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a Senegalese street vendor:

Reflecting multilingual practice and language
ideology in El Arenal, Mallorca

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1. Introduction: On walking and talking in El Arenal

Language and tourism continues to remain a (so far) understudied field in sociolinguistics. Most concise studies offer very limited insights into this field, with the exception of a few major studies, which deal with the complexity and fluidity of tourism settings in terms of their linguistic arrangement and the tourists' language patterns (Phipps 2007, Thurlow &

Jaworski 2010, among others). The changing language ecologies in touristic hot spots such as the Balearic Islands, where adolescents on their end-of-school trips, and middle-aged adults on club tours, engage in binge-drinking and other borderline activities, have been largely neglected in tourism studies, (at least) with the exception of an exhibition catalogue compiled by Storch et al. (2017). The vast expansion of the tourism sector on the island of Mallorca (Spain), from around 100,000 annual tourists in 1950, to

more than 8 million in 2000,¹ has resulted in the establishment of a touristic infrastructure targeting mainly German, Dutch, and British package tourists. The beach areas along the *Ballermann* (a spoofed version of the Spanish term *balneario* denoting the strolling promenade) have thus turned into noisy, neon-lit party circuits, where strip shows and concerts are promoted, and where intoxicated groups of tourists blare popular tavern songs, stumble, tussle, or look for spontaneous sex.

The touristic spaces around Palma's central party areas, colloquially referred to as *Schinkenstraße* ('ham street') and *Bierstraße* ('beer street') as the touristic heart of El Arenal, are multilingual spaces of noisy encounters. There, however, not only tourists interact with locals since, apart from the tremendous waves of tourists, other forms of migration have also increased significantly over the past two decades. Specifically, large groups of Senegalese and Nigerians have migrated to Palma de Mallorca for various economic purposes, some of whom travel on legitimate papers, while others come as undocumented refugees. The beaches have therefore become multicultural meeting points of exuberant tourists (with at times transgressive behaviour), and busy beach vendors, but also of masseuses, men who build sand art, others who sell cold drinks, all with very different origins. While Senegalese women mainly earn their living by plaiting hair at the beach promenade, Nigerian women either operate as cleaners in the sanitary areas of the large party locations *Bierkönig*, *Megapark*

etc., or as sex workers who wait patiently in the dim nooks between the bars and the beach. While the (mostly German) language of the touristic infrastructure is equally present beyond Mallorca, played as songs during *après ski* winter fun parties and in the German carnival, not much has been said about languages spoken by the migrants from the Global South, i.e. the West African languages Wolof, Bambara, Naija, nor about the underlying ideologies of their speakers.

The focus of language ideologies lies with the speakers' beliefs about language(s) and the processes of linguistic awareness (according to Silverstein 1979), but also on "the seeming messiness inherent in encounters and the ways language is practiced and performed in diverse ways" (Hollington & Storch 2016: 2). The linguistic messiness of the *Ballermann* setting, where tourists from the Global North and migrants from the Global South engage in sales discussions, looks, at first sight, like a discursive space where German (and, to a minor extent, English and Dutch) is (/are) the common norm, as the language(s) learnt and used by all those who are keen on making a living; thereafter seemingly joyfully and jokingly used in all sort of quick interactions. The hilarity, however, often takes a sombre tone when tourist language is used to exclude, to mock, and to turn migrant workers into exoticised Others, whose language practices are ridiculed as "broken", as "minimal", and who are seen as an annoying factor in the vacation setting. Multilingualism in El Arenal

¹ As reported by the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* on the occasion of the 100-year-jubilee of the Mallorcan tourist association in 2005. See [<http://www.spiegel.de/reise/europa/100-jahre-mallorca-tourismus-das-17-deutsche-bundesland-a-362532.html>].

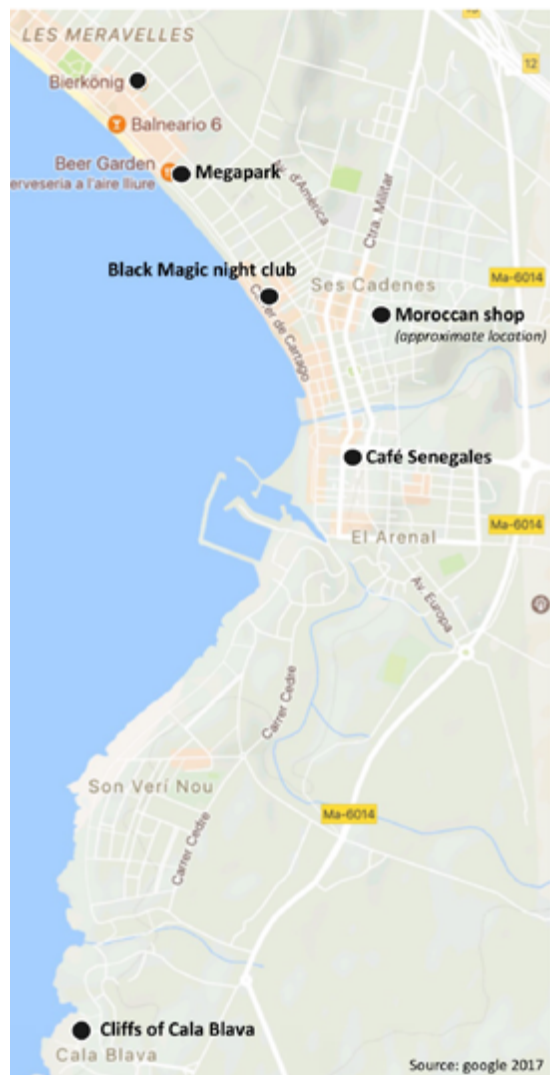
is in many cases bound to unequal power relations, epistemology, and marginalisation (see also Errington 2008, Hollington & Storch 2016), whereby tourists and workers may have very diverging feelings about the languages being used at the beach. This contribution addresses the question whether street vendors use German (and other languages of their communicative repertoire) for their purposes, how they can make it/them ownable or “speak back” with the same words. How are noise and silence conceptualised within the context of touristic linguistic landscapes, dominant soundscapes, and enforced multilingualism (i.e. when migrants from the Global South have to acquire tourist languages for economic survival)?

Summarising different multilingual encounters, discourses about noise and silence, or about desire and home, this contribution aims at portraying the multi-faceted touristic setting of Mallorca from the angle of a personal language biography. The insights into the touristic landscapes of Mallorca and Senegalese street vendor’s language use are based on conversations with Ahmed, a Senegalese immigrant in his late twenties, as well as on numerous quick encounters with other tourists, tourism workers, and shopkeepers along the beachfront of the Playa de Palma, and beyond. The conversations took place in different surroundings during extended walks, here summarised as one concise walk for reasons of better representation. While the first part, which focuses on language biographies and acquisition on the beach, is based on a longer conversation in a Moroccan shisha bar in near vicinity to the well-known party spots like *Megapark*, the following section (3) addresses

language use and in-group strategies in the *Café Senegales* and the nightclub *Black Magic* in El Arenal. The final part (4) focuses on my stroll with Ahmed to the cliffs of Cala Blava, exchanging ideas on noise and silence, after a quick stop at a Moroccan corner shop (see Map 1 for an overview).

Map 1:

Some key locations from the walk through El Arenal



The unusual genre of a *promenade linguistique* with quickly interchanging dialogues, sudden visual and auditory novelties, and unexpected encounters that are addressed in a broad range of stylistic forms, aims to show that the analysis of complex sociolinguistic settings often requires new and unconventional ways of looking at language. Whilst reflecting on a Senegalese beach vendor's multilingual performance, especially through conversations on ideologies and thoughts, by taking informal comments and evaluations into account, a stroll along the beach appeared to be the most promising setting for "data" collection.² One dilemma, however, persists: Attempting to study the encounters between German tourists and African migrants through participant observation is a complex play with insider and outsider identities (see also Rock 2016: 124 for the complexity of the researcher's positionality in linguistic ethnography). During my walk with Ahmed, I was often seen as a (German speaking) tourist by his colleagues, and the thin line of positioning myself between a Sangria-drinking (inside) visitor recognising the bawling party hits vs. representing the (outside) linguist caused me some honest confusion (see also Storch, this issue).

2. Languages on the beach: On language biographies and the noisy everyday

On a Saturday night, after already having spent three weekends together in El Arenal, Ahmed sat in front of me in a small Moroccan shisha bar, and tried to inhale the thick apple-flavoured smoke – for the very first time, as he told me. Coughing from time to time, he took sips of the mint tea we had ordered, and explained to me the differences to the Senegalese tea he made at "home", an apartment he shared with several other Senegalese colleagues. There was a consistent degree of noise around us, yet not the same noise that dominated the beach; in the shisha bar most of customers, to our astonishment, conversed in Spanish, creating a rather relaxed atmosphere, whereas, in contrast, the beaches, Ahmed's daily work area, were usually filled with the German "noise" of hawkers and tourists' juggled forms of address and of phatic communication, *hallo Helmut, hallo Monika*; mock forms addressed to Ahmed's fellow vendors, and their counter-replies, reinitiating a dialogic circus of calling and being-called all over again, day after day, until the touristic high season was over. The beach was a carnivalesque space full of contradictions, where Senegalese beach vendors and German

² Due to the complexity of the setting, the fieldwork carried out in Mallorca between June 2016 and May 2017 represented a methodological mixture of different approaches and dynamic strategies in order to grasp and describe the multilingual encounters between tourists and migrant workers, ranging from ethnographic fieldwork to interviews and metalinguistic discussions. I am particularly grateful to the team of researchers with whom I spent the various fieldwork periods in Palma de Mallorca, and I express my thanks to Fatou Cissé Kane as part of our team for her help with the Wolof translations. The exchanges on language, performance, multilingualism and language concepts resulted in a first workshop at the University of Cologne in November 2016. Moreover, I am grateful to the peer-reviewers for their comments and suggestions. Zoë Braven-Giles is warmly thanked for correcting my English.

tourists alike adorned each other with colourful wigs (for sale, or for mockery), sunglasses, and hats, and seemed to try their best to outwit the Other, with language skills, funny sayings (the Senegalese), with the recording function of a smartphone, uploading the brief interaction to *YouTube* in a second (the Germans), triggering virtual laughter. “*Helmut, c’est la farce, c’est un jeu, c’est rien de grave. Hellmut, Dunkelmut*”³, Ahmed sometimes tried to convince me (with limited success), yet he had a serious look on his face when referring to the interactions that occurred on the beach.

Back in the shisha bar, however, with only Castellano (and perhaps a little Catalan) surrounding us, giving us an auditory break, my counterpart’s tongue loosed. Speaking mostly in French, he explained to me which languages he had learnt, prior to his arrival in Spain, and how.⁴

“So, the first language you learnt at home was Wolof?” I asked him.

“Yes, but there are very many other languages around, there is a huge variety of languages. Peul, Serer, Wolof, very many. But I am Wolof, it’s the ethnic majority.” he explained.

“And the second language you learnt was French, in school?”

“Yes, French, the administration is French, everything is French, our languages are tradi-

tional languages, but you have to pass through French. Then at university, they teach German, English, all other languages”, my interlocutor pointed out, when his phone rang, instantly switching to Wolof when answering the call.

“You meet Serer people, you speak Serer, you greet them in Serer, you can grab some words from him/her, you are nice to them, like now, us speaking French but I may grab some words of German from you...” Ahmed explained, smiling.

“So, Wolof speakers know some bits of all these languages?” I was surprised.

“Yes, that’s how it is. It’s the milieu that causes this.”

“Just as here, with German all around, where learning German seems to be a common thing?” I wanted to know.

“Yes, exactly. This is a purely German economic zone. Learning is easy, but not of good quality, I would not be able to [do so]. You will speak, you will work, you will know some, you will work...” Ahmed’s explanation reminded me of what I had read about mobile vendors in Senegal, who would acquire and use the different languages present in the country in business interactions, what Dreyfus & Juillard (1995: 177) called “*le jeu de l’alternance de langages dans la vie quotidienne*” (‘the alternating game of languages in daily life’) with a high degree of flexibility. Dreyfus & Juillard (1995: 240) described a situation in which a Wolof vendor

³ Which can be translated as ‘Helmut [i.e. the male first name with which tourists often call street vendors] is a masquerade, it’s a game, it’s nothing serious. Hell-mut (‘bright-mut’), Dunkel-mut (‘dark-mut’).’ The play with *hell* and *dunkel* (‘bright/dark’) here refers to skin colour, and when used by a Senegalese hawker reflects the fact that he knows how racialised the language of quick encounters actually is.

⁴ Longer stretches of speech, which were initially held in French, are here translated into English in order to make the dialogue more accessible to potential readers.

and a Manding-speaking female customer both used their own language at first, but then strategically employed each other's language to conclude the transaction in their interest. This reminded me of the strategic use of German, of the naming strategies and the conative function of sales discussions.

I wanted to know more. "Do you have friends in Magaluf, where the British [tourists] are? Is it only English being spoken around there?"

"No, also Spanish residents. So you need Spanish. And also Germans, some of them. But restaurants are English, bars are English-owned. You have to speak it. It's the opposite to here."

"Now it's the Russians coming, right? Many of them, as it seems. Is Russian a complicated language?" I continued to ask my interlocutor.

"Yes, it is." (The following day he would demonstrate how difficult of a language Russian indeed was, when he led me to a Cyrillic shop sign a couple of streets off the Playa de Palma, asking me whether I was able to read this. I denied, and he confirmed that this was truly a very hard language to learn.) "Oh, I met Linka, a girl from Slovakia in a night club. Despite the hard language, we could speak. I spoke French, she used Google."

"Google translator?"

"Yes, translator. But the direct contact was... well, her English was not very perfect. Writing was easy, using the phone, which would put it all into Slavic... Slovakian. A language harder than German. But closer to Russian."

"And your Arabic, what about it? You once told me you know some Arabic?"

Ahmed replied: "Yes, from Koran school. Religion is done in Arabic [in Senegal], so I know Arabic. It's written, not spoken. With Moroccans, I speak French. With Saudis, English. The international languages are English, French, German, Russian, Spanish. It's rare to go to a place where people do not speak one of these languages..." What I found particularly interesting, was Ahmed's usage of Arabic for interactions with tourists. Increasing numbers of Turkish heritage speakers from Germany, whose parents or grandparents had migrated to Germany, visited Palma as tourists. Ahmed knew how to recognize them, and thereafter how to address them in Arabic words that they would know, as the words were also present in the Turkish language. The tourists would often value his approach, resulting in a positive feeling, a good vibe between potential customer and vendor.

Almost finishing our shisha and Moroccan mint tea, I asked him to tell me more about how he learnt German. I knew he had learnt English in school, and then improved it while being in Mallorca, through his daily contact with tourists.

"My German...? In the streets, with people. But I want to do a language course. *Maintenant c'est le temps de modernité* ('now it's the modern times'). When you arrive here, from Senegal, or other countries... someone shows you the way to schools and so on. So that later you can get paperwork, a stable job... *ils apprennent, ils comprennent, ils s'intègrent* ('they learn, they understand, they integrate')." He also told me that times had changed, that things had become more modern: Africans could enter bars, and order a drink, sometimes, just like the shisha bar where we were sitting during

our conversation, which, according to him, would not have been possible a couple of years earlier. I still doubted that they would receive a warm welcome in the larger bars like *Bierkönig*, but kept this to myself.

“And what about the Nigerians? Do they all speak Spanish and German?”

“Spanish yes, German no. Only the ones working in hotels. And the girls, outside in the streets, just some words. They will find their way with tourists. Some English, some German.”

Sometimes nationalities, and languages, were strategically concealed; most street vendors stated that they originated from Senegal, even though some did not speak French at all. To Ahmed, this looked like a strategy which was especially employed by Gambians, who spoke Wolof but with some English words in it, causing hilarity among the Senegalese. Adopting the label of “being from Senegal” would make it easier for tourists to understand, having one category of street vendors (and not a multitude of African origins, coming from Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea etc.), and also, at times, to conceal of one’s identity, trajectory, and immigration status, of course. I told Ahmed about my encounter with a hawker who stated he had come from Somalia, which certainly was not the case as I heard him speaking in what sounded to me like French from Senegal, right afterwards. This was also confirmed by Ahmed, who happened to know him. The hawker standing in front of the *Megapark* would always say that, I was informed, maybe

because some of the German tourists would have already heard of Somalia, or, perhaps, as just a playful way of challenging the tourists’ geographic and linguistic knowledge?

When asking Ahmed whether he knew some Dutch (due to the presence of many Dutch tourists around the bars of *Ballermann Three* and *Four*), he answered that he did not know any words. It is a very complicated language to learn due to the bizarre sounds it contains, and he hissed like a cat, as if to demonstrate this. He stated he would not get anything out of knowing Dutch, adding “*on s’intéresse même pas*” (‘we are not interested at all’).⁵ It was like Chinese. But most Dutch spoke good English, or spoke German, so there was no communication problem, he concluded. The knowledge of specific languages could be a (social) life-saver. Not only economically, but also in order to maintain relationships, or get to know people. While conversing about Ahmed’s language biography, and his German skills, a friend suddenly called him on the phone. “*Mon ami a besoin de moi.*” (‘My friend needs me’). He later explained that a fellow Senegalese had met a Dutch girl with whom he wanted to stay in contact. She spoke English and only little German. He was still learning German and spoke no English. Ahmed had to assist, via *WhatsApp*. Translated terms of affection were then sent off to Holland. No need to learn Dutch.

“What about Chinese? You told me you buy the shades, hats, and plush monkeys from them in large quantities. Do you know some Chinese

⁵ According to Ahmed, the common Senegalese view also was that Dutch tourists would not leave the hotels very often, or would not interact with African street vendors very much.

words?" I asked.

"No. Nothing. We don't need it. The Chinese speak Spanish. Without it, they would not be able to integrate." No reason to learn Chinese, which is complicated, and in the same category as Dutch or Russian: "*Les langues, c'est pour le business.*" ('Language is meant for business.')

Leaving languages aside, we came to talk about the strategies used to attract customers, and the customers along the Playa who would shout back, mock, make noise, or get aggressive. The nicknames with which the vendors were initially addressed, were not always gentle. "*Avant ils n'aimaient pas, maintenant ils se sont habitués.*" ('First they [the vendors] did not like them, now they got used.')

However, the nickname *Helmut*, as explained by my counterpart, was a Senegalese invention, much to my astonishment. Claiming ownership over mock forms and appropriating them (through extensive use) is a strategy to fight exclusion. This mimetic strategy of calling tourists by one's own excluding or derogatory names, and using the label as a selling strategy alongside other well-known sayings, rhymes and songs from the 1970s or 1980s was a catchy way of selling goods to tourists (for instance, one of the commonly cited sayings was *hätte hätte Fahrradkette...* 'shoulda coulda woulda...').



Figure 1:
The *Schinkenstraße*: Areas of playful acquisition or bitter mockery?
(N. Nassenstein)

The following day, a crowded Sunday in May, when returning from the *Schinkenstraße* (see Fig. 1) to the hotel, which was situated at the beach promenade, Ahmed suddenly began to imitate the vending strategies of his Senegalese compatriots, shouting "*Monika!*", "*Lady Gaga!*", "*hallo... Erika!*" (all of which seemed to be a response to the ubiquitous *Helmut*-call). When I showed my amusement by commenting "this is really crazy", he lowered his eyes, and concluded "*chaque jour, tout ça, chaque jour*" ('every day, all this, every day') and pointed with his right index finger to his head, indicating that this was actually insane. These noisy encounters also included vulgar language, as used by German tourists.

That same day we witnessed a group of young men passing by a café, who found apparent amusement through repeatedly exclaiming “*ficki ficki weni zahli*” (which could tentatively be translated as ‘fucky-fucky-pay-lessy’), thereby mimicking defective language, as a parody, and associating grammatically wrong and simplified forms of language with the African immigrants; specifically with the language of the female Nigerian sexworkers.⁶ The imagination of less prestigious or minimal forms of language in relation to speakers of African languages is no novelty, and reflects pejorative language attitudes. This has been extensively dealt with in existing literature, labelled “tarzanized language” or “foreigner talk” (Lipski 2005), or racialised “mock forms” of language (Hill 1999). After the shisha bar, the next stop was a Senegalese coffeeshop, not far from the beach.

3. The *Café Senegales* and the *Black Magic: Café Touba* hits back

The *Café Senegales*, the only Senegalese-owned restaurant in El Arenal (as I was told by Ahmed), overlooks the Plaça Reina Maria Cristina, a spacious palm-studded square just a couple of streets off the Playa de Palma. It was the first café of its kind that was opened in the touristic centre of Mallorca in 2015. Outside, almost inaudible, are the touristic soundscapes which waft from the beach and its promenade. Inside, broken only by laughter, or occasional

greetings in Wolof when another customer enters (*na nga def? – maa ngi fi rekk!*), there is mostly silence.

The first time I was guided by Ahmed and my research colleagues, some of whom already had the occasion to spend some time there, while eating original dishes from Senegal such as *mafé* (peanut chicken), *thieboudienne* (fish and rice), or enjoying a cold *bissap* juice. After that, I returned several more times, usually when I felt exhausted after having spent the whole day in near vicinity to the beach, listening to tourists, or sitting and taking notes near to the main party spots. I ordered a *Café Touba*, a spicy Senegalese coffee that contains around 10 percent *djar* (‘Guinea pepper’), giving it its specific taste, and which made the visit special.

In the Café, no t-shirts with offensive slogans such as “*no Helmut, no ficki, no schöne Uhr* (‘no nice watch’)” were worn. No policeman made groups of Senegalese vendors scatter, and no party music was played: It was the time and the place to speak (about) Wolof, and about in-group communication between Ahmed and his colleagues. Whilst sipping on our *Café Touba* “to go” (Ahmed had plans to continue walking) I wanted to know whether there were also Wolof terms that Senegalese street vendors used for in-group communication, when naming the Spanish policemen, the female Nigerian sex workers, the Indian shopkeepers, and so on. Ahmed helped me to compile a list of terms referring to the different actors on and near the beach, all of which I scribbled down in my notebook (see Tab. 1).

⁶ Based on their nocturnal call for customers *ficki ficki, blasi blasi* (referring to sexual intercourse including oral sex), male tourists seem to classify Nigerians women’s language skills as poor and pidginised – yet, surprisingly, not their own when asking for sex, using the same words.

Term used by beach vendors	Meaning and literal translation
<i>bakhoul</i>	'policeman' (lit. 'something bad')
<i>thiaga</i>	'prostitute, Nigerian sex worker'
<i>déconneur</i>	'bad (unfriendly) customer' (lit. 'fool, foolish person')
<i>niak</i>	'other African' (Nigerians, Ivorians) (lit. 'pej. Central/East African, villager')
<i>helmut</i>	'male German tourist' (derived from the <i>ancien dictateur allemand Helmut Kohl</i> , according to Ahmed)
<i>lady gaga</i>	'female German tourist' (derived from the name of the US-pop star)
<i>kou bakh la</i>	'nice customer, friendly tourist'

Table 1: Speaking back – What street vendors call tourists and fellow Africans

As explained by my interlocutor, these terms were metalinguistically used when two Senegalese vendors referred to a drunk tourist, stating *taye helmut da fa mandi* ('this German tourist is drunk/wasted'), often also paired with the words *sangara* ('alcohol') or *yamba* ('weed'), as a considerable number of tourists also looked for drugs (it has to be stated that various Senegalese beach vendors do not exclusively sell soft toys and hats to tourists). In particular, the vague term *bakhoul* was used in any situation in which police, or other negative surprises such as aggressive customers, disturbed the sales.

While slowly walking away from the *Café*, my conversations with Ahmed also revealed that Helmut was no longer only a term of Othering but was apparently increasingly used in contexts without tourists involved. Recontextualised, it served as a frequent in-group

term of address among Senegalese friends. This, however, seemed to be a rather recent development. "We call each other Helmut, a lot", Ahmed told me, smiling. There are always different ways to react to social inequality and exclusion, and the latter was a form of mimicry, a mimetic reflection of adopting the ostracism that was often projected on them. A couple of days later, Ahmed sent me an audio recording which he had made at the beachfront with his mobile phone, of himself and another colleague, in order to show me what he had meant: Wolof mixed with German terms of address, specifically the ones that were usually ostracizing and part of a mock register used by tourists (see Table 2).

By then, on our way to the next stop on our walk through El Arenal, we had almost finished our spicy *Café Touba*. It had a rebellious taste.

<i>Hallo Helmut...</i>	'Hello Helmut...'
<i>Allô Paco ja (=Pape), nou mou démé?</i>	'Hello Pape, how are you?'
<i>Ah Helmut ça va?</i>	'Helmut, how are you?'
<i>Sant yalla yaw.</i>	'I'm thanking God.'
<i>Naka ligey bi, Helmut?</i>	'How is work, Helmut?'
<i>Tan yi gadjo bi nexouf dé, Helmut, tan yi dafa deugeur...</i>	'Business does not move, Helmut, money is not circulating...'
<i>toubab yi tekiwounou dara fane yi.</i>	the White people (tourists) are not buying.'
<i>Tan yi Lady Gaga, Monika yek, Beyoncé, tekiwounou dara affaire yi mom doxoul quoi...</i>	'These days, some (few) Lady Gaga(s), some Monika(s), Beyoncé(s), business is not moving, whatever'
<i>Waw deug la.</i>	'Yes, that's true.'
<i>Mone ndax tan yi mome xan nga rek policier yi danou sé xawa kheup kani</i>	'Because you know that the police don't give us the possibility to work,
<i>gnigui looky looky bay beugeu dé</i>	they do anything possible (<i>looky looky</i>) until up to being all tired,
<i>waye toubab yi diokhe wounou xaliss quoi</i>	but the White people don't want to give money.'

Table 2: Helmut 2.0 – In-group conversation among vendors as recorded by Ahmed

Later that evening, we continued to walk around in order to catch some of the nocturnal atmosphere: A central spot where languages beyond German or English were heard, and where Ahmed and his colleagues spent their time after a long day at work, was the nightclub *Black Magic*, a small discotheque located at the Playa de Palma which was often crowded with Nigerians, Senegalese, Malians, and Gambians in the off-season (and many Dutch tourists in the main season). Multilingual Mallorca functioned differently in that bar. In the front areas, “the first room”, salsa and pop were played and

groups of customers were mixed, including Germans, Spanish, Dutch, Senegalese, and Nigerians. Some tourists apparently enjoyed the multicultural setting, as I showed Ahmed. Maybe due to the sudden awareness that there was a Mallorca beyond the party hits of the *Bierkönig*? A glance of exoticism which was different from the long-rehearsed encounters on the beach?

Behind the salsa bar, after walking through a wooden second door to the “African” part of *Black Magic*, everything changed. No more German or Dutch tourists, no more

salsa. *Guinness Extra Stout*, a popular beer brand sold in Nigeria, was available there, and African languages were heard; while Naija was played in songs by P-Square and Timaya, Bambara could be heard in remixes of Amadou and Mariam's melodic pieces, and Youssou Ndour's Wolof lyrics filled the air. Breaking the monotony of German *Schlager* stars like Ikke Hüftgold, Mickie Krause, and Jürgen Drews, the music was eventually freed from the dominant soundscapes of the beach, it seemed, and contributed to a multilingual levelling, a uniform distribution, in the backroom discotheque. I was told that sometimes Germans entered, the ones who knew Wolof, and who, apparently, had spent longer stretches of time in Senegal, much to the astonishment of the present Wolof speakers. Ahmed, after introducing me (and my colleagues) to his brother, then another friend, then to the lady at the bar, went back to the dancefloor and spent the entire night at Black Magic, as he usually did on Saturdays. We continued our walk the next day.

4. Longing for a new language: The cliffs of Cala Blava and the power of silence

In the afternoon, Ahmed suggested to take a stroll to his favourite place, outside of El Arenal, near a small village called Cala Blava. On the way he intended to stop by a small Moroccan



Figure 2:
The *Black Magic* nightclub, where Naija, Wolof, and Bambara are played
(N. Nassenstein)

grocery shop which he wanted to show me, picking up our conversation from the previous day. Earlier, I had expressed my astonishment to him about the apparent lack of spaces in El Arenal where language, in my opinion, was neither touristified, commodified, nor "arranged" as a sort of multilingual stage set (which also included Ahmed's strategic use of German for economic purposes, or his rejection of Dutch, and so on).

Rashid, the owner of the Moroccan shop, was a jittery character, jumping from the refrigerated counter to the shelves from where he pulled bread, *Café Toubá*, then frantically counting chickens for Ahmed, all while mixing Wolof (which he had learnt as he ran the only shop that had Senegalese groceries in stock) with French, some Spanish and inaudible bits of other languages, maybe Tamazight? All the while Ahmed commented on the snippets of multilingual speech produced by Rashid, encouraging

him to hurry up, be faster, *celui-là veut rentrer dans son pays* (pointing at me), *fais vite*, wrap it quickly, *on n'a pas de temps*; I feared that all of Ahmed's groceries would land on the floor, considering the hectic rush of the Moroccan seller. I watched in awe. The multilingual staccato of Rashid's translanguaging in the shop filled my counterpart with apparent hilarity, as it was a nice change from what dominated the beaches, the bars, and Ahmed's daily work habits.

"Poulet, poulet, poulet, parle un peu français, Casablancarabat, parler français...", running.

"Pero, mon frère, hablas bien francés! ("But my brother, you speak good French!")", Ahmed

Figure 3:

Buying translanguaged chicken in the shop
Carnicería Halal
 (N. Nassenstein)



giggled, *"los pollos, aquí, no tenemos tiempo..!"* ('Here, the chickens, we don't have time.!')

"Noproblem, vamos a llamar a la policía, police, police. Amigo, amigo, déjà rápido", the seller replied in inseparable gibberish, rushing to another shop shelf.

"Il est très sympa, vraiment ('he is really nice')", Ahmed laughed. "During the world cup, he always said that Morocco would win the cup, they did not".

"Shouér, Shonti-shonti, donsi-donsi..." ('Soccer players, singing and dancing?'), and we stepped out onto the street, into the hot afternoon sun.

I was not sure why Ahmed had taken me to the shop, but I assumed it had to do with its linguistic architecture: Tins, bottles, and boxes with labels from all around the world. Green tea from China, *Café Touba* from Senegal, Spanish chicken, and Moroccan bread. Olives from... and again the messy chorus yelled from inside onto the road:

"Dieuredjeuf, merci beaucoup, sant yalla!" And language from everywhere, however less noisy, less intrusive, and quite unexpected.

After leaving the corner shop, we walked toward the waterfront, passed the local harbour, and climbed up into the hills, where groups of tourists became scarce, and where the wealthy residential areas began, overlooking the bay of El Arenal with a view over the entire beach from *Ballermann One* to *Ballermann Six* or *Seven*. Escaping the noise of the beach, the busy streets full of tourists arriving at their hotels, and drunk groups of party tourists stumbling toward their favourite bars and restaurants,

we reached the cliffs of Cala Blava. I now understood why Ahmed came here whenever he found the time: No one spoke, apart from a woman who called her dog, maybe, from a distance. She kept calling but the name remained indistinct (and no dog showed up).

“Quand je suis vraiment vraiment fatigué, de tout, (‘when I am really tired, of everything’), after work, I come here. To liberate myself a bit. It’s calm, it’s quiet,” he explained to me.

“I get it. Sometimes it’s too noisy on the beach?”

“The(y) shouting... Can you see your hotel, over there? The red building, that’s it.” And he pointed down at the beachfront near *Ballerman Three*, where our research team had chosen to spend the night.

He asked me: “Isn’t it strange here for you? It’s so different”, which I negated.

“This is art, you don’t find it elsewhere”, and he pointed at the rock formations near the shallow water.

“Superbe. Avec le bateau là.” (Or something that sounded similar).⁷

Ahmed, several days after our walk, had gone to the cliffs again, and then sent us (me and the rest of the research team) pictures that portrayed his afternoon while sitting on the rocks, followed by a short text – in German.

Ahmed’s text was held in a creative form of German, where morphology and syntax were not grammatically “correct”, and parts of it may have originated from Google Translator,

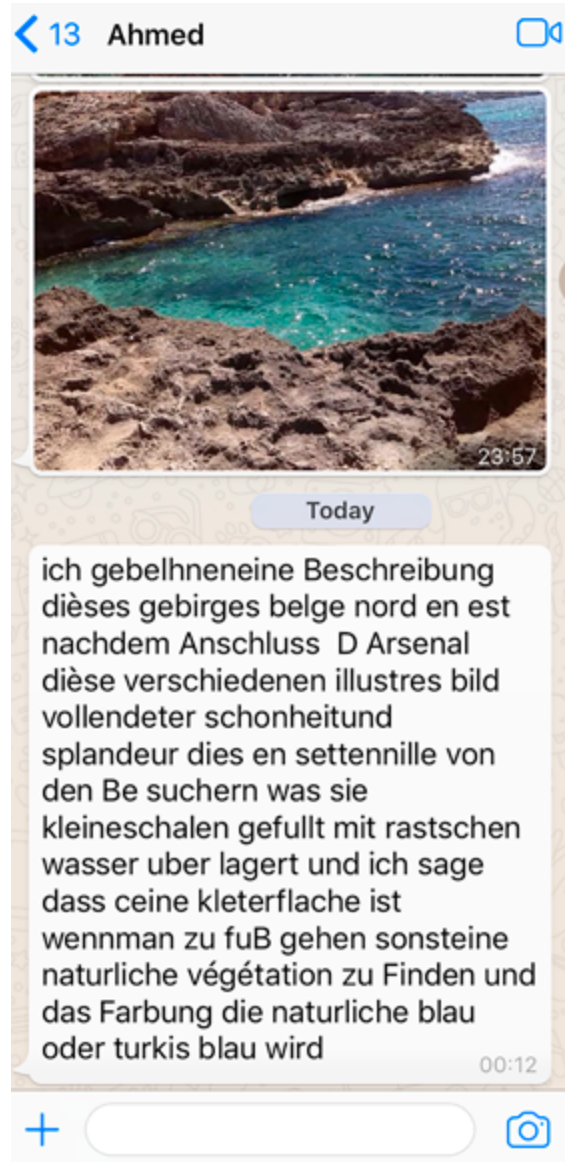


Figure 4:
Silent cliffs – and Ahmed’s description in creative German after our walk
(N. Nassenstein)

⁷ I could no longer decipher most of our recorded conversations due to the blowing wind, which – when considering the low relevance of actual spoken language on the cliffs – I did not mind after all. I mostly recorded storm.

which did not make it less fitting or appropriate. The part where Ahmed concluded *dièse verschiedenen illustres bild vollendeter schonheit und splendeur* ('these different pictures of perfect beauty and splendour') sounded like an advertising brochure where nothing else was necessarily shown apart from striking images: Language itself, if not broken or creatively destandardised, had become superfluous when speaking about a place where silence dominated. Using German, out of the many different linguistic options available, was an emblematic choice, it seemed. The language of *Helmut*, of multilingual work performances, and of economic survival in the tourism sector, was now remodelled on *WhatsApp* in creative ways to record with words what actually lacked words: A place beyond (language).

The poetic compositions such as *kleine-schalen gefüllt mit rastschen wasser uber lagert* (meaning something like 'small waterholes on top of each other?') showed the limits of language in a space where other forces are at work, where the sounds of splashing waves, the wind, women desperately calling their dogs (names that merged with the winds and became inaudible), constituted normality, or "normalimality" (see Storch et al. 2017). A new language, a language set apart, as desired by Ahmed whenever he escaped the shambles of the beach toward the cliffs, was no language at all. While he climbed up to a slightly higher level, a cliff behind the one where I sat, I looked onto the water, onto *die naturliche blau* ('the natural blue'), as he then wrote a couple of days later, and I did not miss the noisy everyday.

5. Outlook: On languages, research, encounters, and material

Exhausted after the long walk under the Mediterranean sun, it is time for some sort of conclusion. The preliminary work on multilingualism in the context of tourism in Mallorca still requires more in-depth research with the Senegalese street vendors, Nigerian cleaners and sex workers, as well with the tourists, in order to approach the sociolinguistic complexity of these encounters. As already pursued in several papers (see Mietzner, Traber, this issue), the materiality and arrangement of language as a commodified resource in forms of signs and printed slogans on t-shirts, or as contradictory accoutrement, has to be further taken into consideration in upcoming studies. Individual voices such as Ahmed's, as part of a linguistic ethnography of El Arenal, are needed when diverging language ideologies and language concepts (language as a tool vs. language as noise vs. silence as an Other form of language) are dealt with, which has also been put into practice in Cissé Kane's very personal account (this issue). Biographic trajectories, a speaker's stance in relation to more dominant or less prominent language practices, and their personal evaluation, could hereby contribute to seeing already established research foci in a new light, for instance, in the field of language ideologies and multilingual practice in diverse settings.

What about the problem with the academic recognition of Mallorca as a legitimate research site? As already stated elsewhere (see Storch et al. 2017: 156–166), research based on different observant and performative approaches in touristic settings, such as El Arenal, is often

eyed with suspicion by colleagues, who assume an apparent banality in research topics and practice. Studying the interactions between migrants from the Global South with tourists from the Global North, however, has the potential to challenge established notions of linguistic and anthropological analysis, and can critically question existing categorisations of North, South, and so on (see also Schneider, this issue).

Mallorca is more challenging than it first seems. A sentiment shared not only by exhausted package holiday and party-seeking tourists, but also by Ahmed, and by myself, toward the end of this *promenade linguistique*.

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