

## Language mixing within an Albanian-German bilingual family network

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Language mixing is a common phenomenon in bilingual families. Bilinguals may mix their languages for various reasons, such as to convey a specific meaning, to suit the conversation partner or topic, or for psycholinguistic reasons. The mixing can take the form of alternation, where the language is completely changed within a conversation or utterance or insertion, where single words or phrases from one language are embedded in another language without changing the overall language of the utterance (see Muysken 2000). This study examines language mixing phenomena within an Albanian-German bilingual family network in Germany. The family is composed of 13 family members belonging to three different (language) generations. The language mixing behavior of the individual generations and the change in language behavior in cross-generational communication are of particular interest. To achieve the goal of this study a total of twelve hours of spontaneous language data, recorded within this family were analyzed. In addition, language biographical interviews with each family member in German and Albanian were conducted.

The following monolingual Albanian utterance from the corpus containing a German insertion, illustrates how the speaker uses the German word *Schultüte* to describe something that does not have a direct equivalent in Albanian. This type of language mixing is typical for the first generation.

### Example (1)

*do qanta qi i kom qi pi ruj per kujtim tfmive do: (.) schultüte qaty i dava per tavan*

a few bags I keep as a reminder of the children some: (.) **paper cones** I put aside there for the attic

However, not all instances of language mixing are as clearly as the example above. In some cases, the switching between languages within an utterance is so frequent and varied that it becomes difficult to identify which language the statement is being made in. Additionally, the reasons for language mixing may not always be clear, like in the following example.

### Example (2)

*qitash e kum ni erst (1.5) se die vergeben keine kleinen baustellen mehr a din pershemull  
so kleine asi nuk dojn gjithmon im auftrag mit einer große mja/ vergeben a din:*

I just heard it now (1.5) that they don't award small construction sites anymore you know for example small projects they don't want always awarded on contract with a big you know

The manner of speaking exemplified in example (2) is characteristic of the second and third generation during conversations with the first generation. The aim is to investigate potential explanations for this language mixing phenomena in this specific conversational situation.