Kiezdeutsch: Perceptions Of A Metropolitan Dialect Of German

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KIEZDEUTSCH: PERCEPTIONS OF A METROPOLITAN DIALECT OF GERMAN

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi

by

EMILY C. KRAUTER

May 2016
ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I explain perceptions of the German dialect Kiezdeutsch. The basis for the research came from four recorded interviews of male and female Kiezdeutsch speakers. I used the Kiezdeutsch recordings to perform research at the University of Mississippi by interviewing nine different German students who were studying abroad for the semester. The interviewees were separated into three different focus groups. I then performed a pilot study of perceptual dialectology followed by an open discussion. Although my sample size proved to be too small and limited to yield any statistically significant results, the data was regardless intriguing. This study focuses on the linguistic and social perceptions of Kiezdeutsch speakers from Kiezdeutsch speakers themselves as well as non-Kiezdeutsch speakers from Germany.

The data collected suggests that the speakers of the Kiezdeutsch dialect are more negatively perceived than the dialect itself. I also concluded that there appeared to be a gendered aspect of this dialect according to the data gathered as well as a possible link between the Kiezdeutsch dialect and Islam.
DEDICATION

Für meine Eltern und Maria. Ihr seid mein Herz.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank my advisor, Dr. Chris Sapp, who helped cultivate my interests in this incredible dialect and was a true source of support and wisdom throughout the process of writing this thesis. I also could not have financed my studies and research without the support of the Modern Languages Department as well as Mr. Graham Boyd. I thank Maria Pohle, too, from the University of Potsdam, who gave me superb insight into the Kiezdeutsch community and supplied me with recordings of these speakers, which was essential for my research and data collection. I am also grateful for the fantastic instruction and guidance from Dr. Corina Petrescu.

In addition, I thank Dr. Dylan Goldblatt for being an excellent and inspiring mentor during my time at the University of Mississippi. I must also send out my sincerest appreciation to Dr. Allison Burkette for serving on my thesis committee.

Lastly, I acknowledge the collegial support from my fellow graduate students, especially Kelly Franklin as well as my dear friends in CCM. Your encouragement and friendship have made this journey so very delightful.
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INTRODUCTION

Kiezdeutsch is a new linguistic phenomenon that has developed in Germany and was first noticed by German linguist, Heike Weise, in the 1990s (*Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht* 17). Kiezdeutsch has been defined as ‘lazy German,’ *Kanak Sprak*¹, *Gastarbeiterdeutsch*², and slang; however, Helmut Glück, a German linguist from Bamberg, Germany, believes this form of speech is actually closer to that of a sociolect (Schröder). Wiese, on the other hand, defines Kiezdeutsch as a *multiethnischen Dialekt* ‘multiethnic dialect,’ because it is not restricted to certain regions in Germany and commonly develops in urban neighborhoods by speakers with differing ancestral heritage (*Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht* 131).

The Kiezdeutsch dialect may have originated from the children of Turkish and Arabic immigrants but is also spoken by individuals who live in these multiethnic communities (Wittenberg and Paul, 98). The sociolect aspect of Kiezdeutsch, namely that it is not specific to a certain geographical location but rather, transcends borders and is defined through social contexts, makes it controversial. Kiezdeutsch is also considered by Wiese to be a *Turbodialekt* ‘Turbo dialect’ meaning that she considers it to be much more dynamic than other dialects because of how quickly the language develops (*Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht* 17).

¹ *Kanak Sprak* is a term used in Germany to describe the language that Near and Middle Eastern guest workers spoke. It comes from the word *Kanake* which is a derogatory term used for individuals in Germany with Near and Middle Eastern descent.

² *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* ‘Guest worker’s German’ — this denotes the language spoken by the guest workers in Germany during the 1960s (Stevenson, 162)
Although there is much that has already been discovered about the Kiezdeutsch dialect, many questions still remain.

In this thesis, I explore the perceptions of Kiezdeutsch speakers from the standpoint of the speakers themselves as well as from non-Kiezdeutsch German speakers. I investigate the native German views on Kiezdeutsch speakers through the analysis of a pilot study on perceptual dialectology as well as through three different focus groups. I focused my research on the possible religious and gendered aspects of Kiezdeutsch. It was my hypothesis going into the study that there was a connection between Islam and Kiezdeutsch, and that the female and male speakers of this dialect used it for different purposes and were perceived differently (the men being more negatively perceived than the women).

In the following chapters, I seek to answer my three main research questions:

1. How do Kiezdeutsch speakers perceive themselves and how are they perceived by non-Kiezdeutsch speakers in Germany?

2. Is there a link between Kiezdeutsch and Islam?

3. Is there a gendered aspect of Kiezdeutsch?

In chapter 2, I explain the origins of Kiezdeutsch and discuss the dialect’s various linguistic features. I also introduce the Kiezdeutsch controversy. Chapter 3 is dedicated to my research in the cities of Berlin and Potsdam, Germany. I discuss my research procedures, data collection and results from my projects. I also interpret the interviews from the Kiezdeutsch speakers by analyzing their personal linguistic attitudes concerning Kiezdeutsch. In chapter 4, I explain my research at the University of Mississippi. The two forms of data collection presented in this chapter are the pilot study on perceptual dialectology and focus groups.
The chapter is divided into several different sections that note the specific procedures for the data collection and analysis.

The concluding section presents the results from the studies as well as explains the limitations associated with this research study. In the chapter preceding the conclusion, chapter 5, the perceptions of Kiezdeutsch speakers in Germany and according to the data collected are explained. I share my personal experiences with the Kiezdeutsch dialect as well as the difficulties I encountered during my research abroad. It is also in this chapter that the gendered as well as Islamic factors of Kiezdeutsch are compared.
2.1 ORIGINS OF KIEZDEUTSCH

Professor Heike Wiese argues that Kiezdeutsch is indeed a variation of German (Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht 15). She believes that it is comparable to other, more historical German dialects such as Bavarian and Swabian, although it naturally has different components and characteristics. Two of the most noticeable distinctions this dialect displays are the Turkish and Arabic influences. It is also considered a ‘youth dialect,’ meaning the speakers of this dialect are primarily youths (Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht 13).

The importance of analyzing the speakers of this dialect helps differentiate it from Gastarbeiterdeutsch, especially considering that some of these speakers have no immigration background whatsoever, categorizing this dialect as limited to just Turkish and Arabic communities would be incorrect. Professor Heike Wiese began researching this dialect after she heard youths speaking a variation of Kiezdeutsch on a bus that was driving through Berlin-Kreuzberg (Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht 17).

Wiese’s book entitled, Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht ‘Kiezdeutsch: A new dialect develops’ introduces the Kiezdeutsch dialect and defends her stance through a series of recordings and linguistic data. Wiese interviewed several teenaged Kiezdeutsch speakers and had them record their daily conversations in order to analyze and study their form of speech.
Through her work, she was able to establish an online language corpus. The *KiezDeutsch-Korpus* ‘Kiezdeutsch corpus’ is a compilation of all of their recordings. Professor Wiese takes a definitive, albeit not popular, stance in her book, stating that Kiezdeutsch is a German dialect, not to be confused with *Kanak Sprak*³, ‘lazy German’ or ‘guest worker German’ and that we must study and recognize it as an important part of German culture (Wittenberg and Paul 98).

Many of the children and teenagers who started speaking Kiezdeutsch lived in multilingual families, meaning that they spoke perhaps Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic or Persian at home and Standard German in school (Wittenberg and Paul 98). The mix of languages, paired with the high levels of anglicism in German society, created the foundation for this dialect. As with any dialect, the teenagers speaking Kiezdeutsch used language as a means to preserve as well as create a new identity. This identity consists of German-born individuals maintaining and paying tribute to their multiethnic backgrounds.

Geographically, Kiezdeutsch started in Kreuzberg, which is one of twelve boroughs in Berlin. Kreuzberg is located almost precisely in the middle of Berlin. It is known for its alternative scene in the arts community but also for its large immigrant population with the majority of the immigrants coming from Turkey (Alisch). In fact, it was recorded in 2011 that 872,000 people in Berlin have an immigrant background (Rockmann). Of the 872,000 individuals recorded, 170,000 of them have Turkish heritage (Rockmann).

---

³ *Kanak Sprak* is a term used to denote the language used by immigrant workers from Near and Middle East who immigrated to Germany during the 1960s during the guest worker movement. This is a derogatory term.
It is also interesting to note that in Kreuzberg, where Kiezdeutsch is prevalent as well as where I
conducted some of my research, 30% of the inhabitants come directly or have parents that come
directly from an Islamic country (Rockmann). The percentage of teenagers and children from the
ages of 0-15 in Kreuzberg with an immigrant background is quite high, at an estimated 70% or
higher (Rockmann). One must remember that Turkish immigrants are considered to be the
largest ethnic minority group in Germany, which dates back to the 1960s when several entered
the country as guest workers (Woellert 16).

Today, Kreuzberg is still known as one of the cultural centers of Berlin and remains home
to the largest Turkish community in the city. It is quite natural, then, that a German dialect
would emerge in this neighborhood, where Turkish, Arabic and German languages as well as
cultures meet.

2.2 LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF KIEZDEUTSCH

The majority of Kiezdeutsch speakers are youths and are second or third generation
immigrants as well as multilingual: speaking their mother tongue such as Kurdish, Turkish,
Arabic or Persian at home with their family and relatives (Wittenberg and Paul 98). This
multicultural upbringing provides the most salient feature for the Kiezdeutsch dialect because
many words from these foreign languages have been integrated into the dialect. The linguistic
features of Kiezdeutsch can be broken down morphologically, phonetically and syntactically.
Table 1 details the morphological characteristics of Kiezdeutsch; namely, the integration of
Arabic and Turkish words into the Kiezdeutsch lexicon.
This vocabulary is commonly exhibited when the speakers of Kiezdeutsch code-switch, or rapidly switching from one speech variety to another in a conversation (Stevenson 240). An example of code-switching would be a teenager who speaks a Bavarian dialect at home with their family, standard German at school with teachers, and Kiezdeutsch with their friend group. Another example would be a teenager greeting his or her friends in Arabic and then continuing the conversation in Kiezdeutsch and Standard German. For example, *Abu!* *Lass das sein!* ‘Hey! Leave that alone’ (*Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht* 118). In this excerpt, *Abu* is actually a Turkish word that has been integrated into the Kiezdeutsch vocabulary and *Lass das sein* is Standard German.

Table 1: Examples of the integration of Turkish and Arabic into the Kiezdeutsch lexicon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kiezdeutsch Word</th>
<th>German Translation</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Wallah</em></td>
<td><em>Echt!</em></td>
<td>‘Really!’</td>
<td>Arabic und <em>Allah</em> ‘and Allah’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hadi çıüş</em></td>
<td><em>Tschüss; mach’s gut!</em></td>
<td>‘Goodbye; take care!’</td>
<td>Turkish <em>Haydi</em> ‘go’ or ‘come here’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Yallah</em></td>
<td><em>Los!</em></td>
<td>‘Go!’ or ‘let’s go!’</td>
<td>Arabic ya ‘<em>allah</em> ‘Oh God’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Arabic influence on Kiezdeutsch is quite strong. An example from this would be the sentence, *Yallah, lassma gehen!* (Schröder). The standard German equivalent of this sentence is *Los, lass uns gehen!* which means, ‘Come on, let’s go!’ (Schröder)  *Yallah* is an Arabic word meaning ‘Oh God.’ One also sees the use of the contraction *lassma* which Kiezdeutsch speakers have integrated as a shortened version of *lass uns mal,* ‘let us.’

The use of anglicisms is also an important component of Kiezdeutsch. This is especially present among Kiezdeutsch speakers on the internet. In this written form of the dialect, Kiezdeutsch exhibits elements of English, German, Turkish and Arabic. Eva Wittenberg and Kerstin Paul are two researchers who have investigated this theory. The following excerpt highlights their work. It was written by a teenaged Kiezdeutsch speaker:

[xXxPlayBoyLuder93xXx]

*haii meine süße*

*alles liebe zub b-day*

*ich wünsche dir alles liebe*

*und viel glück noch in deinem weiteren leben*

*friends 4-ever*

*liebe dich.*\(^4\) (Wittenberg and Paul 110)

Although the majority of the text is in German, there are certain English components. The speaker’s username, for example, is written in English. A username on the internet is someone’s identity. The fact that this speaker chose an English one suggests how integral English is in the Kiezdeutsch dialect.

\(^4\) Translation of Kiezdeutsch from Wittenberg and Paul’s research: ‘Hey my sweetie, happy birthday, I wish you all the best and lots of luck with the rest of your life, friends forever, love you.’
Phonetically, Kiezdeutsch exhibits the coronalization of \[ç\] (Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht 38). \[ç\] is a voiceless, palatal fricative and follows closed and front vowels in German, such as in the word ich \[ɪç\]. In Kiezdeutsch, the coronalization of this sound changes it from \[ç\] to \[ʃ\], a palato-alveolar fricative sound. Both sounds are fricatives but the place of articulation in the mouth changes from palatal to palato-alveolar. This is seen in the pronoun \[ɪç\] ich ‘I’ which changes to \[ɪʃ\].

The sentence structure in Kiezdeutsch is a syntactical feature of the dialect that differs from that of Standard German. Heike Wiese argues that this new sentence structure “reflects a linguistic division of labour between syntax and semantics that is supported by a pattern that Standard German provides for light verb constructions” (“Ich mach dich Messer” 5). For example, while the finite verb in Standard German is always in the second position of the clause, in Kiezdeutsch, the verb position is often in the third position, following the subject, when the sentence begins with an adverb. This difference is exhibited in the table in Table 2 with the verb bolded in each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard German</th>
<th>Kiezdeutsch</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Danach ruf ich dich an</em></td>
<td><em>Danach ich ruf dich an</em></td>
<td>‘I’ll call you afterwards’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The simplification as well as shortening of the German language is another important syntactical aspect of Kiezdeutsch. An example of this concept is in the table in Table 3 which notes the original Kiezdeutsch sentence as well as the standard German equivalent. These sentences were taken from an article written by Lothar Schröder, entitled *Kiezdeutsch ist kein Dialekt* ‘Kiezdeutsch is not a dialect.’ There is virtually no meaning lost between the two sentences, as they both translate to, ‘let’s get out at Moritzplatz [station].’ However, there are times in which alternative vocabulary is used in Kiezdeutsch sentences which could be potential cause for confusion. This is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 3: Example of the shortening aspect of Kiezdeutsch sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kiezdeutsch</th>
<th>Standard German</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lassma Mortizplatz</td>
<td>Lasst uns mal am Moritzplatz</td>
<td>‘Let’s get out at Moritzplatz’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aussteigen</td>
<td>aussteigen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Comparison of Kiezdeutsch and Standard German sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kiezdeutsch</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Standard German</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musstu Lampe</td>
<td>‘You need to put a</td>
<td>Du musst eine Glühbirne</td>
<td>‘You must screw in a lightbulb’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reinmachen</td>
<td>bulb in’</td>
<td>einschrauben</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this example, there is not only a simplification of the language, but also an alternative grammar rule and a differing vocabulary. The basic translation is, ‘you need to screw in a lightbulb’ however, one can see that in the Kiezdeutsch version, the subject du ‘you’ is missing, with a combination of the verb and subject in its place, mussttu for du musst. Wiese explains this phenomenon as “particles” that develop from complex phrases (“Ich mach dich Messer” 15). Such shortenings can also be seen in phrases such as ischwör which in its original form is actually ich schwöre and translates to ‘I swear’ (“Ich mach dich Messer” 15). The vocabulary in Table 4 is also worth noting since the Kiezdeutsch example chooses Lampe ‘lamp’ for Glühbirne ‘light bulb’ which is a more casual, slang term.

2.3 THE KIEZDEUTSCH CONTROVERSY

One of the Kiezdeutsch controversies is that teenagers, with no immigration background whatsoever, are starting to speak this dialect (Wittenberg and Paul 98). This presents a problem for several academics and linguists who believe Kiezdeutsch is an attack on Standard German, threatening to destroy their treasured language.
An article in *Der Spiegel* entitled *Die verlorene Welt* or ‘The lost world’ and written by Stefan von Berg tackles this issue in the following excerpt:


*Dreckische Deutsche, so reden sie. In dieser Welt, mitten und vielerorts in Deutschland, geht es nur noch um einen Wert: Respekt. Respekt bekommt, wer cool und wer stark ist, wer die richtige Kleidung trägt, die richtige Sprache spricht, die richtige Musik hört, wer die richtigen Freunde und die richtige Bande hat.  

Von Berg describes the Kiezdeutsch dialect by naming a few phonetic properties, and in doing so creates a play on words that aims to ridicule the dialect. He refers to these speakers as *Dreckische Deutsche* ‘Dirty Germans.’ The word for dirty in German is actually *dreckig*. Von Berg has changed the word from its original form to *dreckisch* in order to indicate how the Kiezdeutsch speaker would pronounce this word. This change exhibits the coronalized [ç], changing the pronunciation from [dɾɛkɪç] to [dɾɛkʃ]. Although he is correct in that this pronunciation is quite common in Kiezdeutsch, his analysis shows how negative his view of the dialect and of the people who speak it truly is.

---

5 Translation of German text: ‘The residents of this world speak in this way. Hey, man, hey. Whore. Killer. Crass. There are many ‘sch’ and ‘ch’-sounds in this language, hardly any complete sentences. Dirty German, that’s how they talk. In this world, in the middle and in many places in Germany, it’s only about one word: respect. Respect goes to those who are cool and strong, who wear the right clothes, who speak the correct language, listen to the right music, who have the right friends and the right gang.’
The problems surrounding Kiezdeutsch are not only linguistic, but also cultural. I believe that many Germans find this dialect to be a danger to their language because of its immigrant and Islamic undertones. After World War II and due to the *Wirtschaftswunder* or ‘economic miracle,’ Germany was in desperate need of guest labor. At this time, Germany was divided into East and West Germany. West Germany made agreements with the countries Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia over a thirteen year span (Oezcan). Guest workers from Turkey would soon comprise the majority of these immigrants. The idea was that the workers would come to Germany, work for a few years, and then return to their home country. That did not end up happening. These workers, with little German language education, created what we today refer to as *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* ‘Guest workers’ German’ (Stevenson 163).

*Gastarbeiterdeutsch* is characterized by a deletion of function words such as prepositions, articles and the verb *sein* ‘to be’ (Stevenson 165-170). Table 5 exhibits the basic linguistic properties of *Gastarbeiterdeutsch*. These examples were taken from the Rainer Werner Fassbinder 1973 film entitled *Angst essen Seele auf* ‘Ali: Fear Eats the Soul.’ Many of the verbs in *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* are also left in their infinitive form; that is to say, they do not agree with the subject. Adjectives are also left unchanged, in their original form with no adjective ending for case, gender, and number agreement. These adjective endings are required in German grammar. Separable verbs are not separated and the word order in these sentences is often subject-verb-object. Phonomically, the voiceless palatal fricative [ç] like in the word for *ich* ‘I’ is replaced with a voiceless velar plosive [k]. *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* shows significant deviation from Standard German in phonology, morphology, and syntax.
Kiezdeutsch, however, is quite similar in its linguistic and phonetic form to standard German and the German dialects found in the Rhineland, Saarland and Saxony and this should be remembered when disputing the validity of Kiezdeutsch as a German dialect (Hall 47 and Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht 38).

Kiezdeutsch can be described as an urban dialect, or a multiethnic youth language with Turkish and Arabic influences. Kiezdeutsch, although originating in Berlin-Kreuzberg, is today spoken in almost every urban German neighborhood, especially those with a large multiethnic population density such as Mannheim, Freiburg, Hamburg and the aforementioned Berlin. Kiezdeutsch has become such a relevant topic in today’s society that not only linguists and academics are researching it, but also the media. The successful German television series Türkisch für Anfänger ‘Turkish for beginners’ portrays a mixed family: a Turkish man and his two children who move in with his girlfriend, a white German woman with no migration background and her two children. Much of the dialogue and action revolves around the culture clashes of these two worlds coming together and specifically the way the teenagers speak and interact with one another.
Table 5: Examples of *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* ‘Guest workers’ German’ with the Standard German and English equivalents and translations

<table>
<thead>
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The Türkisch für Anfänger ‘Turkish for beginners’ series was extremely successful in Germany, but the Kiezdeutsch speaking characters were often ridiculed for their speech. This is exemplified in the following excerpt where the teenaged Lena mocks Cem for not speaking to her in Standard German:


Lena: Ey und Cem hat vor allem so nischt dich Sprache mit der man mit Lena spricht ey! 6

Once again, the coronalization of [ç] is exaggerated in Lena’s speech when she impersonates Cem. She does this by pronouncing the word nicht like nischt. Cem’s speech is neither respected in this scene, nor in this series. Lena’s attitude toward Cem is a common one, and one that I myself experienced during my research in Germany as well as at the University of Mississippi.

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6 Translation of example from Türkisch für Anfänger ‘Turkish for beginners’: Cem: ‘Turkish for beginners lesson 1: Cem is now your brother. I have responsibility [for you].’ Lena: ‘Hey and Cem has above all, not the language that one speaks with Lena hey!’
2.4 KIEZDEUTSCH AND PERCEPTUAL DIALECTOLOGY

I modeled much of the research for this thesis after Dennis R. Preston’s approach to perceptual dialectology. Perceptual dialectology is defined in Preston’s book entitled *Handbook of Perceptual Dialectology* as being related to folk linguistics (xxiv). It has also been defined as a way to determine “how people perceive the differences between their own dialects and other language varieties” (Yannuar, Azimova, and Nguyen 9). Preston developed five different techniques for evaluating perceptual dialectology in the 1980s (xxiv). His methods are outlined in the following list:

1. Draw-a-map
2. Degree of difference
3. “Correct” and “pleasant”
4. Dialect identification
5. Qualitative data

For the purposes of the pilot study explained in this thesis, I focused on incorporating Preston’s fourth and fifth listed elements: dialect identification and qualitative data. Preston defines dialect identification as, “respondents listen to voices on a ‘dialect continuum,’ although the voices are presented in a scrambled order. The respondents are instructed to assign each voice to the site where they think it belongs” (xxxiv). Dialect identification was a significant component of the pilot study.

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7 This list was taken from page xxxiv of Dennis R. Preston and Daniel Long’s book entitled, *Handbook of Perceptual Dialectology*. 
For the pilot study, I played four different Kiezdeutsch recordings which were presented in a somewhat “scrambled order” alternating between strong-dialectal and weak-dialectal speakers. The participants in the focus groups were also asked to respond to each recording as well as indicate if they could place the dialect geographically or perhaps to a certain social group.

The second element of Preston’s methodology which I used in my research was qualitative data. Preston defines qualitative data as, “respondents are questioned about the tasks they have carried out and are engaged in open-ended conversations about language varieties, speakers of them, and related topics” (xxiv). Once again, this method was quite useful in the gathering of the data in the focus groups outlined in this thesis. Each focus group was asked to respond to open-ended questions concerning the four recordings of Kiezdeutsch speakers they heard. Substantial qualitative data were gathered through the three focus groups as each group described the speakers of Kiezdeutsch as well as analyzed different German language varieties and finally, made several connections to related topics to the research such as the Turkish immigrant presence in Germany at the moment.
3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2015, I worked at the University of Potsdam, in their department *Deutsche Sprache der Gegenwart* or ‘German Language of the Present’ with Professor Heike Wiese. My procedure was aimed at collecting data through interviews with Kiezdeutsch speakers that would not only benefit my linguistic analysis of the dialect and the attitudes of its speakers, but also provide a large enough language sample that could be further analyzed and tested through the use of a pilot study of perceptual dialectology and participant discussion.

The first part of my research was finding Kiezdeutsch speakers to participate. I needed to record these research oriented interviews in order to gather a speech sample of the Kiezdeutsch dialect from two young speakers. These interviewees needed to be under 25 years old since the dialect has been named a *Jugendsprache* ‘youth language’ and is therefore most prevalent in teenagers and young adults. I also needed to interview speakers who fulfilled the geographical requirement, namely those who lived in the neighborhood where Kiezdeutsch was first observed: Berlin-Kreuzberg. It was vital to my research to interview a male and female speaker, as I was investigating the gendered element of this dialect. Finally, since the majority of Kiezdeutsch speakers are the children of immigrants, the pilot study restricted its investigation to participants who were born in Germany with an immigrant background.
The immigrant backgrounds of particular interest to the study were Turkish or Arabic, those two being the biggest linguistically important influences on the Kiezdeutsch dialect.

For the questions that provided the foundation for my interviews, I worked closely with the linguist who is also my advisor at the University of Mississippi, Dr. Chris Sapp, in order to create the most beneficial interview. Upon arrival in Germany, I edited and reformatted my questions with Professor Heike Wiese. Her input was fundamental in that she helped me shape these questions in a way that would be more understandable and provide the most fruitful answers since she is familiar with Kiezdeutsch speakers, considering her interest in the dialect dates back to the first time she heard it in the 1990s (*Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht* 17).

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

I contacted Professor Wiese last spring, 2015, with a proposal of my thesis outline and a request to work with her over the summer. She was quick to respond with a positive answer and thus I planned for my journey to Berlin and Potsdam. Upon arrival, I met with Professor Wiese and her colleagues who have been working with the Kiezdeutsch dialect for several years. I learned how to access and use their online resource, entitled *KiDko* which is short for *Kiezdeutsch Korpus* ‘Kiezdeutsch corpus’ as well as their *Kiezdeutschhandbuch* ‘Kiezdeutsch handbook,’ both of which were quite useful. Wiese instructed me to go to the Kreuzberg neighborhood in Berlin, where Kiezdeutsch first developed, and specifically to the Turkish cultural and youth center located in the heart of this area called, *Naunynritze.*
She instructed me to identify myself as a student working for the University of Potsdam and that I should offer to pay each participant twenty Euros per interview in order to attract as many participants as possible.

When I arrived at the youth center, I was picturing a YMCA in my mind, but it was far from that. Many of the windows were broken in and graffiti was splattered on almost every inch of the facade. I heard German rap music and the sounds of teenaged boys playing pool on the first level of the building. I walked through the side entrance and into the courtyard where there were a couple picnic tables set up with three older men of Middle-Eastern descent sitting at one and chain-smoking. I took care to adhere to Islamic tradition and dressed modestly that day. I approached the oldest looking man at the table, introduced myself, and asked if I could interview a male of the age of 18 or older with an immigrant background. He looked me up and down and gently nodded his head, then motioned for one of the teenaged boys who was talking loudly behind him to come forward. The older man and the men with him, quickly left the area and soon it was just me and the teenaged boy along with his friend with whom he was chatting with.

In order to protect this participant’s identity, I will refer to him as Yorgi. I, once again, introduced myself and began the interview. Yorgi was 19, male and had Turkish heritage. He was born and raised in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Yorgi signed a release form, which was approved by the University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board and also signed a release form thereby allowing me to record his answers by use of my cellular device.
Alter:

Name:

Geschlecht: Weiblich Männlich

Familienhintergrund: _______________________________

Fragen:
NB – alle Fragen und Antworten von den Versuchspersonen werden mit meinem Handy (Emily Krauter) aufgenommen.

1. Sprichst du anders mit deinen Freuden als mit deinen Lehrern? Wie würdest du diese Variante von Deutsch nennen?

2. Wo sprichst du diese Variante (Kiezdeutsch)? Warum?

3. Findest du Kiezdeutsch besser als Hochdeutsch? Warum/warum nicht?

4. Denkst du, dass Kiezdeutsch nicht von allen respektiert ist? Falls ja, warum?

5. Denkst du, dass Mädchen und Jungs anders sprechen? Falls ja, warum?


Figure 1: Interview protocol for Kiezdeutsch interviews
Age:

Name:

Sex: Female    Male

Family background (heritage):_______________________________

Questions:

NB – all of the questions and answers from the participant will be recorded with the use of my cellular device (Emily Krauter).

1. Do you speak differently with her friends as opposed to your teachers? How would you call this variation of German?

2. Where do you speak this variation of German (Kiezdeutsch)? Why?

3. Do you find Kiezdeutsch better than Standard German? Why/why not?

4. Do you think that Kiezdeutsch is not respected by everyone? If yes, why?

5. Do you think that girls and boys speak differently? If yes, why?

6. Tell me a story about when you were totally annoyed with a teacher.

Figure 2: English translation of interview protocol for Kiezdeutsch speakers
The interview was modeled after the questions I created with Professor Wiese which was also approved by the University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board, however, it was more conversational as varying topics and follow-up questions came up during our discussion. The questions I used are displayed in Figure 1 with the English translation in Figure 2.

At the completion of the interview, I paid Yorgi the already agreed upon amount of twenty Euros. I was hoping to interview a young lady in this area who also had an immigrant background; however, there were only boys at the youth center that day. Yorgi instructed me to go to any cafe in the area, as this neighborhood is also a popular spot for university students to live and socialize in. He was confident that I would find a Kiezdeutsch speaker willing to help me, and he was right.

I interviewed my second participant in a cafe and restaurant in the Berlin-Kreuzberg area. She was the acting manager of the facility and met my requirements for a native German speaker above the age of eighteen with immigrant heritage. Like the male speaker, she also had Turkish heritage. For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to her as Jasmine. Jasmine also reviewed and signed the various IRB release forms and was compensated for her interview in the amount of twenty Euros. She was 18 years old and was born and raised in Berlin-Kreuzberg. I initially asked Jasmine the same questions as Yorgi; however, just like Yorgi’s interview, it was more conversationally structured and at times the follow-up questions varied based on her provided answers.
The purpose of these two interviews fulfilled many of the requirements of my research: both participants were young, with Yorgi being 19 years old and Jasmine 18 years of age, they were male and female, and they also lived and grew up in my desired geographically location of Berlin-Kreuzberg. I confirmed this quality by going directly to this neighborhood and verbally confirming that they had grown up in the area.

3.3 RESULTS AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES

The length of each interview was approximately eight minutes long. Both interviews proved to be interesting, grammatically and phonologically but also proved to raise several questions from a sociolinguistic standpoint. Jasmine’s answers correlated closely with Yorgi’s in that she also believed that the way one speaks Kiezdeutsch varies depending on what part of Berlin you are in. In Kreuzberg, she noted, she and her friends call the way their male counterparts speak *Ghettosprache* ‘Ghetto language’ and noted that they invent several new words, such as *Digger* ‘Bro’ whereas the girls in her community do not.

It is in her description of how the newly invented words spread through the community that I ever received a mention of the word *Kiez* in either interview. Jasmine said that these new words travel from *Kiez zu Kiez* or ‘Neighborhood to neighborhood.’ It is in this instant that one could infer that through the transmission of novel words in a youth dialect it would be called *Kiezdeutsch* but Jasmine never takes that step to actually give it this name. It is also important to mention that the actual word *Kiez* is specific to this area in Berlin and is not often used in other parts of the country to describe a neighborhood.
The male and female speaker, Yorgi and Jasmine, gave me an intimate, albeit short, glimpse into their lives as the children of Turkish immigrants. Linguistically, both speakers exhibited the characteristics of the Kiezdeutsch dialect outlined by Wiese, namely the dropping of verb and adjective endings as well as the use of non-standard genders or endings for nouns (Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht 59-60).

The female speaker, Jasmine, quite frequently used the word so as a focus-marker which acts similarly to the way native English speakers use the word ‘like,’ which is also a trademark of Kiezdeutsch (Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht 104). Another phonetic feature that was quite prominent in both interviews was the coronalization of the sound [ç] which became [ʃ].

With regards to the question of whether there is a gendered aspect of Kiezdeutsch, Jasmine, like Yorgi, agreed that male and female Kiezdeutsch speakers speak differently and that, specifically, the women speak with a ‘finer’ tone than the men. Jasmine responded, Naja die Mädchen reden schon ein bisschen feiner. Als mit Mädchen ist das sehr etwas anders als bei Jungs, which translates to, ‘Yeah well, the girls’ speech is a little more refined. It is very different with the girls than it is with the boys.’ She made it clear, however, that both groups speak in this dialect with the same goal in mind: to talk about the opposite sex. Her response was, Naja, also ich glaub die Jungs reden eher über Mädchen und wir reden eher über Jungs ‘Yeah well, I believe the boys talk about girls and we [the girls] talk about boys.’ The way they go about this is, however, different.
Jasmine felt that the men talk about intimate things and experiences just as often as the women do, but that the women are able to do so with more charm than the men: *Ich würd sagen es gibt so Themen, die Jungs mehr mit Freunden besprechen können als wir als Mädchen also Jungs reden auch schon so's über intime Sachen so ich glaub da hat so ein Mädchen bestimmt mehr so Scharm.*

I infer that she connected the ‘charm’ to their word choice as well as prosody and tone.

Yorgi corroborated her response when mentioning his opinion that no girl he knew would ever say the word *Digger,* ‘Bro’: *es wird komisch wenn zum Beispiel eine Gruppe von Jungs, eh sag ich jetzt mal eine Spätkauf chillt und ein Mädchen kommt vorbei und sagt “alles klar Digger?” Das wird keine machen!*

The most telling part of each interview was when I asked both participants to tell me a story when they were annoyed with a teacher. I chose this question in order to acquire a large speech sample from both participants considering the other questions could have been answered with one or two sentences but this once called for a story format answer. Interestingly, both participants, unbeknownst to one another’s answers, relayed similar stories in which they felt that they had been penalized or judged by their teacher based on their immigrant background. Yorgi shared a story that recently happened at school. He pointed out that he goes to school in the city Schwedt an der Oder, which is just outside of Berlin. At his school, he excelled in his physical education class and even broke several school records; however, he was never acknowledged as

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8 Translation of Jasmine’s answer: ‘I would say there are topics that the boys talk about more with their friends as opposed to us girls, well yeah the boys talk about intimate things and I believe [in those instances] the girls definitely have more charm.’

9 Translation of Yorgi’s answer: ‘It would be weird if for example a group of boys, uh I’ll say are chilling out by a convenience store and a girl comes by and says ‘everything alright, bro?’ No one would do that!’
the new recorder holder at the school and his name never written down in the official scorebook.

He said he felt discriminated against because he was a sort of *Ausländer* ‘foreigner’ in this city, which, he also mentioned, used to be a main headquarter for the Nazi Party. In a way, Yorgi implicated that the general mistrust and disdain for foreigners, which was strong during the Nazi era, is still existent in present-day German, or at least in the city where he attends school. I believe that this mistrust, although perhaps rooted in the fear of immigrants, is more closely related to the language in which they speak as well as the people who are speaking it.

Even though Yorgi told me earlier in the interview that he speaks Standard German with his teachers and elders, he still exhibits the phonological features of the Kiezdetusch dialect in his every day speech such as the coronalization of the [ç].
Yorgi’s response is transcribed here in its entirety:


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10 Translation of Yorgi’s answer: ‘I can tell you a story about that, in fact we talked about that yesterday, in fact that was in Schwedt an der Oder [a German city], that’s an hour and a half away from Berlin with the regional train and we went to school there the two of us [Yorgi indicates the boy sitting next to him during the interview] and I had, I was really really good in physical education and I had beaten all of the records for shot-put and triple jump right? Yeah shot-put and triple jump, I beat all of the school records. Yeah and I felt discriminated against because I was somehow a foreigner, and the city of Schwedt used to be a Nazi city when the Nazis were in the city and I felt discriminated against by the teachers because my records weren’t written on the school board and then there was this long discussion and in the end no one listened anyway and that was a huge stress for me I would say.’
Jasmine also shared a similar story in which she felt that her Turkish background hindered her from excelling in the school system, noting that she felt she was often given a lower grade than she deserved based on her immigrant roots: …aber meistens es gibts auch Lehrer, die einfach die Nationalität einfach eine wichtige Rolle spielt. Also hat man, also hat man also ein Eindruck hab ich meistens und ja, dann ärgert man sich schon.  

She noted that no matter how hard she tried, the nationality of the student played a large role in her school. Jasmine went further into this discussion of the Turkish and German culture clash by admitting that her German classmates, in her opinion, were much more respected than her Turkish counterparts:  

Also Deutsche werden viel mehr — wie soll ich’s sagen — berücksichtigt als ...bevorzugt sag ich mal.  

She also shared that her teachers, as well as Yorgi’s, would often make her feel like a foreigner.

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11 Translation of Jasmine’s answer: ‘But mostly there are also teachers, for which the nationality [of a student] simply plays an important role. Well one has, one has that impression, I have it mostly and yeah, then one gets annoyed [about it].’

12 Translation of Jasmine’s answer: ‘Well the Germans [referring to the German students in her class] are much more — how should I say it — considered as … preferred I would say.’
Jasmine’s teachers did this by targeting students with immigrant roots and making rude comments, remarks or jokes which further alienated them from their non-immigrant classmates:

*Also Spezial werden schon meistens so eine Witze gewiss also eine Ausländer*

*Witze sag ich so aber mir fehlt gerade halt spezielles ein aber man hört so manchmal so eine Sprüche so von Lehren obwohl man es eigentlich nicht machen sollte wenn man als so was so ich sagen mit Schülern arbeitet, die alle in andere Wurzeln, anderen Wurzeln hat dann sollte man halt beachten was für Witze man sich macht.*

3.4 LINGUISTIC ATTITUDES

Both Yorgi and Jasmine agreed that they speak differently with their friends than they do in school with their teachers; however, when I asked them if they had a name for this form of speech, neither one identified it as *Kiezdeutsch* which contradicts Wiese’s argument that the speakers of Kiezdeutsch have already named it and that this name is commonly known (*Kiezdeutsch: Ein neuer Dialekt entsteht* 16). Yorgi named it *Straßenslang* which translates in English to ‘street slang’ and Jasmine named it *Jugendsprache* or ‘youth language.’ Interestingly, they both agreed that this form of speech was not a respected form of speech and one that should be avoided when applying for jobs, working with customers, speaking with teachers or talking to government officials.

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13 Translation of Jasmine’s answer: ‘Well specifically there is mostly a joke, well a joke about foreigners I’d say but I can’t think of anything specific at the moment but one hears such quips from teachers even though one actually should not do such things when one works with students who all have different roots, one should pay attention to the different roots when making jokes.’
Jasmine, especially, since she works at a café, said that she makes a point to speak to her customers in Standard German and must put in a lot of effort in order to make sure she doesn’t make any mistakes. For example, she told me, *Englisch fällt mir beides leicht aber es ist natürlich besser wenn man Hochdeutsch spricht als Jugendsprache weil es macht allgemein die Sprache selbst kaputt — also wie ich rede — ich muss mich konzentrieren dass ich nichts Falsches sage*, which translates to, ‘English comes to me easily but it is naturally better if one speaks Standard German instead of youth language because it damages the language altogether — like how I talk — I need to concentrate and make sure I don’t say anything wrong.’ I find it interesting that she made this connection and believes that the way she speaks is actually damaging the German language. More than that, the fact that she shared that she must ‘concentrate’ in order to make sure she doesn't say anything ‘wrong’ implicates that she believes her form of speech, namely Kiezdeutsch, is an unacceptable form of speech as well as something that she speaks constantly.
When I asked both Yorgi and Jasmine why they chose to speak differently with their friends as opposed to teachers, they mentioned the idea of language being connected to respect in their responses. Jasmine felt that teachers are already in a position of authority, considering they are much older than her and are educating her, therefore she must speak to them in Standard German; however, when she is with her friends, she has a closer connection and can speak to them how she pleases: *Ich finde es ist wichtig, also ein Lehrer ist für mich einen Respektsperson, er ist viel älter und das ist eine Lehrerin, die mir was beibringt und mit Freunden hab ich eine engere Verbindung als mit meinen Lehrern deshalb kann ich dann mit denen so reden wie ich will.* Yorgi, similarly, also said that when dealing with teachers it is crucial to speak to them in richtig Deutsch or ‘correct German’ but that with his friends he speaks Türkisch-Deutsch-Slang.

‘Türkisch-German-Slang’:

*zum Beispiel zum Freund sag ich, “Hey Digger komm mal her” und das aus Respekt von Lehrer sag ich “Entschuldigen Sie, Frau oder Herr Punkt Punkt Punkt Mustermann, könntten Sie bitte kommen” also dann red’ ich dann “richtig Deutsch” und bei den andern ist dieses Türkisch-Deutsch-Slang einfach dieses.*

Yorgi also mentioned that he spoke Kiezdeutsch, or as he called it, *anders* ‘differently,’ in the place where I was interviewing him: a youth club and center primarily attended by the children of Turkish immigrants.

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14 Translation of Jasmine’s answer: ‘I find it important, well a teacher is for me a person of respect, he is much older and a teacher is someone who teaches me something and with friends I have a closer connection than with my teachers, therefore I can talk with my friends however I want to.’

15 Translation of Yorgi’s answer: ‘For example to a friend I say, ‘hey bro come over here’ and out of respect for a teacher I say ‘excuse me [here, Yorgi uses Sie, the formal version of ‘you’ in German], Mrs. or Mr. dot dot dot John Q. Public, could you please come here’ so then I speak ‘correct German’ and with the others it’s this Turkish-German-Slang simply that.’
This naming of a linguistic environment and acknowledgment of active code-switching adds significantly to the argument that Kiezdeutsch is heavily influenced by the Turkish and Arabic languages and cultures.

Yorgi also made the connection between age, respect and language. He described the Turkish custom of referring to the oldest man in the community or family as *Abi* which translates to ‘older brother.’ In order to further show respect for this person or for the multiple elders in the family, he would not use Kiezdeutsch, but rather Standard German and even refer to them by *Abi* or *Bruder* ‘Brother’ out of respect and politeness:

> ja es gibt natürlich wir haben zum Beispiel unseren Älteren, unsere Älteren sind, die die vor uns hier aufgewachsen sind und bei uns ist es ja bei Türkischen ist ja so und bei Arabischen das sie Älteren immer automatisch Abi ist, also der große Bruder in dem Sinne, ist jetzt nicht so dass alle wirklich die großen Bruder sind aber man sagt dann immer Abi ist einfach eine Höflichkeitsform wenn man zum jemand Fremden Sie sagt — genau und hier ist es so ich kann natürlich auch nicht zu einem Älteren sagen “hey Digger komm mal her” — sondern, “Bruder, kannst du vielleicht das und das machen” — also da ist dann auch die Höflichkeitsform dann wieder da.\(^\text{16}\)

\(^{16}\)Translation of Yorgi’s answer: ‘Yeah there is naturally [a difference], we have for example our elders, our elders are the ones who came here before us and grew up here and with the Turkish it is so and also with Arabic people that the elders are automatically *Abi* ‘Brother,’ well the big brother in a sense, it’s not that they are all actually the big brothers are but one calls them *Abi* ‘Brother’ out of politeness just like when one uses *Sie* [the formal word for ‘you’ in German] to someone they don’t know — exactly and in this case I can naturally not say to an elder ‘hey bro come over here’ — but rather ‘brother, can you perhaps do that and that’ — then the polite form is there again.
Interestingly, both Yorgi and Jasmine thought that their personal friend group was responsible for creating the word *Digger* which is pronounced [dɪkə]. They both referred to themselves as active participants in the novelty, creation and development of Kiezdeutsch. Jasmine believed that the boys in Kreuzberg were responsible for the creation of this *Ghettosprache* ‘Ghetto language’ and had made up many more words than the girls had, such as *Digger* ‘Bro’: 

also sagen wir jetzt in Kreuzberg es ist so dass die Jungs eher so eine 

*Ghettosprache* haben und auch sehr viel einige Wörter erfinden als Mädchen. 

Zum Beispiel, ich muss kurz überlegen... Naja halt es fehlt mir Spezielles nicht ein aber halt so eine Wörter wie Digger, der eigentlich gar nicht so existieren aber die halt in der Gruppe so sich verbreiten und es ist dann immer mehr verbreitet und man es einfach benutzt.\(^{17}\)

Linguistically, the word *Digger* can be connected to the strong hip-hop influence in Germany that was prevalent in the early 1990s which, coincidentally, was also when Professor Wiese believes Kiezdeutsch was created. This sense of ownership over the Kiezdeutsch vocabulary that both Yorgi and Jasmine exhibited conveys their strong connection to this dialect.

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\(^{17}\) Translation of Jasmine’s answer: ‘Well we say now in Kreuzberg it is so that the boys have a kind of ghetto language and also make up a lot more words than the girls. For example, I need to think about it… Yeah I can’t think of anything specifically but just a word like *Digger* ‘Bro,’ that actually doesn’t exist at all but is just passed around in the group and then it gets passed around even more and one simply uses it.’
German was both Yorgi and Jasmine’s first language, however, keeping with the attributes of Kiezdeutsch speakers, they came from multilingual families. Yorgi shared that he spoke a mix of Turkish and German at home, *zum Beispiel spreche ich Deutsch und Türkisch aber gemischt und dann gibt ja natürlich mehrere andere Familien, die zum Beispiel nur Türkisch sprechen oder nur Deutsch sprechen* ‘For example, I speak German and Turkish mixed [at home] but naturally there are other families who, for example, only speak Turkish or only speak German [at home].’ Jasmine shared spoke a mix of German, Turkish and English, *Unterschiedlich, also Deutsch, Türkisch, Englisch gemischt.*18 Jasmine’s mention of the English language is a relevant topic in that much anglicism is seen among Kiezdeutsch speakers in online correspondence instead of face-to-face communication (Wittenberg and Paul 110).

The primary goal of my interviews was to establish that male and female speakers of this dialect use it to communicate for different purposes. I believed that both genders used the language, but with different goals in mind as well as independent of each other. My findings proved as well as disproved my hypothesis. Yorgi believed that the way males and females speak, in regards to Kiezdeutsch, relies heavily on where in Berlin they are living.

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18 Translation of Jasmine’s answer: ‘[At home we speak] differently, well German, Turkish, English mixed.’
For example, he proposed that it was reasonable to hear a woman speak like he does with his friends, that is to say his form of Kiezdeutsch, perhaps in a different part of the city; however, he noted that if he were hanging out with some of his friends and a girl approached them using the same vocabulary they did it would be unsettling and inappropriate:

\[Es \ kommt \ darauf \ an \ wo\ man \ ist \ weil\ ja \ an \ verschiedenen \ Orten \ so \ und \ in \ Berlin\]
\[es \ ist \ ein \ großen \ Teil \ so \ das \ man \ kann \ sagen, \ dass \ am \ bestimmten \ Orten \ da \ kein\]
\[Unterschied \ ist. \ Das \ heißt \ das \ manche \ Mädchen \ sogar \ schon \ so \ reden \ so \ “Eh \ Alter! \ Keine \ Ahnung \ Laba \ nicht \ tra-la-la \ also \ je” ... \ Das \ wird \ keine\]
\[machen!^{19}\]

He was adamant that no girl in his neighborhood would do that, clearing defining that there are suggested linguistic rules that determine what is considered appropriate male and female Kiezdeutsch language production.

3.5 DISCUSSION

Although both interviews from Yorgi and Jasmine were at times upsetting to hear, I believe that they give telling insight into the current tone and sentiment in Germany toward not only speakers of Kiezdeutsch, but also toward youth with immigrant backgrounds. I believe that these instances of discrimination, although possibly rooted in personal prejudices against certain nationalities, are perpetuated and intensified through the language of the speaker.

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^{19} Translation of Yorgi’s answer: ‘It depends on where one is because yeah in different places and Berlin is a big place so that one could say that in specific places there’s no difference [between how the male and female Kiezdeutsch speakers speak]. That means that some girls would even talk like ‘Hey dude! No idea shut up blah blah blah well yeah’ … no one [in my neighborhood] would do that!’
In both situations, Yorgi and Jasmine were not only German citizens with Turkish roots living in the Berlin-Kreuzberg area, but they were also Kiezdeutsch speakers. I do not believe that their experiences are novel or uncommon, but are actually the norm in such areas. It is also interesting to note that even though they were prompted to tell me a story during the interview of when they are annoyed with a teacher, they both chose situations in which they felt a connection between their heritage and discrimination.

I also find it interesting that immediately, the two speakers, with no connection whatsoever to one another, have confirmed that they find Kiezdeutsch only appropriate in certain situations and with specific people. Their identity is created and preserved through the use of the Kiezdeutsch dialect which enables them to perform as German-born citizens in the classroom and in formal situations, but pay homage to their immigrant roots and Turkish heritage with their friends. Kiezdeutsch also enables them to distance themselves from the ethnic German majority which is often hostile to them.

Finally, the youth center where I interviewed Yorgi, called Naunynritze, is located in the heart of the Turkish neighborhood in Kreuzberg. The building is, unfortunately, not the warm and welcoming youth center one would expect, but more of a graffiti covered, dilapidated building. The center is open to all youth in the area; however, it being in a Turkish neighborhood, the majority of its members are of Turkish descent. The actual name of the youth center, Naunynritze, is also thought provoking. The club is on the Naunyn street, hence the first part of the name; the second part, however, is questionable. Ritze can be translated several ways into English: ‘crevice, crack, chink, gap, groove, opening or scar.’
This seemingly arbitrary name for an obscure youth center in Kreuzberg, although it may seem irrelevant, gives us a deeper sense of some underlying feelings many non-immigrant Germans may have directed at youth centers such as these. Conversely, if this center was named by the Turkish and Arabic immigrants in the area, it displays how they feel they fit into society.
RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI AND RESULTS

4.1 PROCEDURE

After my research in Berlin, Germany, I returned to the United States to continue my research with German exchange students at the University of Mississippi. I chose to work with German exchange students to investigate their perceptions of Kiezdeutsch.

For my research, I selected nine German exchange students at the University of Mississippi. The students were selected randomly from 38 students who responded to an email I sent to all German exchange students at the University of Mississippi. Their participation was on a volunteer basis and they were not compensated for their answers.

I created a perceptual dialectology study for the first component of my research; however, due to the limitations, this must be considered a pilot study. For this pilot study of perceptual dialectology concerning Kiezdeutsch, I constructed a six-point scale from *gar nicht* or ‘not at all’ which was numerically represented by “0” to *sehr* ‘very’ which was represented by “5.” I played four recordings: two male and two female Kiezdeutsch speakers.
The participants were asked to rank each voice based on the six qualities provided with the prompt *Ich finde diese Person* or ‘I find this person’:

1. *Religiös* ‘Religious’
2. *Vertrauenswürdig* ‘Trustworthy’
3. *Gefährlich* ‘Dangerous’
4. *Klug* ‘Intelligent’
5. *Hilfreich* ‘Helpful’
6. *Anziehend* ‘Attractive’

I collaborated with my advisor, Dr. Chris Sapp when deciding on the qualities to be rated as well as the procedure. I chose those six specific qualities for several reasons, one of them being that these qualities are often tested in Matched-Guise Test procedures, which were developed by Wallace Lambert. I wanted to discover if the Kiezdeutsch speakers were perceived as religious and if they would be linked to Islam. I picked the remaining five qualities in order to get a broad picture of how these speakers are perceived by native German speakers on a large spectrum. The pilot study I facilitated as well as procedure was submitted to the University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approved. The original questionnaire is displayed in Figure 3 with the English translation in Figure 4.
Alter:

Name:

Geschlecht: Weiblich    Männerlich

Geburtsort:

Sie werden sich zu vier Aufnahmen anhören. Bewerten Sie bitte die Aufnahmen in Anlehnung an die folgenden Qualitäten. Erinnern Sie bitte, dass die Ihre eigenen Meinungen sind. Bitte Seien Sie so ehrlich wie möglich.

Aufnahme #1:

Ich finde diese Person...

1. Religiös
   0   1   2   3   4   5
   gar nicht          sehr

2. Vertrauenswürdig
   0   1   2   3   4   5
   gar nicht          sehr

3. Gefährlich
   0   1   2   3   4   5
   gar nicht          sehr

4. Klug
   0   1   2   3   4   5
   gar nicht          sehr

5. Hilfreich
   0   1   2   3   4   5
   gar nicht          sehr

6. Anziehend
   0   1   2   3   4   5
   gar nicht          sehr

Figure 3: Pilot study on perceptual dialectology for German participants
Age: 
Name: 
Sex: Female     Male 
Place of birth: 
You will hear two recordings. Please rate the recordings based on the following qualities. Please remember, that these are your own personal opinions. Please be as honest as possible.

Recording #1: 
I find this person to be. . .

1. Religious 
   0         1           2           3           4           5 
   not at all          extremely 

2. Trustworthy 
   0         1           2           3           4           5 
   not at all          extremely 

3. Dangerous 
   0         1           2           3           4           5 
   not at all          extremely 

4. Intelligent 
   0         1           2           3           4           5 
   not at all          extremely 

5. Helpful 
   0         1           2           3           4           5 
   not at all          extremely 

6. Attractive 
   0         1           2           3           4           5 
   not at all          extremely 

Figure 4: English translation of the pilot study of perceptual dialectology of Kiezdeutsch
For the pilot study on perceptual dialectology concerning Kiezdeutsch, I played four recordings: two male and two female. The sequence, along with the duration of the recordings is as follows:

1. Mariam — 13 seconds
2. Jasmine — 20 seconds
3. Yusef — 1 minute
4. Yorgi — 30 seconds

The second and fourth recordings, Jasmine and Yorgi, came from the interviews I did in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Both participants signed IRB approved release forms that enabled me to record their answers with the use of my cell phone. Mariam and Yusef were two recordings that were given to me from the PhD candidate Maria Pohle who is currently working under the direction of Professor Heike Wiese at the University of Potsdam in the Lehrstuhl für Deutsche Sprache der Gegenwart. The recordings she provided me with were much more dialectal than the recordings made of Jasmine and Yorgi. In recordings one and three, the speakers were given the prompt to describe a car crash to a friend who also identifies as a Kiezdeutsch speaker. In recordings two and four, the speakers were prompted by my interview questions, which asked them to tell a story from when they were annoyed with a teacher.

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20 All of these names (Mariam, Jasmine, Yusef, Yorgi) have been changed in order to protect the identity of the participants.

21 Both Jasmine and Yorgi are the same Jasmine and Yorgi who were mentioned in Chapter 3.2.
The participants I interviewed at the University of Mississippi were separated into three groups, based on the dates and times when they were free to meet. The groups are displayed in the table in Figure 5. Also included in the table next to the participants’ names are the cities in Germany where they are originally from. There were a total of nine participants: four female and five male. It is important to note that Thomas, a participant in group 2, was born in Hong Kong; however, he is actually half-German, half-Cambodian, currently lives in Germany, and identifies as German.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia (female), Mannheim</td>
<td>Veronika (female), Darmstadt</td>
<td>Rupert (male), Osnabrück</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maria (female), Darmstadt</td>
<td>Alexander (male), Karlsruhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Magdalene (female), Esslingen am Neckar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas (male), Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josef (male), Heilbronn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Augustine (male), Potsdam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: List of participants in each research group

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22 All of the names of the participants in the pilot study as well as discussion have been changed in order to protect their identity.
4.2 FOCUS GROUP

Following the pilot study, I conducted an open discussion with every group. I used a set of questions that were compiled with the assistance of PhD candidate, Maria Pohle, who is at the University of Potsdam. The discussion was led in German in order for the participants to express their opinions and beliefs as authentically and detailed as possible by removing the language barrier, as they were all German native speakers. Once again, all participants signed a pre-approved IRB release form and their answers were recorded with the use of my cell phone. The questions used for the discussion portion of the research are displayed in Figures 6 and 7.

The discussion, although guided by the questions listed, was meant as an exercise for the participants to share their first impressions of the speakers from the recordings. Their impressions were then later cultivated and expanded upon through specific questions about each speaker. I also asked each group to compare the male and female speakers as well as each individual recording. In order to acquire greater memory recall and more accurate answers, I replayed each recording before we discussed it. The discussion also acted as an aid in discussing their answers in the pilot study. For example, many of the participants justified their opinions of the speakers through how high or low they rated them on the questionnaire.
Interview Protocol

Alter: 
Name: 
Geschlecht: Weiblich  Männlich 
Geburtsort: 
Fragen: 
NB – alle Fragen und Antworten von den Versuchspersonen werden mit meinem Handy (Emily Krauter) aufgenommen.

Fragen nach der 1. (weiblich) Aufnahme:
1) Bewertung des Sprechers: Wie findet ihr die Sprecherin? Wie stellt ihr euch die Sprecherin vor? Was könnt ihr über sie nach dieser Aufnahme sagen? Was für Qualitäten hat ihre Sprache? Wie findest du ihre Sprache?

2) Begründung der Bewertung: Warum findet ihr die Sprecherin so? Was spricht dafür?

3) Register- und Situationseingrenzung: Was glaubt ihr, mit wem spricht sie hier? Warum glaubt ihr das?

4) Selbstidentifikation/ Selbstwahrnehmung: Würdet ihr auch so reden? Wenn ja: wann /mit wem? Wenn nicht: warum?

Zusätzliche Fragen: zur informellen Aufnahme (KD)
a) "Hast du für diese Art zu sprechen einen Namen?"

Fragen nach der 2. (männlich) Aufnahme

1) Bewertung des Sprechers: Wie findet ihr den Sprecher? Wie stellt ihr euch den Sprecher vor? Was könnt ihr über ihn nach dieser Aufnahme sagen? Was für Qualitäten hat seine Sprache? Wie findest du seine Sprache?

2) Begründung der Bewertung: Warum findet ihr den Sprecher so? Was spricht dafür?

3) Register- und Situationseingrenzung: Was glaubt ihr, mit wem spricht er hier? Warum glaubt ihr das?

4) Selbstidentifikation/ Selbstwahrnehmung: Würdet ihr auch so reden? Wenn ja: wann /mit wem? Wenn nicht: warum?

Zusätzliche Fragen: zur informellen Aufnahme (KD)
a) "Hast du für diese Art zu sprechen einen Namen?"

**Kannst du die zwei Stimmen vergleichen? Was sind die Unterschiede zwischen den zwei Arten? Welche Adjektiven würdest du benutzen, um die Sprache zu beschreiben?***

IRB Approval  ***must be included as written***
This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

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Figure 6: Interview protocol used in the discussion following the pilot study.
Interview Protocol

Age:
Name:
Sex: Female  Male
Place of birth:
Questions:
NB – all of the questions and answers from the participants will be recorded with the researcher’s cell phone (Emily Krauter).

Questions after the first and second (female) recordings:
1) Assessment of the speaker: How do you find the speaker? How do you imagine the speaker to be like? What could you say/infer about her after the recording? What qualities does her speech have? How do you find her language?

2) Motivation for Assessment: Why did you find the speaker to be that way? How can you account for that?

3) Register and Situation localization: Who do you believe she is speaking with? Why do you think that?

4) Self-identification/Sense of self: Would you also speak in this manner? If yes: when/with whom? If no: why not?

Additional questions:
a) Do you have a name for this form of speech?

Questions after the third and fourth (male) recordings:
1) Assessment of the speaker: How do you find the speaker? How do you imagine the speaker to be like? What could you say/infer about her after the recording? What qualities does her speech have? How do you find her language?

2) Motivation for Assessment: Why did you find the speaker to be that way? How can you account for that?

3) Register and Situation localization: Who do you believe she is speaking with? Why do you think that?

4) Self-identification/Sense of self: Would you also speak in this manner? If yes: when/with whom? If no: why not?

Additional questions:
a) Do you have a name for this form of speech?

**Can you compare and contrast the four recordings? What were the differences? Which adjectives would you use to describe the speech?**

IRB Approval  ***must be included as written***

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

Figure 7: Translation of interview protocol
4.3 PILOT STUDY RESULTS

In order to analyze the pilot study data, I compiled all of the results into different tables regarding the qualities assessed. I then made a table with the averages of each quality and speaker which are represented in the table and graph displayed in Table 6 and Figure 8. None of the speakers scored above an average of 2.5 on the 5-Point Scale which was presented on the pilot study survey. The sample size proved to be too small to test for statistical significance, however, the results suggest that the female speakers were more negatively perceived by the pilot study participants than the male speakers in regards to the quality ‘attractiveness.’ This was not a result I was anticipating, as I began my researching believing that the male speakers would be more negatively perceived than the female speakers. I based my hypothesis on the interviews I conducted with actual Kiezdeutsch speakers. Both Yorgi and Jasmine believed that the female Kiezdeutsch speakers used a more refined version of Kiezdeutsch than the male Kiezdeutsch speakers in their Berlin-Kreuzberg neighborhood. This opinion is limited to Yorgi and Jasmine, as well as their speech community of Berlin-Kreuzberg; however, it is a compelling opinion.

This speech norm suggests an expectation that these men, and in this case, these Kiezdeutsch speakers, will behave in a certain linguistic manner. That manner being that it is expected for them to speak Ghettoslang as well as have a more aggressive tone when addressing one another. When the women behave in this manner, it disrupts this social norm and proves to be even more unsettling since it is not expected. Yorgi and Jasmine both justified this hypothesis by stating that they believed that there was a linguistic difference in the way in which male and female Kiezdeutsch speakers speak.
Figure 8: Bar graph of the average qualities of the speakers from the pilot study

Table 6: Average of rated qualities from the pilot study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Religiousness</th>
<th>Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Dangerousness</th>
<th>Smartness</th>
<th>Helpfulness</th>
<th>Attractiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Speaker 1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Speaker 2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Speaker 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Speaker 2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jasmine believed that female speakers were more refined in their speech whereas the men spoke more of a *Ghettosprache* or ‘ghetto language.’ Jasmine stated in her interview:

... *also sagen wir jetzt in Kreuzberg es ist so, dass die Jungs eher so eine Ghettosprache haben und auch sehr viel einige Wörter erfinden als Mädchen.*

*Naja halt es fehlt mir Spezielles nicht ein aber halt so eine Wörter wie Digger, der eigentlich gar nicht so existieren aber die halt in der Gruppe so sich verbreiten und es ist dann immer mehr verbreitet und man es einfach benutzt zum Beispiel ich bin irgendwo in Kreuzberg und ich also höre meistens so ein Wort wie Digger und andere Wörter weil sie selbst erfunden sind und dann benutzt man das automatisch auf also meistens von Kiez zu Kiez. Spricht sie schnell rum.*

---

23 Translation of quotation from Jasmine: ‘Well, we say in Kreuzberg it is so that the boys have sort of a ghetto language and also make up several more new words than the girls do. Yeah, I can’t think of anything specifically but there are words like *Digger* ‘Gangster’, which actually don’t exist but are spread within the group and are used, for example I’ll be somewhere in Kreuzberg and I’ll hear a word such as *Digger* ‘Gangster’ and other words that were made up and then one automatically uses them mostly from neighborhood to neighborhood. They travel quickly.’
Yorgi reinforced as well as expanded on her answer by saying that it would be possible to hear female Kiezdeutsch speakers use phrases that are normally exclusive to male speech depending on where you are in Kreuzberg but that this would never happen in his neighborhood:

\[Es\ \text{kommt}\ \text{darauf}\ \text{an\ wo\ man\ ist\ weil\ ja\ an\ verschiedenen\ Orten\ so\ und\ in\ Berlin}\]
\[es\ \text{ist\ ein\ großen\ Teil\ so\ dass\ man\ kann\ sagen\ dass\ an\ bestimmten\ Orten\ da\ kein}\]
\[Unterschied\ \text{ist.\ Das\ heißt,\ dass\ manche\ Mädchen\ sogar\ schon\ so\ reden\ so}\ ‘\text{Eh Alter!\ Keine\ Ahnung\ Laber\ nicht\ tra-la-la\ also\ je.}\’\ Genau\ so,\ \text{weil\ uh\ weil\ im}\]
\[Endeffekt\ \text{es\ wird\ komisch\ wenn\ zum\ Beispiel,\ eine\ Gruppe\ von\ Jungs\ eh\ sag\ ich}\]
\[jetzt\ mal\ eine\ Spätkauf\ chillt\ und\ ein\ Mädchen\ kommt\ vorbei\ und\ sagt\ ‘alles\ klar}\]
\[Digger?’\ \text{Das\ wird\ keine\ machen.}\]

Incidentally, Jasmine also touched on the prosody of female Kiezdeutsch speech, stating that it was different than that of male speech in that it was smoother and more refined than male speech, \textit{Naja\ die\ Mädchen\ reden\ schon\ ein\ bisschen\ feiner. Als\ mit\ Mädchen\ ist\ das\ sehr\ etwas anders\ als\ bei\ Jungs… ich\ glaub’\ da\ hat\ so\ ein\ Mädchen\ bestimmt\ mehr\ so\ Scharm.}\ The prosody of their speech is noted here, as well as their use of vocabulary and word choice, considering both Yorgi and Jasmine mentioned that the word \textit{Digger} ‘Bro’ was specific to male Kiezdeutsch speakers.

\textsuperscript{24} Translation of quotation from Yorgi: ‘It depends on where one is because yeah in different places and in Berlin, [Berlin] is a big place so much so that one can say that in specific places there’s no difference [between how them men and women speak]. That means some girls even talk like ‘Eh dude! No idea, shut up tra-la-la, well yeah.’ Exactly so, because uh, because ultimately it would be weird for example, a group of guys uh I’ll say now are chilling out by a convenience store and a girl comes by and says ‘everything okay gangster?’ No one would do that.’

\textsuperscript{25} Translation of quotation from Jasmine: ‘Yeah well, the girls talk a little bit finer [than the boys]. It’s very different with the girls as with the boys… I believe that a girl has definitely more charm.’
Interestingly, the results from the pilot study contradict Jasmine and Yorgi’s views of Kiezdeutsch since the female speakers were rated as less or equally as attractive as the male speakers, which is illustrated in Table 6. When comparing the results, it is also apparent from the data that the more-dialectal speakers, Mariam and Yusef, were rated consistently lower than the less-dialectal speakers Yorgi and Jasmine. This data indicates that the focus groups that participated in the pilot study perceived Yorgi and Jasmine, the less-dialectal speakers of Kiezdeutsch, more positively than the more-dialectal speakers Mariam and Yusef.

4.4 FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Each discussion provided different results based on the group dynamics and the personalities of the participants but were similar in that all participants reacted negatively to the four recordings that were presented. The participants explained and justified their scorings during the discussion section through the prompting of questions which were posed by myself.

In the first group, Cecilia, from Mannheim, had heard the Kiezdeutsch dialect before but could not designate it to a certain region in Germany, *Ich habe den Dialekt schon öfter gehört von verschiedenen Leuten, die ganz unterschiedlich aussah und ja ich kann den Dialekt gar keinem Land zuordnen...weiß ich gar nicht aber es klang auch nicht nach Muttersprache Deutsch.*

---

26 Translation of Cecilia’s answer: ‘I’ve heard the dialect often from different people who had differing appearances and yeah, I can’t designate the dialect to a certain state… I don’t know at all but it doesn’t sound like native-tongue German.’
In her following explanation, even though she had seen people from different backgrounds and with varying appearances speaking this dialect, she stated that the speakers from the recordings were probably foreign and from the Near and Middle East, *Irgendetwas Richtung Türkei oder ja Richtung Iran, Irak.* Immediately, without prompting, Cecilia was able to connect the recordings of these speakers to the Near and Middle East. When I asked her if she had a name for this dialect she responded that she would call the more extreme or dialectal forms of Kiezdeutsch, like those present in the first and third recording from Mariam and Yusef as *Ghetto Slang* ‘ghetto slang’ which is actually quite similar to the way Jasmine previously described the speech of male Kiezdeutsch speakers as *Ghettosprache* ‘ghetto language.’

---

27 Translation of Cecilia’s answer: ‘Something in the direction of Turkey or yeah, in the direction of Iran or Iraq.’
When I asked Cecilia if she thought it was a dialect, she vehemently denied this categorization. Even though she had previously used the term *Dialekt* ‘dialect’ to describe it, she said:

*Also nee, ich würde nicht sagen dass das ein deutscher Dialekt ist, nicht wie Bairisch oder Schwäbisch oder so und je nach dem wie extrem die Form auch ist, würde ich auch sagen das schon übertrieben. Also man kann sich auch mehr Mühe geben, weil vor allem auch die Grammatik nicht immer richtig ist und weil den Wörter weggelassen wurden und dann verfälscht wird und, ja ich würde mich nicht mit solchen krassen extremen Formen nicht unterhalten wollen.*

Cecilia’s reaction to all four speakers was overall negative, the most negative reaction being to the first and third recordings, which she named *Ghettoslang* ‘ghetto slang.’ For the first female speaker, she described her speech as *primitiv* ‘primitive’ and *nicht so sauber* ‘not so clean.’ I find it interesting that she chose the word ‘clean’ to describe the language, which implies that the speech they use is dirty.

---

28 Translation of Cecilia’s answer: ‘Well nah, I would not say that [Kiezdeutsch] is a German dialect, not like Bavarian or Swabian or something and also depending on how extreme the form is, I would also say it’s a bit exaggerated. Well, one can give a bit more effort, especially also with the grammar, which was not always correct and all of the words that were left out and then incorrect and yeah, I wouldn’t want to speak in such an extreme, crass way.’
Near the end of the discussion, I asked Cecilia to compare all four speakers paying specific attention to the male and female speakers. Once again, she used the adjective *sauber* ‘clean’ to qualify each speaker. In her opinion, there was little to no difference between the male and female speakers, but she did note that the second male speaker who was not so dialectal as the first male speaker had the *sauberste* or ‘cleanest’ speech but still sounded as though he was not native German, *ja das klang schon das war so eine Mischung aus irgendeine Fremden als wär er nicht gebürtig Deutsch oder muttersprachlich Deutsch ähm aber auch Berlinerisch.*\(^{29}\) In comparison with the first male speaker, whom she described as *asozial* ‘trashy,’ ghetto and untrustworthy. Cecilia justified her description based on his incorrect grammar usage as well as the prosody of his voice, *Das klang schon etwas asozial, mehr nach ghetto… auch weil er, weil die Grammatik ja weil es grammatikalisch irgendwie nicht korrekt war manchmal, aber von Inhalt her klang es auch schon nicht Vertrauenswürdig.*\(^{30}\)

Overall, Cecilia’s view was that these speakers had the ability to speak proper German but were simply not putting in the required ‘effort’ or *Mühe* in order to do so. It is also important to note that Cecilia is from Mannheim, Germany and not Berlin-Kreuzberg but still claimed to be familiar with the dialect. Mannheim is located in the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg and is approximately 400 miles away from the northeastern city of Berlin-Kreuzberg.

\(^{29}\) Translation of Cecilia’s answer: ‘Yeah that sounds like a mix of something foreign, like he would not be a native [born in Germany] German oder that German wasn’t his native tongue um but also [it sounds like] the Berlin dialect.’

\(^{30}\) Translation of Cecilia’s answer: That [the recording] sounds a little asocial or awkward, more ghetto sounding… also because he, because the grammar yeah because the grammatically somehow incorrect was sometimes but from the content alone it was not trustworthy [sounding].’
Mannheim, however, is similar to Berlin in that it is a metropolitan city with a large number of Turkish immigrants (Heine and Syed 2005). Interestingly, Mannheim is also home to one of the largest mosques in Germany, the Yavuz-Sultan-Selim mosque.

When I asked Cecilia if she had heard people speak this dialect before, she responded affirmatively and gave me a description of what kinds of people speak Kiezdeutsch as well as where they can be found. She told me that friends of her sister from the Realschule or ‘vocational school’ often speak this dialect as well as people on the street or in the streetcars, Ja, das erinnert mich an Schulkameraden von meiner Schwester von der Realschule und ja aus der Bahn aus der Straßenbahn. It is important to note that Cecilia connected Kiezdeutsch with students from the Realschule which is considered not as elite as other German high schools and is for students of lower academic performance. This indicates a connection between intelligence and Kiezdeutsch, namely that people with a lower intellect also speak Kiezdeutsch. Cecilia also mentioned that the less dialectal speakers, female speaker 2 and male speaker 2, sounded more educated than female and male speaker 1 who spoke with a heavier dialect, Das klang etwas gebildeter irgendwie... auch schon wesentlich gebildeter als der erste Mann.

My results from the second group were fruitful considering it was the largest and most diverse group I interviewed: six individuals, three women and three men. Geographically, it was also quite diverse in that I had participants from almost every corner of Germany. They were also the only group whose verbal reaction to the recordings themselves were telling.

Translation of Cecilia’s answer: Yeah, that [Kiezdeutsch] reminds me of my sister’s classmates from the vocation school and yeah [people] in the train or in the street cars.’

Translation of Cecilia’s answer: ‘That [Jasmine’s recording] sounds a little more [than Mariam’s recording] educated somehow… [Yorgi] also sounds substantially more educated than the first man [Yusef].’
For example, when I played the first recording of female speaker 1, Mariam, the strong dialectal speaker, they all laughed and made comments such as original Berlinerisch ‘original Berlin dialect,’ Ich fühle mich Zuhause! ‘I feel right at home!,’ and Wenn es ein Mann gewesen, wäre es ein Kevin ‘If that would’ve been a man speaking, it would’ve been a Kevin.’

Although I felt that this spontaneous reaction could have potentially tainted or influenced the responses to the pilot study, it was quite fascinating to observe their raw and immediate reactions to the recordings. The person who said he felt ‘at home’ was from Potsdam, which is close to Berlin-Kreuzberg. The participant who described the speaker as a Kevin was also thought provoking considering he was able to negatively judge this person within a matter of seconds and associate him with a group of people in Germany who are looked down upon.

Interestingly, female speaker 2, Jasmine, as well as male speaker 2, Yorgi, who both spoke a less dialectal version of Kiezdeutsch, received no comments or quips when their recordings were played. Male speaker 2, Yusef, however, was met with the same hilarity. Like with Mariam’s recording, all participants laughed during his recording and made comments about his speech including: Schöne deutsche Jugendsprache ‘beautiful German youth language’ and Es könnte auch meine Unikumpels sein! or ‘That could've been one of my university buddies!’ The fact that all participants laughed after the Mariam and Yusef’s recording is indicative of their feelings toward these speakers, namely, that they don’t take them seriously nor believe that they are respected in the German society.

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33 The name ‘Kevin’ is used as a derogatory term in German for a man who is awkward, unintelligent, and obnoxious.
The participant who said he felt ‘at home’ with Mariam’s recording was also the one who indicated that this recording could’ve been one of his friends from university. This revelation indicates the code-switching component of Kiezdeutsch; however, it proved to frustrate many of the participants because they felt this form of speech is a choice and that the Kiezdeutsch speakers are simply not giving enough effort to speak Standard German.

With female speaker 1, Mariam, the participants in this group felt that she was no longer speaking German because of the great amount of slang in her speech, *das ist ein bisschen zu viel... ein bisschen Slang ist schon gut aber das ist kein Deutsch mehr*. Her speech also allowed them to judge her place in society, with one participant commenting that Mariam was probably unintelligent and from a ghetto or slum but not necessarily poor, *die ungebildeten Leute reden so, geht in die Richtung dumm, nicht unbedingt zwangsläufig mit der Kombination Arm aber die halt aus dem Ghetto oder Slum kommen*.

When I asked them if they had a name for her form of speech they, like Cecilia, used the word *Asi* (short for *asozial* ‘trashy’) to describe her form of speech, calling it *Asislang*, which is derogatory and translates loosely to ‘trashy slang.’

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34 Translation of German text: ‘That is a little too much... a little slang is good but that [the recorded speech sample] isn’t German anymore.’

35 Translation of German text: ‘The uneducated people talk in this manner, it goes in the direction of dumb, it’s not necessarily connected with the poor [people] but just with those who are from the ghetto or slums.’
They also tried to distance the German language from this dialect, noting that they would not refer to it as German, but rather Turkish, and, once again, that this was an active choice the Kiezdeutsch speakers were making and that they had the ability to speak Standard German nicht so Deutsch.. eher Türkisch… die müssen nicht so reden!\textsuperscript{36} They also, like Jasmine, called it simply Jugendsprache or ‘youth speech.’

This focus group’s reaction to Jasmine was much more positive but they still believed that she, as well as the other speakers, were perhaps German native speakers with an immigrant background, which indeed was the case with each speaker: \textit{Ich habe das Gefühl, dass sie alle eine Migrationshintergrund haben oder ausländische Wurzeln, die sind auch vielleicht Muttersprachler.}\textsuperscript{37} All four recordings were of individuals with Turkish or Arabic background who were born and raised in Germany. I find it quite thought provoking that this focus group was able to come to this consensus just through the analysis of four short clips of speech. That indicates, in my opinion, that Kiezdeutsch is not only intrinsically connected to the Turkish and immigrant communities in Germany but also that Kiezdeutsch speakers are ultimately considered native German speakers, at least by this focus group.

\textsuperscript{36} Translation of German text: ‘[Her speech was] not so German… rather Turkish… they don’t need to talk like that!’

\textsuperscript{37} Translation of German text: ‘I have the feeling, that they all [all of the speakers from the recordings] have a migrant background or foreign roots, they are also perhaps native speakers [of German].’
Yusef’s recording proved to excite many of the participants in such a way that they were frustrated with his speech. Through the discussion of his recording, it became clear that these participants truly felt Yusef was speaking with such a thick dialectal Kiezdeutsch on purpose because he thought it was cool, *Man muss nicht so reden! Man kann wahrscheinlich Deutsch, gutes Deutsch aber die machen es mit Absicht weil es halt cool ist.* They also said that ‘the incorporation of the Turkish words in his speech was unnecessary’ *Türkisch Wörter einfügen finde ich unnötig.* The participant in this group from Hong Kong, Thomas, came to the aid of these speakers noting that perhaps it is the case that ‘some cannot speak differently’ *Manche konnten nicht anders.* The rest of the group, however, stood strong in their belief that Yusef was exaggerating his speech.

The participant from Potsdam, who felt ‘at home’ and had friends who spoke this way, was the only one who had a semi-positive reaction to this recording noting that it made him feel comfortable, like Mariam’s recording, and warmed his heart, *Warmes Herz— habe ich Zuhause gefühlt.* Yorgi’s recording evoked similar feelings in the participants to those generated by Jasmine’s recording. They believed that Yorgi was smarter than the previous male speaker, Yusef, but once again, probably not a native speaker of German. A common theme in the discussion of his recording was that all participants felt that he tried to speak Standard German, *Er versucht sich gut auszudrucken und kommt klar...Er versucht — das ist wichtig.*

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38 Translation of German text: ‘One doesn’t have to speak that way! One [Yusef] can probably speak German, good German but they do that on purpose because it’s just cool.’

39 Translation of German text: ‘[The recording] warmed my heart, I felt right at home.’

40 Translation of German text: ‘He [Yorgi] tries to express himself well and is clearly understood… he tries — that is important.’
After we discussed each individual, I led a discussion comparing the male and female recordings. The participants believed that Mariam and Yusef came from the same social class and in fact were low class, *es den Ruf hat oder den Beigeschmack hat, dass es aus der Unterschicht kommt aus der vermeintlichen Unterschicht.* I find this response fascinating because the participants were actually able to label Kiezdeutsch as a sociolect, which some researchers believe it is, without formal linguistic training. This qualification shows how identifiable the speakers of Kiezdeutsch in Germany are. The participants also believed that female speaker 2 and male speaker 2, Yorgi and Jasmine, were trying to fit in with the German culture but that the other two speakers were not and would rather live on the streets, *versuchen mit der deutschen Kultur anzupassen und den anderen zwei sind Straßenabi.*

In regards to the Turkish connection, although there was much discussion about the topic, several participants strongly felt that all four recordings were second generation Turkish, *Ja, wahrscheinlich mit der zweiten Generation von den türkischen Immigranten.* The terms they used to describe this form of speech were all negative and somewhat derogatory: *Kanakslang, Jugendsprache, Asislang* meaning, ‘Kanak slang,’ ‘youth speech,’ and ‘asocial slang.’

41 Translation of German text: ‘It [the Kiezdeutsch dialect] has the connotation or association that it comes from the lower class, from the alleged lower class.’

42 Translation of German text: ‘[Yorgi and Jasmine] try to fit in with the German culture but the other two are street rats.’

43 Translation of German text: ‘Ja, probably with the second generation of Turkish immigrants.’

44 *Asislang* refers to *Asi* which is short for *Asozial* ‘anti-social’ or ‘unsocial.’ It is a derogatory term for a person in Germany who is a jerk and perhaps also socially inept or awkward. Its true definition is difficult to articulate because it covers such a wide breadth of meanings and can be used for both men and women or groups of people. The term is often used to differentiate oneself from someone else who is perhaps causing trouble or acting out. In this instance *Asislang* ‘Asi-slang’ refers to the language these types of people (people who are asocial) would use.

45 ‘Kanak’ is a derogatory term used to describe individuals in Germany who have foreign, especially Near or Middle Eastern heritage.
The word *Kanak* denotes people in Germany of Near, Middle Eastern or Turkish heritage and was even used to describe a language variation prevalent in Germany in the 1980s: *Kanak Sprak*. This specific variation was spoken by Turkish immigrants. Geographically, this focus group could not locate these speakers to a specific region. When one participant said it was particular to Frankfurt and Berlin as well as other major cities, another participant rebutted saying that she had heard it in her small village. At the end of the discussion, one participant commented that this type of speech was, ‘all over Germany and even in Austria,’ *Es ist bundesweit! Sogar in Österreich!* 

My final group of participants were two men, also from differing regions: northern and southern Germany. This group echoed the preceding participants in many of their reactions, however, they were the quickest to associate and disassociate these recordings with the Turkish community in Germany. One of the participants in the third group immediately described female speaker 1 as one with *Türkischstämmig* or ‘Turkish heritage’ but also shared that he had heard people also without any immigration background speak in this manner, *Ich kenne so viele Leute, die so reden…ohne türkische Wurzeln, das ist einfach Straßenslang.*\(^{46}\) His opinion was that this dialect was simply slang that one speaks on the streets. When comparing the different recordings, this was the only group that reacted positively to the first male speaker, Yusef.

\(^{46}\) Translation of German text: ‘I know so many people who talk like this… without Turkish roots, it’s simply street slang.’
In their opinion, this speaker was not smart and would never get a management position but he was the friendliest sounding one, \textit{nicht so gebildet... Ich kenne so viele Leute, die studieren und auch so reden, man würde aber nicht so 'top management' sagen mit Leuten, die so sprechen... am freundlichsten von allen, ziemlich locker drauf, ausgelassen so.}\footnote{Translation of description of Yusef: ‘[He was] not so educated… I know so many people who study [are in college or at the university] and talk like this, one would not associate ‘top management’ with such people who talk like this… [Yusef was] the friendliest sounding one from all of the recordings, quite relaxed and hilarious.’} Neither participant was able to mark a clear difference between the male and female speakers but they were united in their description of the language which was shockingly similar to the way the other groups described it: \textit{Asideutsch, Kanak Sprak,} and \textit{Slang,} ‘Asocial German,’ ‘Kanak-speech,’ and ‘slang.’ Like the second group, they used the word \textit{Asi} and \textit{Kanak} to describe the four recordings. Both of these terms are neither positive nor praiseworthy but rather quite offensive and derogatory and are both used to describe groups of people particular to Germany.

4.5 DISCUSSION

I find it both interesting and alarming that both the terms \textit{Kanak} and \textit{Asi} were prevalent in every focus group. It proves my hypothesis that Kiezdeutsch is intrinsically connected to the Turkish culture in Germany but also reveals how negatively that culture is perceived, at least by the participants in this pilot study. These discussions also reinforced the sociolinguistic dimension of Kiezdeutsch considering every participant from group one, two, and three had heard it spoken before and were from varying German cities.

\footnotetext[47]{Translation of description of Yusef: ‘[He was] not so educated… I know so many people who study [are in college or at the university] and talk like this, one would not associate ‘top management’ with such people who talk like this… [Yusef was] the friendliest sounding one from all of the recordings, quite relaxed and hilarious.’}
That means that Kiezdeutsch crosses state borders in Germany and is truly a product of metropolitan and non-metropolitan communities with large immigrant populations. It is my belief that the negative reactions, conveyed in each focus group, are related to the speakers themselves and not specifically that dialect. Many of the participants were frustrated because they believed the speakers could speak Standard German but were not putting in the effort to do so. In my opinion, these discussion groups confirmed my idea that Kiezdeutsch is negatively perceived because of the speakers of these dialect. When the focus groups were asked to describe each speaker, they were unanimous in bringing up Turkish heritage in every instance. This reaction indicates that there is still much prejudice against Turkish immigrants and the children of Turkish guest workers, at least amongst the participants in my research. The opinions from these discussion groups suggest that Kiezdeutsch is neither taken seriously as a true German dialect, nor even considered a respectable form of German by individuals who are living in Germany today.
5.1 EXPERIENCES IN GERMANY

During my summer research, I was able to travel extensively throughout Germany. My trip started in Bavaria, where I stayed with my relatives who live in a small, rural village close to Munich. When I described my topic of study, Kiezdeutsch, I was met with much more disdain than I had expected. My older relatives, the so-called “older generation” by the discussion groups, were concerned for my safety because they knew I had planned on going directly into Turkish neighborhoods in order to collect my data. Even more than their concern for my well-being, however, was their harsh opinion of the Kiezdeutsch dialect. When I asked my grandmother’s cousin, Annerl, if she had heard of the Kiezdeutsch dialect, she spouted off a few different German slang words with a German-Turkish accent saying, *Ja, krass, Alter! Sie ist eine Jugendsprache* ‘Yeah, crazy, dude! That is a youth language.’ She was quick to categorize this dialect as simply something that teenagers speak on the streets with one another. Her husband, Rupert, had a more academic approach but was equally as appalled with the Kiezdeutsch dialect, calling it improper German and even going so far as to say it is destroying the German language through the incorrect grammar usage.
He gave me an example of his experience with Kiezdeutsch speakers by noting that he hears them speak without the correct definite or indefinite article and shared the sentence ‘I need cellphone contract’ instead of ‘I need a cellphone contract’: [Kiezdeutsch ist] kein richtiges Deutsch! Er zerstört die deutsche Sprache. Sie sprechen ohne Artikel, man braucht unbestimmte oder bestimmte Artikel und ich höre den ‘Ich brauch Handy Vertrag.’ Stimmt gar nicht.\textsuperscript{48}

This attitude, however, was not limited to the older generation of Germans in Bavaria that I interacted with: my contemporaries shared their views as well. One of my German friends in particular told me that he believed I was wasting my master’s thesis and that I should have concentrated my research on a more credible German dialect such as Bavarian, Warum hast du nicht von einem richtigen Dialekt gewählt wie Bayrisch? ‘Why didn’t you choose from a real dialect like Bavarian?’ Another one of my German relatives who is also my contemporary as well as a woman, gave me interesting insight into her interpretation of the Kiezdeutsch dialect. Like the others I have mentioned, she too believed that I was wasting my time and effort and that I should have focused my research on a more respectable topic. When I shared my research goals with her, namely that I was investigating the difference between male and female Kiezdeutsch speakers, her interest sparked. I asked her what her opinions were of these speakers, fully expecting her to respond that she found male Kiezdeutsch speakers more threatening than female Kiezdeutsch speakers, but it was completely reversed: she found women who speak this variation of German to be much more unsettling than men.

\textsuperscript{48} Translation of German text: ‘[Kiezdeutsch is] not proper German! It destroys the German language. They [the Kiezdeutsch speakers] speak without articles, one needs indefinite or definite articles and I hear them say, ‘I need cell phone contract.’ It’s not correct.’
She described them by saying *Die Frauen sind unheimlicher als die Männer... also wenn ich sie auf der Straße höre, fühle ich mich nicht so sicher* ‘The women are scarier than the men… well when I hear them on the street, I don’t feel so safe.’

This negative and uncomfortable sentiment toward Kiezdeutsch and Kiezdeutsch speakers transcended borders as it was also my experience when I traveled to Berlin to begin my research studies. Like in Bavaria, I too had German relatives in Berlin who were even more disappointed with my choice in thesis topics. Perhaps their stronger reaction is due to the fact that, geographically, they are closer to one of the original Kiezdeutsch neighborhoods. Once again, the “older generation” was concerned for my safety and were disturbed when I relayed my experience of gathering interviews in the Turkish neighborhoods. Ula, my grandmother’s cousin who works as a German teacher, asked me if I told my interviewees *Sagst du, dass die falsches Deutsch sprechen?* ‘Do you tell them that they speak incorrect German?’ She was also the only one of my German friends and relatives who truly believed I was in imminent danger in these Turkish neighborhoods. Ula relayed several stories to me about how lucky I was to have collected my data and to be safely back in the nicer parts of Berlin. She told me about the Turkish mafia, a group I did not even know existed, that supposedly prowls the streets of these Turkish neighborhoods in their expensive cars, looking for young women to kidnap.

It was not made clear to me during my research if Ula’s concerns were justified in their reasoning or were simply imagined and fueled by negative stereotypes. Regardless of their validity, the fact that they exist and that she was truly upset with my decisions to go into these neighborhoods, shows me that this fear of the Turkish communities has been projected to the Kiezdeutsch dialect and goes much deeper than I had originally anticipated.
Ula’s older sister, Marlene, who is also a German relative of mine, was equally distressed when I told her of my plans to carry out my research in the Berlin-Kreuzberg area. When I first arrived in Berlin and was in need of establishing Turkish contacts, I actually reached out to Marlene, hoping that since she had lived in Berlin her entire life, perhaps she knew of some families that would be willing to let me interview them. When I called Marlene and explained my research to her, she simply responded that she had nothing to do with the Turkish communities or Kiezdeutsch speakers and could not help me, *Damit haben wir nichts zu tun*. Her abruptness caught me off guard, but, once again, gave me incredible insight into the perception some native Germans have of the Kiezdeutsch speaking community.

Despite the strong opinions of my German relatives and friends concerning Kiezdeutsch, it is not recommended to draw conclusions from these comments, since they are constructed by lay persons and not actual linguists. Their views, although moving, are often times effected by their own personal prejudices and stereotypes associated with the people speaking these dialects. Karlheinz Jakob cautions against interviews with lay persons about dialects by writing, *Das Laienwissen über die sprachlichen Merkmale der bewerteten Sprachvarietäten ist unvollständig, ungenau und falsch* ‘The lay persons knowledge about the language characteristics of the judged language variety are incomplete, imprecise, and wrong’ (179).
5.2 THE GENERATION GAP

In my research and experience with the Kiezdeutsch dialect, a common theme that was often presented was the perception of these speakers from the older German generation. In the second and third focus groups I worked with at the University of Mississippi, this idea arose during the discussion; namely, that the older generations in Germany, that is to say the participants’ parents and grandparents, would be much more critical of the recordings. The comments from all of the participants, however, were mostly negative, which begs the question: is there really a generational gap? The evidence from the pilot study, as well as discussion sections suggests that there is not. All of the exchange students that I interviewed, with the exception of one, who himself was considered a “foreigner” in Germany, had negative views of the Kiezdeutsch dialect. For them to indicate that their parents or perhaps even grandparents would have a much stronger negative reaction is hard for me to imagine as their reaction was already shocking.
In the second and also largest focus group, the question of how the older generation in Germany would react to these recordings arose organically, as it was not part of my interview protocol. When the question was posed by one of the participants, another responded quite dramatically that if I were to have done this interview with older people, they would have fallen out of their chair and also that the older generation would have connected the dialect much earlier in the discussion to the word ‘Turkish,’ whereas these participants felt that they were still careful when making this association:

Wenn du diese Interview mit älteren Leute machen würdest, die würden vom Stuhl fallen! Ich bin mir auch sicher, dass das Wort Türkisch viel früher auskommen würde, wir waren noch sehr vorsichtig mit Türkisch, Ausländisch, Kanake und so weiter.\(^{49}\)

Although the participant who shared her preceding opinion appeared to have been justifying her answer by making this focus group appear more tolerant of foreigners and minority dialects, just a few moments before this comment, she mentioned that the speakers in the recordings were probably second generation Turkish, (Ja, wahrscheinlich mit der zweiten Generation von den türkischen Immigranten). She then shuddered at the thought of everyone speaking a form of Kiezdeutsch in Germany and said O Gott, wenn die alle würden so reden! ‘Oh God, if everyone talked like that!’

\(^{49}\) Translation of German text: ‘If you were to do this interview with older people, they would fall from their chair! I am also certain that the word ‘Turkish’ would’ve come up much earlier in the discussion, we [the group 3 participants] were still very careful with Turkish, foreigners, Kanake [derogatory term for immigrants to Germany from Near or Middle East] and so on.’
The previous tolerance that she claimed to have is contradicted by this statement. It seems that this purported tolerance is simply a facade used to hide the group’s, or at least this participant’s, true feelings toward the Kiezdeutsch speakers and dialect.

Another participant in their group, Thomas, who was half German, half Cambodian and was born in Hong Kong, had an interesting perspective on the recordings and Kiezdeutsch speakers. Since Thomas had first-hand experience of what it felt like to be a foreigner in Germany, he came to the defense of these speakers when I bluntly asked the group if this dialect was associated with the Turkish community and therefore negatively perceived. Some of the participants immediately brushed me off by saying *Kein Türkending* ‘Not a Turkish thing’ or *Nichts mit Herkunft zu tun* ‘it had nothing to do with their heritage.’ Thomas, however, was the only participant to disagree with the group and acknowledge that there was indeed a connection between a disdain for immigrants and their impression of this dialect. He did this by sharing his own experiences growing up in Germany with a slight accent and being judged negatively based on his speech production but he also acknowledged that the attitude toward these non-native speakers is currently changing to a more positive one:

_Es gibt aber eine Verbindung, das kommt ursprünglich dafür, persönlicher Ausdruck wenn man von Ausland kommt und Deutsch reden kann ohne Akzent, dann ist man gut gebildet... jetzt gerade dass ändert sich, das war damals so dass dieser Dialekt negativ war weil die von Ausland kommen aber es ändert sich gerade, das verbindet man nicht jetzt._

50 Translation of German text: ‘But there is a connection, it comes originally from personal opinions when one comes from abroad and can speak German without an accent then is one well educated… this is changing currently, that was at that time so that this dialect was negative because those from abroad were coming [and were speaking it] but that’s currently changing, one doesn’t make that connection now.’
Thomas’s stance was not a popular one among his peers in the discussion group, but I was glad that his opinion was voiced because I believe it gives a more realistic and honest assessment of the true perception of the Kiezdeutsch dialect.

In the third discussion group, the participants were less vorsichtig ‘careful’ than the second group and thought after the first recording that the voice speaking was Turkish. In regards to the generation question, they agreed with the second discussion group in that they felt that they themselves were much more accepting of this dialect than the older generation. When I asked them if this dialect was respected in Germany, both participants responded, Auf keinen Fall! ‘No way!’ They followed this up by mentioning the generational gap, stating that this form of speech was normal and accepted among their peers but that this was not the case with the older generation: Das ist in unsere Generation, in unsere Jahrgänge akzeptiert ganz normal aber mit den älteren Generationen auf keinen Fall!\(^{51}\) When I asked both participants what the reasoning was behind their acceptance of Kiezdeutsch and the older generations’ rejection of the dialect, they simply replied Die sind einfach gar nicht daran gewöhnt, als die junger waren gab es nicht ‘They [the older generations] are simply not used to it, when they were younger it [Kiezdeutsch] did not exist.’

Despite both groups’ efforts to justify their answers and claim their liberal attitudes towards Kiezdeutsch and the speakers from the recordings, my experience with them supports my argument that their accusations of the older generation actually applies to them as well. All three of these groups had participants who were studying in college which implies that they are educated, young as well as open-minded.

\(^{51}\) Translation of German text: ‘That is our generation, in our age range is it [the dialect] accepted pretty normally but with the older generation, no way!’
Their reaction to the recordings proved that they were indeed educated but, surprisingly, were not as tolerant as they claimed to be. The oral responses from focus group participants and the pilot study data indicate prejudices against the recorded speakers. For example, all participants unanimously scored the first female speaker, Mariam, as 0 or ‘not at all’ for the ‘attractive’ quality. Her speech was also more dialectal than that of Jasmine’s recording, suggesting that the thicker the Kiezdeutsch accent, the less attractive the speaker is perceived to be.

Even though almost all of them, except for Thomas, denied the connection of Kiezdeutsch to the negative stereotypes associated with the Turkish communities in Germany, I believe that this connection is strong. The only migrant groups that were mentioned in each discussion group were those from the Near and Middle East, with Turkey being the most common. It is clear that this negative association, although it perhaps did indeed start with the older generations, has trickled down to the younger generations in Germany.

5.3 THE DANGEROUSNESS OF KIEZDEUTSCH AND THE GENDER ASPECT

Several of the Germans I encountered in Germany as well as at the University of Mississippi truly believe that Kiezdeutsch is dangerous. They view the speakers as threatening and the dialect as a weapon against Standard German.
I included the quality of ‘dangerousness’ on the pilot study and although the results were, like the rest, negative, the sample was not large enough to test for statistical significance; however, regardless of the sample size and taking into consideration my experiences in Germany during the initial data collection, I was expecting the dangerous rating of these speakers to be much higher.

In Figure 9 and Table 7, the results of the pilot study in regards to the dangerous factor are listed. Figure 9 shows that the majority of the participants actually scored the speakers to be gar nicht or ‘not at all’ dangerous. Conversely, this data presents a problem of division between the pilot study responses and the discussion section. One must then consider the level of honesty for each section. It is my opinion that the participants were more honest in their responses for the pilot study than with their responses during discussion section.

There are three possible reasons for the pilot study results not being as negative as the discussion results. First, one must consider the number of participants in each group. Since there were multiple participants in group 2 and group 3, the viewpoints and opinions of each participant could have been influenced or even changed through the exchange of ideas. Second, since they were scoring the pilot study survey on their own, the influence from fellow participants, aside from verbal reactions to the recordings, was absent, thus allowing each participant to honestly rate the four recordings without the input from other participants. Third, in the pilot study, the participants were rating just the dialect and language qualities of each recording, whereas they were asked to discuss the speakers in the focus group. This created a level of objectivity for the pilot study portion as well as subjectivity for the following discussion section.
Considering that the quality of dangerousness was not rated highly, I do not believe that it is an important factor in defining Kiezdeutsch. However, with that said, I believe that a possible perception of Kiezdeutsch speakers is that they are considered to be a dangerous group of people. One must make the following distinction: the dialect is not dangerous, the people who are speaking it are.
Addressing the gendered aspect of Kiezdeutsch, there is not strong evidence from the pilot study, focus groups or my experiences in Germany that lead me to believe that there is a strong divide between the male and female speakers of the dialect. Although the data from the pilot study indicates that female speakers of Kiezdeutsch are perceived to be less attractive than male Kiezdeutsch speakers, that is the only suggestive conclusion that can be drawn.

Table 7: Pilot study participants’ rating of each recording for the quality ‘dangerousness’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Dangerous 0</th>
<th>Dangerous 1</th>
<th>Dangerous 2</th>
<th>Dangerous 3</th>
<th>Dangerous 4</th>
<th>Dangerous 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Speaker 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Speaker 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Speaker 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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Both Yorgi and Jasmine believed that the female Kiezdeutsch speakers spoke with more ‘charm’ than the male Kiezdeutsch speakers, but this attitude was not corroborated by the focus groups. One of my German relatives, in fact, contradicted this statement when she shared with me that she found the female Kiezdeutsch speakers to be much more dangerous sounding than the male speakers. Although that was her personal opinion, the quality of ‘dangerousness’ did not stand out in this particular pilot study of perceptual dialectology.

In fact, when comparing the average results from the pilot study, all four recordings were given low scores which actually indicates a positive perception, meaning that the members in these focus groups found the Kiezdeutsch speakers not to be dangerous. There still remains to be a possible association between Kiezdeutsch use and male attractiveness and toughness. When women use Kiezdeutsch, or at least Kiezdeutsch slang, they upset gender expectations and thus appear threatening, unattractive and scary. It is possible that my German relative found the female Kiezdeutsch speakers to be more alarming than the male speakers because such speech is not expected from female speakers. Yorgi and Jasmine both agreed that the males in their area spoke more of a Ghettoslang ‘ghetto slang’ which is perhaps jarring to hear if it comes from a female. Yorgi himself said that he would be surprised if he heard a girl in his neighborhood talk like he does with his guy friends.
The number of Muslims spiked in Germany with the introduction of guest workers in the 1960s (Sakaranaho 2). These guest workers came from several different regions, the most important being Turkey. In Werner Schiffauer’s book entitled *Islam in Europe: Diversity, Identity and Influence*, he touches on the presence of Muslims in Germany and actually argues that the guest worker movement caused these individuals to become more devout in their religion:

The key term for understanding first-generation migrants’ religious sentiments is the word *gurbet*, or foreign. The experience of foreignness has several facets. One is a fear of self-loss. The migrant, who is often single, moves into a space in which no one knows him or her. Often used to a high measure of social control, the migrant suddenly finds him or herself in a realm in which social control is practically non-existent. This often leads to feelings of disorientation. Among first-generation migrants, stories circulated about Turkish workers who had ‘gone to the dogs’ in Germany (i.e. had relationships with women, become alcoholics, and thus lost their perspective on life). Islam offered a certain stable point against this trend of anomic experiences, not least because one found, in Islam, a community of like-minded people who could give each other mutual support. (71-72)
I agree with Schiffauer, but I believe he failed to mention another important aspect of establishing one’s identity; namely, that of speech. Although Kiezdeutsch speakers are not exclusively Muslim, many of their expressions are Islamic and therefore the connection does exist. This potential connection to Islam is a possible contributing factor to the negative perception of Kiezdeutsch speakers and communities in Germany. This is especially evident when one considers the recent anti-Islamic groups that have formed in Germany, such as Pegida, *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*.52

The link between the shunning of Islam from the German culture and the fear that Kiezdeutsch could ruin the German language is not insignificant. I argue that this concept is actually the key to understanding the German mentality toward this dialect. There is a great sense of fear that accompanies Islam and the individuals associated with it. Schiffauer names this “the construction of the ‘Muslim Other’” (77). I agree that this sense of otherness is active in Germany society and has been projected on the Kiezdeutsch dialect. Klaus Böger, a German politician, conveys similar beliefs regarding the Turkish and Islamic communities in Berlin and notes that they are indeed seen as a threat to the German culture:

> I think the question of Islam and Islam classes alike, something I sense as a politician, provokes great fears and concerns in the population. You can sense that in particular when you take part in discussions in Berlin neighborhoods. There are, to formulate it crassly, concerns that Islam, people of Islamic religion in Germany, when they go into the schools, may somehow slowly change the art and nature of our culture, which is completely western. (4)

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52 Translation for German text: ‘Patriotic europeans against the islamization of the occident.’
The initial introduction of guest workers into Germany in the 1960s, in my opinion, posed one problem to German society: namely the changing of their societal make-up. The second problem they are facing today is linguistic: the creation and expansion of the Kiezdeutsch dialect.

Schiffauer also argues that the alienation of these migrant workers by the German society actually united them as a minority group. This situation is in jeopardy today, however, since many former guest workers now have children, who although share their foreign heritage, are German born and therefore German citizens. This creates an identity crisis for these children. A probable solution for the coping of this crisis is through the development of a community created dialect: Kiezdeutsch. This allows these individuals to acknowledge their heritage while still functioning as members in German society. Schiffauer explains:

As should be demonstrated in the following with the example of Muslims in Germany, the battle for recognition is decisive for the development of this position. Second- and third-generation Muslims are confronted with the situation that they, unlike their parents, passed through its institutions and have built diverse relationships with society. They are German, English or French Muslims and not just Muslims in Germany, England, or France. This is nothing to be taken for granted, but a practical relationship, a task or project. They must situate themselves in the given society and develop an understanding of themselves in that situation. (76-77)

The “understanding of themselves” that he mentions, in my opinion, is achieved through their identity and this is created through their speech, thus the importance of Kiezdeutsch.
It is imaginable that some Kiezdeutsch speakers would hope to distinguish themselves from their parents and assimilate to German culture in that they do not speak *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* ‘Guest workers’ German,’ but their own dialect. Schiffauer also mentions that this certain group of immigrants faced problems in creating their place in society because their acceptance was controlled by “those occupants who define the conditions for admission” (77).

The individuals who are in charge of defining these conditions for admission are the native Germans. In my opinion, the Germans have allowed the Turkish immigrants, as well as their children, to integrate into the German society, but a strong barrier that is holding strong is the rejection of their language. *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* and Kiezdeutsch are not regarded as educated forms of speech in Germany and it is conceivable that they will never reach the same prestige as *Hochdeutsch* or ‘Standard German.’

This discrimination is perhaps motivated by the fear of the ‘Muslim Other’ based on my experiences this past summer as well as the research results from the pilot study. The current political climate in Germany is another factor that could be exacerbating this intolerance hence the development of groups such as *Pegida*. The fact remains, however, that some individuals in Germany without any connection to Turkey or Islam are beginning to speak Kiezdeutsch. This generates even more discomfort for some native Germans who are trying to diminish the Kiezdeutsch dialect. The question, therefore, must be asked: why are non-immigrant children speaking Kiezdeutsch? Is it simply due to the close proximity in which they are living to Kiezdeutsch speakers, or are they too trying to distance themselves from the rigid German society? It is plausible that there are potentially several factors contributing to this trend.
The younger generations, specifically the teenagers, are beginning to incorporate Kiezdeutsch speech into their language based on perhaps their friend group and geographical location, but also because they are trying to distinguish themselves in society.

Another idea to consider is “covert prestige,” an idea developed by the linguist William Labov. Covert prestige addresses the principle of individuals changing their speech pattern in order to gain prestige within a certain group in the community (Labov 221). Covert prestige differs from Labov’s other linguistic principle of ‘overt prestige.’ Overt prestige is used when speakers are trying to gain access to the culturally dominant group of society whereas covert prestige is used for the marginalized groups in society (Eakin). Concerning Kiezdeutsch, I believe covert prestige offers an explanation for the prevalence of non-immigrant Kiezdeutsch speakers. Not only are these speakers exposed to Kiezdeutsch geographically if they are living in a metropolitan area with a large migrant population, but they are also socially exposed to the dialect through interactions with their peer group. In order to gain full access to the Kiezdeutsch community, these speakers change their speech patterns through covert prestige. This process enables them to identify themselves as Kiezdeutsch speakers, even though they may not have Turkish or Arabic background.
CONCLUSION

6.1 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

There were a number of reasons why the pilot study of my research was too limited to yield concrete conclusions. One of the limitations was the sample size in the pilot study of perceptual dialectology. The recordings used in the pilot study survey were from different sources: one of the sources was myself and the other was a PhD candidate at the University of Potsdam, Maria Pohle. The Kiezdeutsch speakers in the recordings also spoke different varieties of Kiezdeutsch. Yorgi and Jasmine, since they were interviewed by me and were not interacting with other Kiezdeutsch speakers, spoke a variety of Kiezdeutsch which was similar to Standard German, whereas the recordings of Yusef and Mariam were of them speaking with other Kiezdeutsch speakers.

The length of recordings as well as the number of participants in the three focus groups was also quite small, meaning that the data and results only reflect their specific experiences and opinions and can not be used as a generalization for all current perceptions of Kiezdeutsch speakers. It is also important to note that since the sample size was small and the research method was unorthodox, no statistically significant results were gathered from the data provided; however the data does suggest some intriguing possibilities.
Another limitation that must be noted in regards to this study is the participant observation. In future research, the sampling of Kiezdeutsch speakers could be improved through the recording of dialectal speakers communicating with each other, as opposed to the researcher, who may not speak the dialect in question. Once again, since the sampling was small, the focus groups were uneven in the number of participants. Group 1 had only one participant: Cecilia. This group yielded perhaps the most honest answers for the pilot study and discussion section that followed since Cecilia was not influenced by the opinions of her peers. With that said, it must be acknowledged that the larger groups, namely group 2 and 3 were perhaps a bit biased based on the members in each group. For example, group 2 had six participants, both male and female whereas group 3 had only two participants that were both male.

The choice to include my personal experiences as well as the opinions of my relatives and friends in Germany also limited my research through the incorporation of subjectivity; however, the views shared are highly suggestive of the current perceptions of Kiezdeutsch speakers and communities in Germany. It is also interesting to note that many of the opinions and views of those relatives and friends mentioned were corroborated by the participants in the pilot study.
6.2 FURTHER RESEARCH

This study of perceptual dialectology of Kiezdeutsch could easily be expanded upon and investigated more thoroughly. An important element to consider would be the methodology for data collection. I suggest gathering a larger speech sample of Kiezdeutsch speakers from every metropolitan German city where Kiezdeutsch is spoken. This would also enable the researcher to study the possible variations of the dialect. A larger group of non-Kiezdeutsch speakers for the perception study would be ideal as well in order to yield statistically significant results from the data. Finally, I propose the use of a Matched-guise test with a Likert scale in order to gather the most accurate results.

6.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The purpose of my research on Kiezdeutsch was to gain a deeper understanding of the dialect from a sociolinguistic angle by examining perceptions of Kiezdeutsch by both Kiezdeutsch speaking and non-Kiezdeutsch speaking-Germans. I interviewed Kiezdeutsch speakers in Germany and then used their speech samples to perform a pilot study coupled with a discussion component with three different focus groups. These focus groups were created at the University of Mississippi and were comprised of native German speakers who were studying abroad for the semester. The analysis of the data collected from the recordings, the pilot study, and the focus groups provided the basis for my research.
In chapter 2, I explained the origins of Kiezdeutsch from a historical as well as linguistic standpoint. It was in this chapter that the linguistic features of Kiezdeutsch were introduced and analyzed. The Kiezdeutsch controversy was also included in this chapter.

Following this section, I gave a brief summary in chapter 3 of my research and data collection in Berlin and Potsdam, Germany. I then explained the perceptions and linguistic attitudes Kiezdeutsch speakers have of themselves. Collecting these speech samples as well as having the opportunity to interview Yorgi and Jasmine\(^5\) proved to be incredibly helpful in that it gave me firsthand insight into the Kiezdeutsch community in Berlin-Kreuzberg as well as direct contact with Kiezdeutsch speakers.

In the chapter following this, chapter 4, I shifted my focus to the German exchange students at the University of Mississippi. I used the recordings and data that I explained in chapter 3 as the foundation for the pilot study as well as interview protocol for the focus groups. In this chapter, I give a detailed explanation of my procedure as well as an analysis of the results from the different case studies. In the final chapter preceding the conclusion, I introduce my personal experiences in Germany concerning the Kiezdeutsch dialect. It is in this chapter that I share how the interactions with my family and friends in the southern as well as northeastern regions of Germany reflect their perceptions of the Kiezdeutsch dialect and language community. The opinions and attitudes that I encountered mirrored the data I compiled through the use of the pilot study and focus groups at the University of Mississippi.

\(^5\) Yorgi and Jasmine are the pseudonyms for the male and female Kiezdeutsch speakers I interviewed in Berlin-Kreuzberg, Germany.
Through the research and data analysis, I was able to draw some conclusions, despite the limitations of the study. Considering the small sample size as well as the low number of focus group participants, no statistically significant results were yielded. The data reflects, however, how poorly each Kiezdeutsch speaker was rated by the participants in the pilot study. The discussion sections also proved to be essential in gathering information as to the the participants’ perceptions of Kiezdeutsch speakers.

Although the data has revealed much about the current perceptions of Kiezdeutsch from the two Kiezdeutsch speakers I interviewed in Berlin-Kreuzberg and the nine non-Kiezdeutsch speakers who participated in the pilot study, as well as the reactions I encountered from my German relatives and friends, there still remains a question: why is this dialect so negatively perceived? Is this negativity controlled by the speakers of the dialect or by the dialect itself? One possibility is that the negativity associated with Kiezdeutsch is more closely related to the group of individuals speaking the dialect, rather than the linguistic features of the dialect. I supply two warrants for this hypothesis.

First, in the pilot study, the non-Kiezdeutsch speakers did not rate the speech samples as dangerous, indicating that they do not feel threatened by the dialect itself; however, in conversations with my German relatives, I had been warned that the people who use this dialect, that is to say the Kiezdeutsch speaking communities, are dangerous. Secondly, during the discussion section of the focus groups, the participants described Kiezdeutsch based on social groups in society instead of the linguistic characteristics of the dialect.
For example, the participants in groups 1, 2 and 3 believed that the recordings were of speakers with Turkish heritage. The Turkish component was constantly repeated during the discussion section, so much so, that I decided to concentrate my research on this topic.

It is my impression that the fear of Kiezdeutsch is motivated by two main sources: the Turkish presence in Germany and Islam. The Turkish communities have grown exponentially since the introduction of *Gastarbeiter* ‘Guest workers’ in Germany and by doing so, have developed a new societal division between immigrants and native Germans. The Turkish immigrants brought with them their beliefs and practices, one being a religion practiced by several Turkish immigrants: Islam. Although Islam is not practiced by every Turkish immigrant in Germany, it remains to be a term that is often synonymous with these communities.

Considering Kiezdeutsch was first spoken by the children of Turkish and Arabic immigrants, it is possible that the disdain German society had for their parents, the *Gastarbeiter* ‘Guest workers’ has been transferred to them.

The pilot study described in 4.1 suggests that the native Germans participants feel that Kiezdeutsch is truly attacking their culture: Islam was an attack on their culture through religion, the *Gastarbeiter* ‘Guest workers’ staying in German was an act of defiance, threatening to upset the social structure, and now Kiezdeutsch is threatening to destroy the German language.

Although there are negative perceptions about the Kiezdeutsch dialect, the data implies that it is actually the Kiezdeutsch speakers that are being judged. The focus groups constantly came back to the idea that these speakers had the ability to speak Standard German but were choosing to speak Kiezdeutsch *mit Absicht* ‘on purpose.’
This places the blame on the speaker and not on the dialect through accusing the speaker of being insubordinate by not adhering to the cultural norms of speaking Standard German. In conclusion, I agree with Glück’s argument that Kiezdeutsch is a sociolect (Schröder). It is implied, based on the data I collected, that the speakers of this dialect are more harshly judged than their speech habits.

The data provided indicates that the Kiezdeutsch speakers in this particular study were not only marginalized by the native-German participants in the study as well as data collection, but also perceived to be a threat that must be eradicated. The focus groups that I interviewed seemed to believe that through the Kiezdeutsch speakers’ speech patterns, they were upsetting the societal balance, and that in order to regain this balance, their dialect must be discouraged. The dismissal of this sometimes playful dialect and the encouragement of Standard German is one possible solution that my interviewees suggested for the “Kiezdeutsch problem.” However, I believe this “problem” will persist in the years to come, because it is not the language that is causing the concern, but rather the people who are speaking the dialect.

I conclude that the perception of Kiezdeutsch, among the individuals who participated in my study and who shared their opinions with me while I was researching in Germany, will only improve if the image of immigrants and Turkish communities in Germany is shifted to a more positive one; otherwise Kiezdeutsch, along with other minority dialects, will continue to be a source for argument and division in German society.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


VITA

Education

B.A. in Germanic Studies, Communication & Culture, and Theatre & Drama 2013
Indiana University, College of Arts & Sciences
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Advanced Training

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KoPra: Deutsch als Fremdsprache in Theorie und Praxis, University of Leipzig 2015

Academic Awards and Fellowships

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Department of Modern Language Conference Travel Grant, University of Mississippi 2015
Graduate School Conference Travel Grant, University of Mississippi 2015
Pedagogical Seminar Travel Scholarship, American Association of Teachers of German 2015
Eickhorst Scholarship, University of Mississippi 2015
Graduate Fellowship, University of Mississippi 2014-2016
Fulbright ETA Scholarship, US Department of State 2013-2014
IU Incentive Grant, Indiana University 2009
IU Recognition Scholarship, Indiana University 2009-2013

Presentations and Workshops

Invited Lecturer, “Phonetische und morphologische Eigenschaften des Kiezdeutschen.” University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS 2015
Presenter, “Kiezdeutsch: A New and Exciting German Dialect.” Mississippi Foreign Language Association Fall Conference, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS 2015
Invited Lecturer, “Fulbright Year in Germany: Living the American Dream in Hessen.” Indiana German Heritage Society, Indianapolis, IN 2015
### Leadership and Community Service

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<td>Chair, Women’s Book Club, St. John the Evangelist Church, Oxford, MS</td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
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<td>Counselor, Hoosier Burn Camp, YMCA Camp Tecumseh, Brookston, IN</td>
<td>2013, 2015</td>
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### Research and Teaching Interests

- German as a Foreign Language: designing lessons around culture, Spaßpädagogik, Total Physical Response
- Topics: Cinema of War, German Theater, German Dialects, German Expressionism, Gender Studies, Anglicism, Sociolinguistics

### Languages

- English (native), German (near-native), Middle High German