

“ich mag so wasserpfeifladen”*

*I like *so*_{PARTICLE} *shisha shop*

The interaction of grammar and information structure in Kiezdeutsch

1 Hypothesis:

In novel usages of „so“ in Kiezdeutsch, grammar and information structure interact.

2 Kiezdeutsch – a short description:

- **Distribution:** urban areas with a large migrant population (Berlin: Neukölln, Kreuzberg, Wedding); multiethnolect; used also by speakers without migration background

- **Status:**

- youth language (Androtsopoulos 2005, Kotsinas 1992, Kallmeyer 2001)
- contact language (Clyne 2000, Löffler 2005)

- **Characteristics** of Kiezdeutsch, found also in similar varieties in Europe:

- New lexical items:

Welke sma? [Straattaal]
which girl

- Omission of inflections and auxiliary verbs:

Ja skriva kontratt [Rinkebysoenska]
I [have] sign[ed] [a] contract

- Adv-SVO word order (instead of V2):

normalt man går på ungdomsskolen [Copenhagen multiethnolect]
normally you attend the youth.club

(cf. Nortier 2006, Quist 2005, Kotsinas 2001)

► in Kiezdeutsch, new constructions are formed based on

- grammatical reduction
- expanding patterns from standard or colloquial varieties of German!

(cf. Wiese 2006)

3 The phenomenon:

(1) ich mag **so** wasserpfeifladen

I like so_{such??} shisha-shop

(2) da gibts **so** billard-raum

there is so_{such?} snooker.room

(3) ich bin mehr **so** naturtyp für natur dorf

I am more so_{???} nature.type for nature village

(4) da gibts **so** Hermannstraße und Wittenau

there is so_{???} Hermannstraße and Wittenau

4 Explanations from Standard German

4.1 *so* = comparison particle?

► **first case:** ‘Prototypical’ function of *so*, like in standard German (cf. Thurmair 2001)

(5) für mich is ja nich **so** schlimm **wie** für sie
for me is PART not as bad as for her

► **second case:** no comparison context!

(2) da gibts **so** billard-raum
there is so_{such?} snooker.room

4.2 *so* = intensity marker?

► **first case:** As in standard/colloquial German

(cf. Auer 2007)

(6) ich hab halt nich **so** große erfahrung damit
I have PART not so_{that} big experience with.it

► **second case:** *so* cannot get the main accent!

(3) ich bin mehr **so** naturtyp für natur dorf
I am more so_{???} nature.type for nature village

4.3 *so* = hedging strategy?

► **first case:** As in colloquial German

(cf. Androtsopoulos 1998)

(7) also ich steh auf nich auf rappen un **so**
well I like [prep] not [prep] rapping and so

► **second case:** the nouns following *so* cannot get a “fuzzy” interpretation

(4) da gibts **so** Hermannstraße und Wittenau
there is so_{???} Hermannstraße and Wittenau

4.4 A type-token article?

► **first case:** like in colloquial German

(cf. Hole/Klumpp 2000, Weinreich 1993)

(8) der hat **son** lied über ausländer geschrieben
he has so_{such.a} song about foreigners written

► **second case:** no inflection, no stress

(1) ich mag **so Ø** wasserpfeifladen
I like so_{such??,Ø} shisha-shop

Our proposition: [so XP] is a new strategy to mark focus in Kiezdeutsch!

5 so as a new focus particle

- **Definition of focus** (Krifka 2006:6): "Focus indicates the presence of alternatives that are relevant for the interpretation of linguistic expressions."
- **Strategies in German to mark focus:**
 - Word order
 - Stress + word order
 - Focus sensitive particles + word order
- **Other languages: "focus-only" particles**
 - *like* in colloquial North American English (cf. Meehan 1991)
 - *bara/ba'* in Swedish youth language (cf. Erman & Kotsinas 1994)

so is a focus particle because...

- ✓ no lexical content
- ✓ emphasising the phrase following
- ✓ often in the classical focus position
- ✓ occurs with phrases other than nouns

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