in orange. If you look at the two examples, you will notice that (2b) is much less mixed. In the Camfranglais example, a French grammatical frame is integrated with lexical elements from English and Hausa. In the Kiezdeutsch example, we find mostly German, with only one borrowed element, (Arabic-)Turkish *vallah*, which not accidentally is a discourse marker and stands in peripheral position.[16]

The monolingual habitus fosters a majority language that is so dominant that it holds a tight rein on linguistic developments here, and this is typical for Europe. Urban contact dialects in such societal settings constitute variations on their majority language that are a far cry from the integrated mixing that we find in most African countries. Mair (2022) reported from sociolinguistic interviews with Nigerian immigrants to Freiburg in South Germany that they missed

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[16]See, e.g., Fuller (2001), Matras (2020) on the easier borrowability of discourse markers.

a proper "street language" in Germany, and this explicitly did not refer to Kiez-deutsch, but to a kind of informal language use that involved a more liberal mixing and integration of linguistic resources.

However, these are gradual rather than categorical differences, and in both cases the power of the multilingual com-sit is such that it can also support new grammatical patterns. These are much less frequent in cases like Kiezdeutsch, but we do find them, and we can even observe some transfer of syntactic patterns from heritage languages, although that is exceedingly rare.

In order to illustrate such mixing even under conditions of a societal mono-lingual habitus, I chose an example in (2b) that does include such a rare kind of syntactic transfer. You will have noticed that I omitted *Meller* in my inter-linear translation, but had an additional "and stuff" in the idiomatic paraphrase. This is because *Meller* is actually not a word, but derived from *Teller* through *m*-reduplication. This is not a productive pattern in German outside Kiezdeutsch, but it is common in Turkish, which presumably is the source of this. We can account for the Kiezdeutsch pattern as shown in Figure 6.3.[17]

$$
\left.
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{PHON:} & \text{O} \quad \text{O}^{[\text{ONSET} \,:=\, /\text{m}/]} \\
\text{SYN:} & \text{N} \quad \text{N} \\
\text{SEM:} & e \\
\text{PRAG:} & \text{p} \, . \, \text{p} \in \{e^+, <\text{speaker } \text{I}^n e >, \text{C(speaker)}\} \\
\text{COM-SIT:} & kiez^D
\end{array}
\right\}
\quad
\begin{array}{c}
[m\text{-reduplication}]^T \\
/ \\
[m\text{-reduplication}]^D
\end{array}
$$

Figure 6.3: Entry for *m*-reduplication in Kiezdeutsch

At the phonological level, we have a placeholder for a representation (**O**) that gets copied and modified by replacing its onset with /m/. In syntax, this is paral-leled by two nouns. Only the first one has a semantic representation (**e**), since the second is a nonsense word (for instance *Meller* in the example above). Pragmati-cally, this can be associated with three possible patterns, represented as elements of a set (p ε { …}). In this set, **e^+** indicates elaboration: not just plates, but plates 'and stuff'. **I^n** stands for the negative expressive interval mentioned in 4.2 above; it captures the fact that *m*-reduplication can also express pejoration – something I called the 'whatever' effect, relating to the interaction of elaboration and pejo-ration here (think of your teenage daughter responding to your gentle criticism of the state of her room). Finally, **C** is a function we invented, based on a study

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[17]Cf. Wiese & Polat (2016).

with Kiezdeutsch speakers: it captures that by using this pattern, speakers can present themselves as "chilled" or "cool" (Wiese & Polat 2016).

Finally, the com-sit is characterised as a multiethnic urban youth setting in Germany, which I referred to as *kiez. Kiez* is part of informal com-sits. Since we have a strongly monolingually oriented society in Germany, com-sits are indexed with the majority language, German, by default, and *kiez* inherits this index: *kiez* $\in$ *informal*^{D}, hence *kiez*^{D}. At the same time, *kiez* is a com-sit that is characterised by multiethnicity and linguistic diversity involving a range of heritage languages. As a result, it supports the transfer of *m*-reduplication by encouraging language mixing in general (to mark a multilingual group), and the integration of Turkish elements in particular (given that Turkish is a salient heritage language in this setting).

This entry captures *m*-reduplication in Kiezdeutsch as a pattern that is associated with its Turkish source (represented by the line to *m*-reduplication indexed for Turkish, "T"). Kiezdeutsch *m*-reduplication has a lot of parallels with its Turkish source pattern, but at the same time, in this new *kiez* com-sit, the pattern has also developed its own characteristics, reflecting its integration into a German youth setting. The first one is phonological: in Turkish *m*-reduplication, only the first consonant is replaced by /m/, but in Kiezdeutsch, it is the whole onset, in line with German phonology. For instance, when the Turkish president Erdoğan once got annoyed by some critical Twitter threads, he threatened to 'eradicate Twitter Mwitter'.[18] In German, one would have said "Twitter Mitter", replacing the whole onset /tw/ by /m/, not just the first consonant /t/.[19] The second difference comes in at the pragmatic level: the "chilled" component in Kiezdeutsch is an additional feature that is absent in Turkish *m*-reduplication. This is linked to the urban youth aspect of the com-sit, rather than to German in general: the *kiez* setting is the basis for higher-order indices to a speech community stereotyped as "cool".

An interesting example of social indexing through language mixing comes from the phonetic de-integration of loan words. At the beginning, in Chapter 2.1, I discussed the integration of *Computer* as a loan word into German to highlight the reality of grammatical systems. Using a metaphor from Star Trek, I compared linguistic systems to Borg-like collectives that integrate loan words along the lines of "You will get grammatically assimilated. We will add your linguistic distinctiveness to our own.". However, resistance is not always futile, and we can actually have words de-integrating again. When I grew up, French loanwords like

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[18]"Twitter Mwitter hepsinin kökünü kazıyacağız"; see Wiese & Polat (2016: 247).
[19]Cf. also Stamer (2014).

Orange, *Restaurant*, or *Parfüm* in German were fully integrated phonologically and we pronounced them with German vowels ([ʔoʁaŋʒə], [ʁɛstoʁaŋ], [paʁfyːm]). However, this has been changing, and I hear my daughters pronouncing these words with nasalised vowels that make them much closer to the French version and less integrated into the German phonological system ([ʔoʁɑ̃ːʒə], [ʁɛstoʁɑ̃], [paʁfœ̃]). At first, this felt a bit stylised to me and even slightly pretentious, but with more and more exposure, I increasingly find myself doing the same.

Such de-integration seems odd from the point of view of grammar, given that the way to go for loanwords is to blend in rather than to stick out, so we should expect them to integrate more and more, rather than make a U turn. However, this makes sense if we understand languages as social indices: flagging the original "Frenchness" of loans can signal multilingual competences in times of globalisation, so that it now sounds unknowledgeable and slightly provincial to pronounce them too German. Using pronunciation for such signalling works well because phonetic deviations are salient and thus useful for social indexing, but they do not overly affect the grammatical system, and hence the linguistic integration is preserved. This, then, explains the exceptional behaviour that has been observed for the phonological/phonetic domain compared to morphosyntax when it comes to borrowing.[20]

6.3 Language separation can index formality

The fact that languages function as indices can also work the other way round and support language separation, rather than mixing. As mentioned, European nation-states build on ideological ties between nation and language. This also means that they are often dominated by a linguistic purism that delegitimises the combination of elements indexed for different languages, and standard language ideologies discourage mixing. As a result, com-sits with higher formality, which are associated with such "standard language", tend to restrict themselves to a single language index. In heritage language settings where language mixing is otherwise common, language separation can then still be preserved as a high-formality marker.

In an open-guise study on register perception, we asked German Namibians to listen to recordings in German that differed with respect to language separation:[21] one involved lexical borrowings from English and Afrikaans, while the other did not. We asked participants whether the different recordings sounded

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[20]For instance, Poplack (2018).
[21]Wiese et al. (2021)

more like talking to a friend, i.e., pointing to an informal setting, or to a teacher, i.e., a formal setting. Responses indicated that recordings with lexical borrowing were more strongly associated with the informal situation, while those without were associated with the formal one. This suggests that separating elements along language indices can mark com-sits with a higher formality, even in groups where mixing signals belonging.

Møller (2019) describes something similar for heritage-Turkish in Denmark. In his paper, he quotes a young man who reports speaking only Turkish, without any Danish mixed in, to his girlfriend's parents, his prospective in-laws, even though "they speak fine Danish", explaining "it's just the respect [...]. I have to present myself from the best side" (Møller 2019: 45). Again, separating elements along language indices can mark formality.

Looking at this from the opposite side, that means that the combined use of elements indexed for different languages can in turn serve as a marker of informal registers. In other words, code switching and borrowing can take on informal register associations. This puts elements from different languages on the same plane as informally marked elements from the same language, something which is very much in line with our approach to com-sits: as discussed in 4.2 above, when we understand com-sits as the basis of linguistic systems, we can integrate "language" differences and differences in formality under a unified perspective of registers as linguistic choices that are associated with different com-sits.

What counts as language mixing vs. "pure" Turkish, German, etc., depends on what kinds of cross-linguistic transfer are perceived as such: what do speakers notice as coming from another linguistic system? To test this, in our perception study on Namibian German, we included a third stimulus: a recording that involved grammatical, rather than lexical transfers. Responses to this stimulus took a middle place between talking to a friend and to a teacher. We interpret this as evidence for a lesser social salience of grammatical compared to lexical variables. This is in line with approaches assuming that elements that involve more overt material are more consciously accessible and thus easier to borrow.[22]

An example that shows how this can pan out in the formation of new varieties comes from our corpus of Namibian German.[23] As part of this corpus, we have recordings where speakers were asked to play-act talking about the same accident in an informal setting with a friend and in a formal setting with a teacher.[24]

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[22]E.g., Thomason & Kaufman (1988), Labov (2001), Matras (2020), Levon & Fox (2014), cf. also Wiese & Bracke (2021), Sauermann et al. (to appear) for Namibian German.

[23]DNam corpus; Zimmer et al. (2020); see https://hu.berlin/DNam.

[24]This was done using the 'LangSit' method of eliciting naturalistic, register-differentiated language use (https://hu.berlin/LangSit; Wiese 2020b), which also provided the basis for the RUEG corpus.

In their descriptions, they often mention that the person who had the accident did not seem to have been injured. In German, you can express this using the phrase "weh tun", lit. 'do/cause painful'. This is kind of an awkward construction because it is atelic. The person who gets injured, the RECIPIENT, is expressed by a dative phrase, while the SOURCE or AGENT gets to be the subject. If you just want to express that you injured yourself, without including the source, you have to put it like 'I did me painful'.

This makes the standard German pattern inconvenient to use if the important player is the injured party, and the source is not relevant. In contrast to this, Afrikaans offers a pattern much more suitable for this: *seer kry*, lit. 'get/receive painful' expresses the RECIPIENT as a subject and does not need a dative complement. Not surprisingly, then, German Namibians, who have this pattern at their disposal as part of their multilingual resources, make good use of it. They integrate the pattern into their German by using a close German counterpart of the verb *kry*, namely *kriegen*, which basically means the same ('to get/receive') and is also phonologically somewhat similar (diachronically, they go back to the same root).

Now, what is used as the complement of *kriegen* depends on the com-sit. In informal settings, speakers tend to use the original Afrikaans element, *seer*, resulting in *seer kriegen* as a Namibian-German pattern that combines the language indices of German and Afrikaans, thus highlighting the speech community's multilingual character. In formal settings, though, this kind of language mixing should be avoided. Speakers solve this by replacing *seer* with its German counterpart, *weh*. This results in *weh kriegen*, a Namibian-German pattern that, unlike *weh tun*, has all the advantages of the Afrikaans model, but does not involve any overt lexical material from a language other than German. There is nothing in it that is socially indexed as "Afrikaans", making it suitable for com-sits that favour language separation, rather than mixing.

Figure 6.4 summarises this development. Elements indexed for Afrikaans (A) are rendered with dotted lines, those indexed for German (D) or, more specifically, for Namibian German (ND), with dashed lines. *kry* and *kriegen* are associated as crosslinguistic counterparts within the linguistic resources of Namibian Germans, as are *seer* and *weh*. The pattern of *seer kry* supports *seer kriegen* in informal com-sits, while *weh kriegen* is specified for formal ones.

What I particularly like about *weh kriegen* – despite its less pleasant semantics – is not only the rich translinguistic network of resources it builds on, but also what it shows us about linguistic dynamics: Namibian German does not only boast characteristic features in informal com-sits, but has also developed some
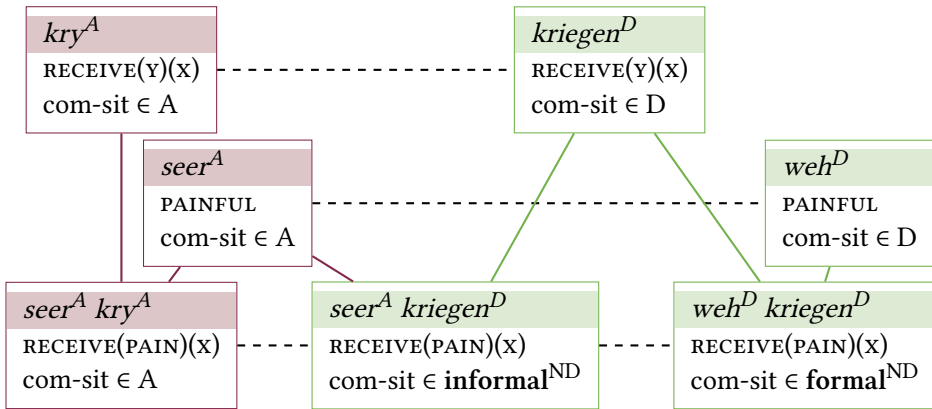
Figure 6.4: Com-sit differentiation for language mixing vs. separation in Namibian German *seer/weh kriegen*

new patterns in formal ones, supporting a new variety of Namibian standard German.[25]

The fact that abstract grammatical patterns are less socially salient as loans than overt lexical elements makes them suited for such a variety (as long as they are not highlighted and sanctioned as "wrong grammar" in metalinguistic discussions, e.g., at school). Since all their components are indexed as "German", they are perfectly fine in com-sits concerned with linguistic purism. This, then, illustrates the differential impact that language indices can have on developments in different com-sits, even though they are secondary to com-sits as the foundation of grammatical systems.

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[25]This variety also includes some lexical borrowings, but since these are more salient, they are generally restricted to words referring to Namibian-specific phenomena, e.g., *braai* for a certain kind of wood-based barbecue. See Kellermeier-Rehbein (2016) on such loans indicating a Namibian-German standard variety.

7 Conclusions: Com-sits, grammatical systems, and languages

In this book, I developed an architecture that allowed for grammatical systems without requiring languages and language borders. In so doing, I reconciled two strands of linguistic research, namely, on the one hand, sociolinguistic approaches to linguistic fluidity, (super-)diversity, and multi-competence and, on the other hand, structural approaches to linguistic coherence and grammatical systems. Researchers from these strands are usually not in the habit of talking to each other a lot. This would not need to bother us too much (after all, not everyone needs to talk to everyone else all the time), if it wasn't for the fact that the two strands provide us with two core insights that seem to be irreconcilable at first sight:

Sociolinguistic findings reveal bound 'languages' to be social constructs that cannot capture the diversity and fluidity of actual language use.	Findings on linguistic structure indicate internal organisation and coherence and the workings and interactions of distinct grammatical systems.

I showed that we can actually have it both ways: we can acknowledge that languages are social constructs that can impose boundaries that do not reflect speakers' linguistic realities, and at the same time we can recognise the workings of different grammatical systems that are also evident in the way speakers use language. As a basis for this, I introduced a specific concept of communicative situations, or short "com-sits". I understood com-sits as the setting of communication, understood as a social activity that is typically centred around language production and perception, through which meaning is (co-)constructed. As such, they provided the social and functional characteristics associated with different choices of linguistic elements. I modelled such com-sits as part of the information represented in lexical entries (in a broad sense of lexical entries that also encompasses more abstract patterns).

I demonstrated that, with this in hand, we can accommodate both sociolinguistic and structural findings, showing that languages are not real, but grammatical

systems are, and they are anchored in com-sits. Once a grammatical system is in place, it can optionally be socially indexed as a named language or dialect. This primacy of com-sits means that we do not need languages for grammatical structure. It put the traditional picture on the head, making languages not the basis for linguistic differentiation, but a peripheral, optional addition.

Note that this also means that we do not need to assume multiple grammars for different varieties, but can instead do with an inventory of patterns. The question of one grammar vs. multiple grammars does not occur here because we do not keep within language borders with the grammatical patterns we posit: grammatical patterns are captured through lexical entries that are associated with different com-sits, and they can combine into larger grammatical systems by virtue of shared com-sits.

I fleshed out this architecture by looking at examples of "free-range" language, a metaphor I introduced for language in settings that are less confined by normative ideologies of monolingualism and linguistic "purity". Such settings might still feel some effects of monoglossic ideologies dominant in their societal macro context, but they will be less impacted by them. I discussed findings from four kinds of settings that have also been targeted in approaches to linguistic (super-)diversity and fluidity: urban markets, heritage language settings, multiethnic adolescent peer groups, and digital social media. I argued that such settings allow us to shed further light on the role of com-sits and languages. Specifically, I showed that there are three lessons we can learn from them:

(I) Com-sits support linguistic differentiation. In speakers' repertoires, linguistic elements can be overall connected as part of (generic) language. However, they are also organised into different domains according to their use in different com-sits. Speakers choose different linguistic resources from their repertoire according to the com-sit they are in. This is something children learn early on in first language acquisition, and it can also be observed in the emergence of new varieties, for instance in the case of urban contact dialects.

(II) Grammar is grounded in com-sits. The co-occurrence of elements in a com-sit supports selective strengthening of the connections between them. This way, com-sits provide the grounds for linguistic systematicity; they support the organisation of linguistic resources from an unstructured "feature pool" into systematic "feature ponds", that is, linguistic ecologies that support characteristic grammatical patterns. This implies that there can be grammatical patterns that are associated with specific com-sits, but do not involve "language" boundaries. I discussed evidence for this from both spoken and written language, including language-agnostic constructions at an urban market, and emoji as translinguistic discourse markers in digital social media.

(III) "Languages" index belonging. Linguistic systems can support the emergence of languages as sociolinguistic indices. This is an optional development that draws on a specific societal macro context, namely one that constructs elements as belonging to a certain "language" and reinforces "language" borders. Such macro contexts are typically found as a legacy of European nation-state ideologies. Languages are hence social constructs imposed upon linguistic systems, but that does not make them less real from a sociolinguistic point of view. Quite the opposite: as social indices, they play an important role for negotiating patterns of belonging. The choice of elements with different "language" indices can call up different ethnic identities, for instance to exploit associations with different groups of customers at a market. In addition to such different "language" choices, I showed that mixing or separating elements along "language" indices can also fulfil differential functions in multilingual settings. Transcending the borders of socially constructed languages can be used to indicate multilingual group identities in informal settings, while keeping within such borders can index formality. Once "language" borders are established, this can then also support dynamics in the other direction, that is, elements that are identified as belonging to a certain language can, as a result, be used in a certain com-sit. However, this is a secondary development that builds on the emergence of systems that are initially based on com-sits.

So, languages and their boundaries turn out to be anything but superfluous; rather, they have a range of important uses as social indices. However, that does not mean that they are needed for grammar. For grammatical systems, we can happily do without named languages and language borders, since all we need is com-sits. In a way, this leads us to an unexpected outcome: it is the grammar folks who should do away with "languages" in their work, while sociolinguists should find them most relevant.

I hope I have not managed to alienate both sides with this conclusion now, but rather that this might stimulate a further integration of grammatical and sociolinguistic approaches. I believe that this is important and fruitful for our understanding of language, not least of all for settings outside monolingual and purist hegemonies. These free-range settings are crucial for a complete picture of what language is actually like. So far, this picture has been infelicitously skewed towards an historic and geographic peculiarity introduced by European nation-state building: the imagined linguistically homogeneous setting. In contact-linguistics, there has lately been an increased interest in small-scale multilingualism in traditional societies that have not been impacted by European colonialism. I hope to have shown that we can find interesting examples of free-range language

even within industrialised societies, as counter-sites to a monoglossic macro context

The dynamics of free-range language settings with their high diversity at levels of both linguistic structure and social meaning makes them a particularly interesting domain for linguistic analysis and not least of all for integrative theory building. For future work, I believe it will be promising to see what further insights such free-range language settings can afford us into linguistic architecture, grammar, and the social and linguistic reality of com-sits.

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Name index

Grammatical systems without language borders

Current research in grammatical analysis and sociolinguistics points to two core characteristics of language that seem incommensurable at first sight: (1) research on linguistic structure indicates internal organisation and coherence, and the workings and interactions of distinct grammatical systems, but (2) sociolinguistic research suggests that language borders and bound 'languages' are counterfactual social constructs that cannot capture the diversity and fluidity of actual language use. This seems to constitute something like a "quantum-linguistic" paradox: language systems aren't real (they are just ideological constructions), but at the same time, they are a reflection of actual structure.

This book shows how this paradox can be resolved through an architecture that allows for grammatical systems without presupposing language borders: this architecture puts communicative situations, rather than languages, at the core of linguistic systematicity, while named languages are captured as optional sociolinguistic indices. The approach builds on insights from "free-range" language, a metaphor for language in settings that are less confined by monoglossic ideologies. The author looks at four different kinds of settings: urban markets, heritage language settings, multiethnic adolescent peer-groups, and digital social media.

Central lessons to be learned from such free-range language settings are: (1) communicative situations support linguistic differentiation and can thus be the basis for fluid registers; (2) grammatical systematicity is grounded in communicative situations and does not require bound languages and linguistic borders; (3) named 'languages' can emerge as social indices signalling belonging, but this is an optional, not a necessary development.