

Urban contact dialects: A comparative view

Heike Wiese, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Multilingualism acts as a motor of linguistic developments, so multilingual communities can afford us a privileged view onto ongoing tendencies of language variation and change. A particularly interesting outcome of multilingual dynamics are urban contact dialects, which I understand as “urban vernaculars that emerged in contexts of migration-based linguistic diversity among locally born young people, marking their speakers as belonging to a multiethnic peer group” (Wiese, *to appear*).

These dialects benefit from both the dynamics of urban language contact and of youth, as a particularly innovative speaker group, making them a rich domain for research into language variation and change. Accordingly, there has been a high interest in such contact dialects across a diverse range of countries and local settings.

For two large geographical regions in particular, these phenomena have received a lot of attention from contact-linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives: Western Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. In my talk, I integrate these two research threads in a comparative discussion. I show how such an integrative approach can shed a light on the interaction of local settings with societal mono- vs. multilingual habitus, and its differential outcomes at structural and sociolinguistic levels.