Constructional pejoration in a language-contact situation:
$m$-doublets in urban German

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SFB 632 “Information Structure”
B6 Kiezdeutsch
T1 Urbane Language Variation

Denkwerk-Project (with C. Schroeder)
“Let’s do language” – Kiez goes Uni
Three examples

Er kommt schon wieder mit Fahrrad-Mahrrad
he comes yet again with bike mike
‘He comes by bike yet again.’

Die sind immer mit der letzten Minute. Ey, diese Schissermisser
they are always with the last minute man these shitter.mitter
‘They always come in the last minute. Man, these scaredycats.’

Lassma U-Bahn Mu-Bahn!
let.MP subway mubway
‘Let’s take the subway!’

How come?
What about it?
Background: urban German in a contact situation - Kiezdeutsch

A possible source: m-doublets in Turkish

Pejorative incorporations: Yiddish/English (shm-) Kiezdeutsch (m-)

Pejorative support: lexicalised m-doublets in German

Suggestion for a developmental path: from amplification to pejoration: The ‘whatever’ effect

Constructional pejoration: grammatical vs. pragmatic contributions
Kiezdeutsch – a new urban dialect

• Multiethnic and multilingual urban settings in Europe
• Rise of new linguistic practices, incl. new variants of majority languages, in particular among adolescents
• Speakers from different ethnic backgrounds, including the majority one
  – multiethnolects
  – new dialects
  – urban vernaculars

...
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Kiezdeutsch – a new urban dialect

• ≈ 1/5 of the population in Germany has a “migrant background”

• higher proportion of younger people in this population

• higher in urban areas: about ½ of under 18 year olds

→ Emergence of multiethnic and multilingual contexts that foster a special linguistic dynamics for new developments in the majority language
JASKIMI
Ich Liebe dich

Lasst uns lieben

Aber doch nicht heute!

Doch?

Mam amour
I love

Maap 6 äye

LIEBE

Versprochen

Zumin ich werde
sich auf immer und
evrig lieben

-ORIS

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Kiezdeutsch – a new urban dialect

Interesting convergence of findings in different countries / languages at levels of

- Language system
- Language use
- Language attitudes
The dynamics of diversity

- Ample language contact opportunities
- Large range of mono- and multilingual competences
- Higher tolerance of linguistic variation
- Loosening of grammatical restrictions

→ pioneer dialects
**m-doublets in Turkish**

Bahçede **ağac mağaç** yok.

*‘There are not trees or shrubs or bushes in the garden.’*

Dotor hastanın **gözüne mözüne** baktı.

*‘The doctor checked the patient’s eyes etc.’*

- **SEM**: amplification/generalisation (‘and so on’)
- **SYN**: syntactically integrated;
  base mostly nouns, but also poss. for verbs
- **colloquial**
**shm-doublets in Yiddish & English**

- **Yiddish**
  - šmus, šmir
  - Libe-šmibe
  - Gelt-šmelt

- **Turkish**
  - m-doublets

- **Yiddish**
  - Kingsley-Shmingsley
  - consommé-shmonsommé
  - pretty shmetty

- **English**

- **Southern 2005**

- **Spitzer 1952, Feinsilver 1961**

**pejoration** (‘ironical dismissal’)

- not syntactically integrated;
  - base mostly nouns, but also possible with adjectives; can be metalinguisic

- **colloquial**

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**m-doublets in urban German**

- **pejoration** (dismissal, devaluation) or casual / ‘cool’ marker

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Er kommt schon wieder mit Fahrrad-Mahrrad.

he comes yet again with bike mike

Lassma U-Bahn Mu-Bahn!

let.MP subway mubway

Die essen Chips Mips.

they eat crisps misps

“Could be he does not like it that they eat crisps, or he’s just cool.”

- devaluation, dismissal
- “cool”, “chilled”, “easy”

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**m-doublets in urban German**

“sounds youthful”
“vernacular that young people use”
“more for young people”
“when we are among ourselves”

- **pejoration** (dismissal, devaluation) *or* **casual / ‘cool’** marker
- **colloquial**: youth language / peer group situations
**m-doublets in urban German**

Er kommt schon wieder mit **Fahrrad-Mahrrad**.

- **pejoration** (dismissal, devaluation) *or* **casual / ‘cool’ marker**
- **colloquial**: youth language / peer group situations
- possible in different sentence types / speech acts

Lassma **U-Bahn Mu-Bahn!**

Kommt der **U-Bahn Mu-Bahn**?

- **Declarative**
- **Imperative**
- **Interrogative**

**Er kommt schon wieder mit Fahrrad-Mahrrad.**

*he comes yet again with bike mike*

**Lassma U-Bahn Mu-Bahn!**

*let.MP subway mubway*

**Kommt der U-Bahn Mu-Bahn?**

*comes he subway mubway*
*m*-doublets in urban German

Lassma U-Bahn Mu-Bahn fahren!
let.MP subway mubway go

Ich will mir noch Kleid Meid kaufen.
I want myself still dress mess buy

- pejoration (dismissal, devaluation) *or* casual / ‘cool’ marker
- colloquial: youth language / peer group situations
- possible in different sentence types / speech acts
- syntactic integration: continuation possible

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**m-doublets in urban German**

Die sind immer mit der letzten Minute. Ey, diese Schissermisser
they are always with the last minute man these shitter.mitter

Ich kauf mir noch *das Kleid Meid* dahinten.
I buy myself still a dress mess

- **pejoration** (dismissal, devaluation) *or casual / ‘cool’ marker*
- **colloquial**: youth language / peer group situations
- possible in different sentence types / speech acts
- **syntactic integration**: continuation possible with Det??

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m-doublets in urban German

Ich will mir noch *neues Kleid Meid kaufen.
I buy myself still new dress mess buy

- **pejoration** (dismissal, devaluation) or **casual** / ‘cool’ marker
- **colloquial**: youth language / peer group situations
- possible in different sentence types / speech acts
- **syntactic integration**: continuation possible with Det??
  no modification
  base: N, rather than Adj, V
Lexicalised $m$-doublets in German

‘rhyme duplication’:

Heckmeck, Kuddelmuddel, Techtelmechtel, Schickimicki

hassle jumble-bumble hanky-panky fancy-pancy
Lexicalised $m$-doublets in German

‘rhyme duplication’:

Heckmeck, Kuddelmuddel, Techtelmechtel, Schickimicki

hassle jumble-bumble hanky-panky fancy-pancy

*other consonants:* Remmidemmi, Larifari, ratzfatz

racket airy-fairy in a jiffy

similar: ‘ablaut duplication’:

Singsang, Wirrwarr, Mischmasch Krimskrams Wischiwaschi Tingeltangel

singsong hurly-burly mishmash hotchpotch wishy-washy honky-tonk

- mostly pejorative
  - $m$-doublets: base is usually no lexeme
  - not productive, lexicalised as one unit
  - both components semantically void

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Bzdęga 1965: 2nd most “accompanying feeling” for word formation by reduplication in German
A developmental path: The ‘whatever’ effect

Turkish *m*-doublets:
Amplification ‘and so on’

less specific: 
vagueness

speaker keeps information vague because s/he does not care about specifics

German lexicalised *m*-doublets
Pejoration

Yiddish *shm*-doublets

Kiezdeutsch *m*-doublets

speaker does not need to care: ‘chilled’, ‘cool’

referent is not worth caring:
 dismissal, devaluation

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## Constructional pejoration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHON:</th>
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<tr>
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<td>S</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PRAG:</td>
<td>WE(S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*phrasal integration expansion*
Constructional pejoration in a language contact situation

- New, productive $m$-doublets in German, similar to Yiddish $shm$-doublets
- Amplification as a basis for pejoration;
- Association of ‘cool’ / ‘chilled’ in youth language with pejoration via ‘whatever’ effect
- Pejoration through construction: semantic void + pragmatic ‘whatever’