

„Ich mach dich Messer“: Grammatische Produktivität in Kiez-Sprache („Kanak Sprak“)

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Englische Zusammenfassung

The phrase “Ich mach dich Messer” (lit.: *I make you knife*) is a ritualised threat used in a variety of contemporary German that is popularly known as ‘Kanak Sprak’ (*kanak language*), but is also referred to as ‘Kiez-Sprache’ (*hood language*) by its speakers. Kiez-Sprache is a multi-ethnic variety that combines features of a youth language with those of a contact language, and has counterparts in other European countries (e.g. *Rinkeby-Svenska* in Sweden or *straattaal* in the Netherlands). So far, the interest in Kiez-Sprache has been mainly from sociological and sociolinguistic perspectives, and less so from grammatical ones.

After a brief discussion of Kiez-Sprache in general, I investigate the status of a phrase like “Ich mach dich Messer” within the grammatical system of Kiez-Sprache as well as from the point of view of Standard German. Drawing on a corpus of spontaneous speech samples, I show that this phrase does not stand alone, but rather exemplifies a kind of construction that is also evident in other phrases in Kiez-Sprache. I argue that the construction reflects a linguistic division of labour between syntax and semantics that is supported by a pattern that Standard German provides for light verb constructions. Given these relationships, a phrase like “Ich mach dich Messer” should not be regarded as a random grammatical simplification, and in particular not as an isolated case of determiner drop, but rather as a systematic phenomenon that indicates grammatical productivity of this new variety.