

# Betweenness and the emergence of order

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## Abstract

Experiencing betweenness is quite frequent in border spaces where liminal spaces arise. Our case studies range from Belgian Walloon/Belgian French/Dutch virtual encounters to German/Russian/English chat communication and to Polish/German face-to-face conversations. In these contexts, people's perceptions are of a fleeting nature, reflecting the dynamics of the b/order in question. In contact with one another across borders and languages, they challenge their own ways of evaluating products or speech; unconsciously, they accommodate themselves to their interlocutors or show divergence from some of them. Sometimes they start to create shared forms of expression.

Bridging economics and linguistics, our research confirms the notion that experiencing betweenness is contiguously related to the liminal space. Either this transitional phenomenon suffers a setback and fades away, or a well-ordered system arises, inevitably accompanied by the emergence of a new order.

## Keywords

Border, order, betweenness, business sciences, linguistics, microeconomics, language contact, perception studies

### 1. *Experiencing betweenness of B/Orders*

The motto of our interdisciplinary approach to border experiences embedded in business, social and cultural sciences may be called *economics meets linguistics*. Strongly committed to empirical data, and its analysis and interpretation, we aim to show that plurilingual encounters, face-to-face or virtual, should be considered liminal spaces (Turner 1998). People of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds experience betweenness along fading borders, where the flux of the orders belonging to either part allows crossings and the creation of new combinations, which may or may not be positively evaluated. Our case studies range from Belgian Walloon/Belgian

French/Dutch virtual encounters to German/Russian/English chat communication and to Polish/German face-to-face conversations. Our survey on value perception among consumers in Belgium and the Netherlands—some of them Dutch–French bilinguals—shows that language barriers determine the access to additional information and consumers' possible re-evaluation of products.

Choices not only form parts of economic contexts, but also determine language use. Speakers are always forced to accommodate their way of speaking to the needs of their interlocutors, but in contexts of plurilingual communities, these choices of items and their combination, for words and grammar, have an even stronger impact. There are different constellations of productive or receptive bilingualism which must be taken into consideration in order to understand the moves of interlocutors in an ongoing conversation. We argue that members of bilingual language communities in border regions and others, engaged in virtual communication, are experts in plurilingual dialogue (German–Polish, Russian–German–English) who masterfully exploit the full potentialities of language contact. In the first phase, experiencing borders may lead to convergence between the codes involved. In the second phase, code-mixing may be observed. Finally, fused forms may become more and more frequent, indexing an emerging new system with the potential to become routinized, later conventionalized, and finally generalized by a community upgrading their way of expressing themselves into the coining of a new language variety.

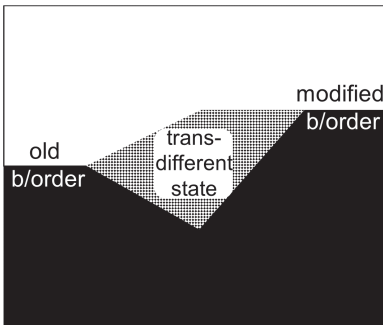
Experiencing the former borders as constructed and changeable leads to an in-between state which must be considered temporary. How do social actors (re-)establish well-defined borders, and which steps in this process can we observe in our data? More precisely, we focus on individual and collective behavior, showing the integration of forms or features in contact due to the different perspectives and practices present in the ongoing interaction. Which circumstances favor the emergence of a codified new order? From a dynamic perspective, betweenness characterizes the transdifferent states on the move experienced by social actors directly at the borders between old and upcoming new orders (Lösch 2005; cf. 5 below).

## 2. *Experiencing the emergence of new orders*

When contact along these borders happens, social actors experience the differences on either side of the old border, but from the perspective of neither side. As a result, the actors involved feel pressure to resolve and dissolve the inherently borderless state. Betweenness is, thus, a pressing, fleet-

ing perceptual phenomenon, as it becomes resolved in the dynamics of the b/order (Schiffauer et al. 2018). Betweenness can be temporary, in that the undefined and undecided transdifferent state dissolves into a modified border and order (see Figure 1). However, betweenness may also develop into emerging new borders with a defined and codified liminal space that extends temporally in a stable state into the future, thus representing a new order.

A: Temporary betweenness and modified (new) order



B: Betweenness and the emergence of a codified new order

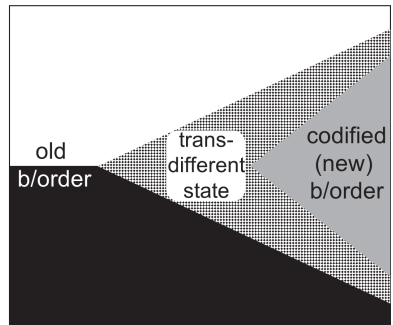


Figure 1: Betweenness of old and new orders and the emergence of new borders

We argue that this concept of betweenness can help to explain the dynamics of b/orders and the formation of new orders in many fields of social science. It is therefore an important, yet also elusive concept for describing border regions in social perception, cultural orders and processes, complex social systems, linguistic phenomena, and communication. We outline, demonstrate, and discuss betweenness (in its individual experience and through external observation across disciplines) from the unlikely perspective of business sciences and economics, and link it back to the concept in linguistics, which is itself rooted in ethnology (Turner 1998).

### 3. Experiencing betweenness in decision-making

#### 3.1 Experiencing betweenness in individual social actor decision-making

Social actors experience betweenness at many perceived and socially constructed borders, including those most fundamental to the business sci-

ences and microeconomics: borders in decision-making or choice. In classic economic theory, choice behavior involves trade-offs of expected utility versus monetary sacrifice. Almost all economics textbooks define the border as being at the point of equilibrium between utility and sacrifice, i.e. the border(s) between choice or no choice—stated in monetary terms as the reservation price. Yet between choice and no choice—directly at the border—there exists a “range of reservation prices” (Wang/Venkatesh/Chatterjee 2007) where choice is undefined and uncertain. This range of reservation prices then marks betweenness in the classic economics notion of choice. Experiments studying consumers and product demand simulations have shown that disregarding this instance of betweenness in choice, and thereby sticking to the single-border concept of reservation price, leads to inferior predictions of actual consumer purchase behavior (Wang/Venkatesh/Chatterjee 2007; Dost/Wilken 2012). This betweenness in choice extends beyond monetary settings; similar betweenness can be observed in the willingness to contribute time to a local public good in a non-monetized, small-scale community in Papua New Guinea (Pondorfer/Rehdanz 2018).

Similarly, betweenness occurs in general judgments and evaluations, for example when judging distances, lengths, or counts (Krüger et al. 2014). Betweenness in evaluations becomes particularly pronounced when social actors enter a psychological state of high-level construal, characterized by abstract and psychologically distant (e.g. temporally distant) mental processing. The more abstract and future-oriented the way in which a social actor processes a current border, the wider the related betweenness extends into the space of seemingly different orders. Conversely, with more concrete or present-oriented mental processing, the sharper and more distinct the border seems to be. Incidentally, the same effect of pronounced betweenness from more abstract processing has been experimentally confirmed in a consumer-choice setting with reservation price ranges (Isaak/Wilken/Dost 2015).

Betweenness in reservation prices marks an indecisive state of decision makers (Dost et al. 2014; Schlereth/Eckert/Skiera 2011). In this state, decision makers are under a perceived pressure to update their preferences with all available information, potentially shifting and modifying the old border(s) of choice, and thus arriving at a modified order (i.e. a new reservation price; Wathieu/Bertini 2007). Similarly, when integrating information from the liminal space, new, temporally stable, and distinct choice options can be manifested in the perception of the decision maker (Dost/Wilken 2014). It has been shown, for example, that after consumers are exposed to an unexpected state of betweenness in their choice of coffee, “fair

trade” is increasingly perceived as a distinct category of coffee with a higher perceived value, commanding a higher monetary sacrifice. Conversely, at prices well outside the range of reservation prices (i.e. on either side of the old order), consumers initially evaluated fair trade coffee as just another coffee variant, and therefore, no temporally stable new category for fair trade coffee is formed (Wathieu/Bertini 2007). We argue that experiencing betweenness will typically exert pressure on social actors; it is this pressure that drives the onset of the dissolution of old borders, the modification of bordering orders, or the emergence of a new liminal space in a new order.

### *3.2 Experiencing betweenness in topic or issue formation*

With its relevance for perception and valuation, betweenness occurs in communication processes such as the emergence of new topics, issues, or trends. Topics between related networks and systems of meaning which are distinct from either existing order—and are thus in-between—hold the most promise for forming persisting new networks of meaning and forms of communication. For example, Barron et al. (2018) found, in an information-theoretical analysis of the French revolution national assembly records, that new topics or new modes of delivery (“patterns of heteroglossia”) were more likely to change the subsequent form and content of discourse when they managed to relate to existing word patterns, while also being radically novel. When new delivery does not codify into a new order, it disappears quickly, contributing just minor modifications to the existing forms (Barron et al. 2018). Similarly, in online social network communication, the existing orders offer a “trellis” (Bail 2016) to support the codification of the new topics or forms of communication as a distinct new order. Trending topics in the news cycle are those that bridge existing orders and topical networks (Bail 2016). Many similar observations have been made regarding the persistence and success of new scientific ideas that fall between existing fields and networks of knowledge (Borrett/Moody/Edelman 2014) and regarding the language and word patterns to describe these ideas (Vilhena et al. 2014). In all these instances, betweenness shapes the dynamics of communication and discourse.

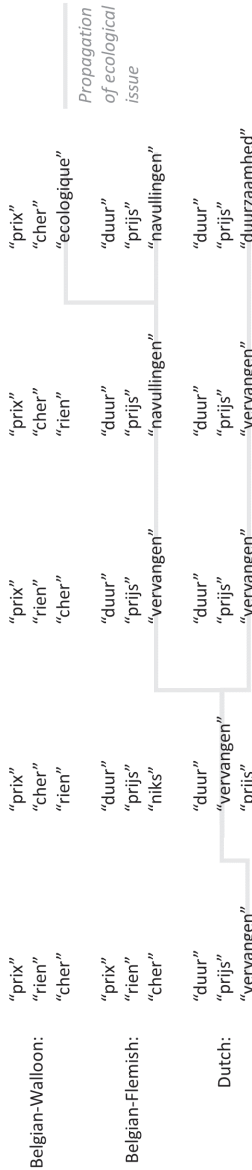
Subsequently, we provide an empirical case from marketing communications that involves an emerging betweenness in the communication among consumers, pressure from experiencing betweenness in one consumer group, and the dissolution of betweenness without a stable change in old orders.

We analyzed survey perception data on an emerging product perception issue in the context of marketing a product through a consumer community in three regions and two languages (Flemish/so-called ‘Belgian Dutch’ and Walloon in Belgium, Dutch in the Netherlands). Here, betweenness enters consumers’ product value perceptions in the form of an ecological issue with the product arising in the Dutch part of the consumer community. The ecological issue is picked up by the Dutch-speaking Flemish part of the community, and much later by the French-speaking Walloons, leading to a transdifferent state in their product valuations as well as increased pressure to resolve their in-between valuation.

The study follows the introduction of a new cleaning product by means of a so-called product seeding or micro-influencer campaign (Haenlein/Libai 2017). In such marketing campaigns, everyday consumers are equipped with a new product and asked to test it. The participating consumers enter a campaign-related online community platform to network and communicate with each other as well as the product manufacturer. Businesses hope that the consumers involved will spread product recommendations and word-of-mouth information to their peers (Dichter 1966; Berger/Schwartz 2011).

In our case, 913 consumers across the Netherlands, and the Flemish and Walloon regions of Belgium participated in the campaign for five weeks. Every week, a list of the most prevalent positive or negative topics or issues was compiled using the online platform communication of the three consumer groups. Here, we focus on the top three negative issues per week (see Figure 2). In addition, a weekly survey asked all consumers for product valuations and their cognitive involvement in a possible purchase decision on commonly used Likert-type scales (rescaled to 0: lowest and 1: highest). The averages for all three consumer groups are plotted in Figure 2 as well.

### Top 3 issues per consumer group and week



### Betweenness in consumer perception

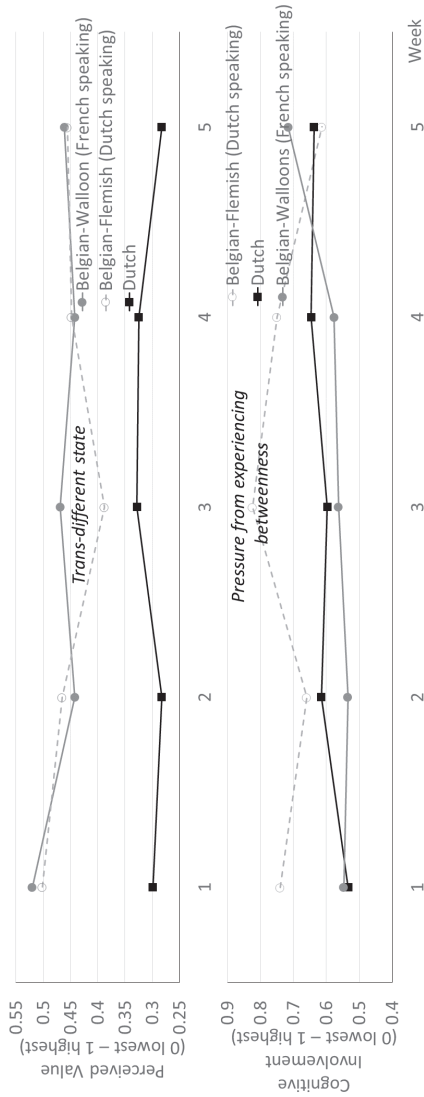


Figure 2: Experiencing betweenness in product valuation across language barriers

In the first week, following the product's introduction, a negative issue came up among the Dutch consumers. While all consumers in all regions perceived the cleaning product to be expensive (marked by trending topics "cher" and "prix" in Walloon, and "duur" and "prijen" in Flemish parts of Belgium and the Netherlands), the Dutch consumers also spotted an ecological downside to the product: They discussed how the cleaning product requires frequent refills ("verwangingen" or "vervangen"), thus generating additional waste. This issue was picked up in week three by the Dutch-speaking Flemish ("navulligen", "vervangen"), and only entered the discussions of the predominately French-speaking Walloons in week five ("ecologique"). The corresponding aggregate product evaluations from the weekly surveys demonstrate the betweenness experienced by the Flemish consumers, as their evaluations drop to a level between their Dutch and Walloon counterparts. Before week three, Dutch consumers started with lower product evaluations than Belgian consumers, possibly due to the perceived ecological issue. As Flemish consumers are often bilingual and can read both the Dutch and French comments of their fellow participants, they picked the issue up in week three. At the same time that their product evaluations drop to an in-between level, Flemish consumers' average cognitive involvement reaches the highest level observed across the consumer groups and weeks. We attribute this increase to the perceived pressure to resolve the experienced betweenness in the discussed social consensus on product perceptions and evaluations. After a week of discussions, mainly among the Flemish participants, the betweenness dissolves, but without establishing a new order, even though the issue is finally picked up by the Walloon consumers as well.

### 3.3 Findings and their effect on betweenness

In this example from a consumer-generated marketing communication context, betweenness enters cleaning product evaluations of a consumer group that can perceive two distinct discourses about the product. When the consumer group (the Flemish consumers) picks up the discourse in Dutch, their evaluations approach those of their Dutch consumer counterparts. Concurrently, betweenness starts exerting pressure in the form of higher cognitive loads. We argue that this pressure leads the Flemish consumers to resolve their in-between evaluation and return to evaluations similar to their French-speaking peer group, the Walloon consumers. This example illustrates the inherent instability of an emerging betweenness in communication.



The discourse about this cleaning product happened in a virtual border space, an electronic communication platform, where geographic barriers are less meaningful, but language barriers may remain. The example shows the importance of social actors capable of bridging these remaining barriers, such as in the case of bilinguals in border regions. The following examples will investigate the role of bilinguals for betweenness in language and discourse from a deeper, linguistic perspective.

#### *4. Experiencing betweenness in situations of language contact*

##### *4.1 Language contact in plurilingual encounters*

Borders are no longer lines, but liminal spaces between two centers. This is true for border regions such as the *Greater Region SaarLorLux* spanning across Saarland and the Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the French region of Lorraine, and finally Belgium's Walloon region, where French is spoken, as well as the German-speaking community in Belgium. Furthermore, such liminal spaces may develop twin cities like Frankfurt (Oder) (D)/Śluby (POL), Görlitz (D)/Gorzewo (POL), or Euroregions such as Brandenburg (D)/Lubuskie (POL). In these spaces, new markets emerge between the centers already established in the past, e.g. Berlin (D) and Poznań (POL), favoring plurilingual encounters. People meet in these spaces to exchange goods and enjoy their leisure time, among other activities.

Their bi- and plurilingual language use facilitates communication among speakers of different first languages (L1 speakers). The interlocutors learn to express themselves and understand others in their second and third languages and beyond (L2 speakers, L3 speakers etc.). When they meet more and more frequently, these encounters become conventionalized and the groups involved form bi- and plurilingual communities of practice (Wenger 1998; Wille 2008). They create routines which are sometimes reciprocally used as internal identity markers among their members. Their particular language use is recognized by outsiders, thus assuming an external importance. Similar language routines may be observed in the language use among migrants and their children or grandchildren, residents of certain suburban areas shared by members of first, second, and third generations, or among people living in diaspora (on Brazil, cf. Jungbluth 2016; on Georgia, cf. Höfler forthcoming; on Germans in the former Russia, cf. Baumgärtner 2018). All of them use several languages—spoken or

written—to communicate with each other from time to time, more or less regularly.

In these spaces of betweenness, new (urban) dialects may emerge (for example: Kiez-Deutsch, cf. Wiese 2006, 2012a, 2012b; ARTE 2012; Singlish: Vogelsang 2014; Schneider 2017). Some of them may be considered (proto-)creoles, a process which recalls the emergence of Romance languages roughly one thousand years ago, when the varieties of Latin spoken in the different parts of the Roman Empire underwent a process of emancipation and developed their own spoken and later on written forms, e.g. French, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, Romanian, and Italian, among others.

These changes characterizing the underlying processes take place in three phases: first, acceptance of variants by bi- or plurilingual individuals; second, the selection of some forms deemed by members of certain groups as identity markers; and third, the reduction of the forms when their use spreads, is generalized, and finally becomes the norm for all citizens (residents of the respective neighborhood; group members living in that space; people of a state: “imagined communities”; cf. Anderson 1983). Though language change happens in all language settings, plurilingual speech communities often exhibit an extraordinarily strong drive. A temporal dimension is also added to spatial belonging when the latter stage takes the floor right at the moment when a self-confident new language community arises.

Observing the language use of bilingual speakers offers a detailed picture of the processes of language production when two (or more) languages are involved. The tendency to choose one language (in the first place), then also to include the other language if necessary, has been described by many scholars in linguistics (cf. Muysken 1995, Clyne 2000, Lüdi 2004, Jungbluth 2012). In this article, we will focus on how borders are perceived by interlocutors in language use, and how they are established or dissolved in discourse. In discussing these phenomena, we emphasize a three-phase process of betweenness.

#### *4.2 Experiencing betweenness: accepting new forms*

*Examples of bilingual language use—Russian in contact with German and English:*

Whenever speakers make use of code-mixing, they demonstrate that two more or less equal polylingual forms exist in the first place. In the follow-

ing, some examples will be presented, showing that users in bilingual chats communicate within their group quite naturally. In doing so, they not only establish this community of practice but also repeatedly confirm their form of expression. Even if we are dealing with so-called typed communication, it still reminds us of oral communication phenomena where code-mixing is typical amongst bilingual speakers. Of course, this technique is usually used when all participants in a conversation have access to the languages involved.

Example (1) is taken from a trilingual online chat (Chit-Chat within *russen-chat.de*) and contains German elements within a Russian utterance (cf. Schreiner 2010).

- (1) *dlja tex kto po angliski ne sprech-ujet*  
for those who in English not speak (3.P.Sg.Pres.)  
(Rus/Ger/Eng online chat *russen-chat.de*, date: 06/09/2010)

The word-like element *sprechujet* consists of a German word stem *sprech-* (ENG: *speak*) that transfers the semantics of the “word”, and the Russian flectional ending *-ujet* is added onto the German stem. When looking at the whole sentence, we see that this flectional ending is correct from the Russian perspective. From the speaker’s (or user’s) perspective, this form could be defined as a spontaneous neologism. It is spontaneous because it is not generally known as a neologism, but it is easily understood. One potentially interesting research question arises here: namely, whether bilinguals would immediately notice that the “other language” has been inserted. However, in this article we concentrate on how these examples show betweenness.

As discussed by Pavlenko (2002) for Russian–English bilinguals, the uttering of mixed forms seems to be a common technique. Pavlenko reports a study that consists of examples of English and Russian emotional oral communication and narratives. She additionally refers to an example introduced by Andrews (1999), where an English word is inserted into a Russian utterance:

- (2) *Oni budut ochen’ eksaited!* Andrews (1999, p. 100)  
they will be very excited (Russian *vzolzovannyj*)

As compared to (1), there is no morphological marking showing integration into the matrix language. An interesting discussion concerning the differing semantics of the two lexemes *excited* (ENG) and *vzolzovannyj* (RUS) is suggested by Pavlenko; focusing on the inserted adjective *eksaited*, “the translation is only an approximate one, as the Russian word contains a negative element of worry or nervous agitation, absent from its English

counterpart” (Pavlenko 2002, p. 71). So, the consequence here is that a bilingual who wants to focus on the encouraging or promising semantics has chosen to, according to Pavlenko, “appeal to lexical borrowing and code-switching”. (2002, p. 71) One could also label this form as a spontaneous neologism due to its semantic difference.

While code-switching is frequent, forms of code-mixing below the word level are less common (examples 3 & 4), and abbreviations are a way to bridge the liminal space on the one hand, and to establish an insider jargon on the other. The latter, which can indicate identity-marking, will be discussed in the next part.

Examples of the first phase are the following:

- (3) *Jades do op-yi om-y.* (Jańczak 2013, p. 180).  
Go you to grandpa-CASE and grand-ma-CASE  
*You go to your grandparents.*
- (4) *Nie ma zug-u.* (Jańczak 2013, p. 179)  
Nois train-CASE  
*There is no train.*

These examples show that the bilingual users, members of a bilingual German–Polish speech community, frequently integrate German nouns into their predominantly Polish sentences. They even do not hesitate to attach flectional morphology, treating the words as if they were Polish nouns—as described for the Russian–German examples in (1). Sometimes, even native words are replaced with neologisms: *Zitron* (German: “Zitrone”) instead of Polish *cytryna* (Meise 2008, p. 124). The reciprocal acceptance of producing and listening by the interlocutors—in short, the shared licensing of these forms of expression and their evaluation as legitimate language use—reflects the conventionalized form of practice established and performed again and again among its members.

#### 4.3 *Experiencing betweenness: emergence of new forms indicating identity*

*Examples of bilingual language use—Russian in contact with German and English:*

As noted above, discussing examples surrounding the concept of the border does not have to involve a physical geographic division. Rather, it can be located in the individuals themselves when online communication is the object of study. For Russian–German bilinguals, the border is between languages, language families, and communicative conventions.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, we can see that the pure use of bilingual mixed forms shows that these forms are understood and accepted in a community. The question arises whether mixing phenomena can also be interpreted as a marker of identity for an individual who has produced the forms, and further as an identity marker for a whole community.

Russian–German bilinguals are faced with borders on several levels, borders between the two languages that only partly share morphological forms and morphological marking. Other levels may concern language families or different cultures. In the online conversations mentioned above, the reference to identity can be observed in the use of special nicknames or user screen names symbolizing bilingualism. Some examples of these names are: Xx-Sonza-xX, Sladjij2008 or RUSSLANDDEUTSCHER (cf. Schreiner 2010). The word *sonza* in the first screen name shows that the Russian pronunciation of the middle consonant [ts] is represented by the letter <z>, its typical realization in German orthography. Thus, bilingualism is demonstrated at the outset in the name itself. The second name, Sladjij, is a Russian adjective (Eng. ‘sweet’), and can thus imply the user’s Russian identity. The third example, ‘Russlanddeutscher’ (Russian German), is a German word and a clear symbol that inserts the category *Russian German* directly into the conversation. We, of course, do not speak of the identity of the individuals themselves, but these names are cited as examples symbolizing bilingualism, which is emphasized in the communication at hand.

Similar frames in the morpho-syntactic structure of the languages allow the interlocutors to easily switch between languages and insert words or even morphemes into the other language. By doing so, the speakers and users show some part of their (communicative) identity, which can be described as being in-between—or at least the language that they use shows equivocal elements of betweenness.

#### *Examples of language use in the liminal space of the border region:*

Of course, examples of typical markers of insider talk are not limited to the aforementioned use of abbreviations (studied in the context of outlaws, e.g. Rotwelsch in Kluge (1987), Yenish in Ehlich (2010), or criminal gangs). The use of abbreviations is motivated by the desire to disallow or at least to reduce understanding/comprehension for outsiders—in the cases discussed here, representatives of society such as police officers, judges, or other members of the respective speech community. During adolescence, the exclusion of parents, teachers, and peers from certain topics (and their evaluation discussed by the adolescents (cf. ‘liminal’ Turner 1998) and young adults) is one of the motives for using abbreviations or cryptic

forms of expression. Meaning can be further obscured by applying processes of change in the linear sequence of parts of speech, as in the example of speaking backwards (cf. the French argot is known for using the technique of *Verlan* characterized by replacing the word order of syllables in French vernacular speech, *opposé au "parler correct"*).

First, residents of Frankfurt (Oder), and even many students of the European University Viadrina, are not familiar with the term *offa*, an abbreviation or acronym used by the previously discussed bilingual student group in several of their cohorts to refer to German ‘öffentliches Recht’ *public law*. Second, among other identifiers, the naming of their insider-talk as *Viadrinisch* (‘*Viadrinic*’) reveals that their form of expression has become a marker of their belonging to the place, to the institution, and particularly represents their being part of the inter-year classes at different levels studying German and Polish Law, generation by generation, one following the other.

In the context of Denmark, Quist (2005, p. 146) states that the variety of Danish used among the adolescents in Copenhagen should be considered a new linguistic resource—a variety of Danish in its own right, confirming, among other things, their new identity (‘act of identity’; cf. Le Page/Tabouret-Keller 1985). In doing so, she rejects negative assessments calling it “incorrect Danish” or devaluations declaring their language use as “uncompleted second language acquisition” (cf. Wiese 2006).

The adolescent informants themselves exhibit a well-defined self-awareness of belonging on several levels: “In the end we [people from the quarter] are Kreuzbergers—Berliners—German[er]s—Cosmopolitans.” (*Im Endeffekt sind wir Kreuzberger – Berliner – Deutschländer – Weltbürger!* cf. Corpus Kiezdeutsch; Wiese 2012b).

#### 4.4 Experiencing betweenness: emerging new language communities

This third phase is represented here by the special case of Russian–German–English virtual online communities. These communities may develop into communities in the “real world” if the communication is extended to the offline domain (on establishing communities, cf. Androutsopoulos 2006, Brehmer 2013). The first two phases can be seen as the basis for a new language community. As has been explained, linguistic markers can be interpreted as symbols of identity for both the individual speaker and for speech communities consisting of speakers (and users) using these mixed forms.

In today's world of global communication, the spread of what may have been considered to be cryptic insider talk may end up as a new dialect (cf. Kiezdeutsch: Wiese 2012a). The use of the aforementioned French argot developed in the *banlieues* (Eng. "quarters"), and is no longer restricted to its former speakers, but has been imitated by teenagers from other social groups and is also used in the media. There are even suggestions about integrating this way of speaking French into the German-speaking classroom in Switzerland (Nacro 2001, and educational recommendations there). One is not required to follow this proposal, but one must be aware that new language communities may be the outcome of an early state of betweenness.

In contrast to the neologisms integrated into a speech act reflecting the first phase, where the interlocutors may accept or refuse their use, and the second phase characterized by upgrading certain practices into a speech style indicating a certain group identity, the third phase is characterized by an ongoing conventionalization of the use of fused forms observed by the members of a speech community as a whole. This expansion of use as part of the social dimension is accompanied by a change in the forms of expression themselves. The high variability of expressions during the earlier phases solidify into one or two forms. Some of them still show their dual origins and may be characterized as transparent with regard to the languages involved in their becoming a word (cf. Bachmann 2005 & forthcoming), but others represent fused forms. These lemmas are more or less opaque, but they are definitely no longer the arbitrary combination of two languages, as they have undergone a profound change; rather than demarcating a clear line of division, they show an extended overlapping space which may belong to either language.

- (5) wyräumuj  
DER V IMP 2.P.Sg  
clear out (the dishwasher)

This order shows a fused form, as there are two Polish affixes—one of them of a derivational (wy-), the other of flectional nature (-uj: IMP 2.P.Sg.)—surrounding a German root (Zinkhahn-Rhobodes 2016, p. 204–205).

- (6) ten Prüfung caly  
DET N ADJ  
This whole exam

The superficial impression that the two languages are used in a well separated way is misleading, as two of the lexical items forming part of the

nominal phrase, the demonstrative pronoun *ten* (“this”) and the adjective *cały* (“whole”), obviously show agreement with the noun *Prüfung* (“exam”) with regard to number: singular, gender: masculine, and case: accusative. The latter may be derived from the (possibly left out) verb *mieliśmy* (“we had”) (colloquial) and its regimen. The choice of the gender may follow either the rules of gender in Polish, which in the case of a consonant ending designate it as masculine, or by referring to the Polish masculine counterparts: *egzamin* (“exam”) or *sprawdzian* (“test”). This kind of language use is only possible by routinized bilingual speakers toward equally well-trained listeners. There is no doubt whatsoever about the fused character of the nominal phrase (Zinkhahn-Rhobodes 2016, p. 185–187).

Wiese (2012a) emphasizes the positive evaluation of the way former migrants speak German in some neighborhoods of Berlin by identifying this restructured form of expression in German as an emerging new urban dialect. In doing so, she also recognizes its function as an identity marker, and as a symbol of belonging to a certain community of practice, possessing its own customs and its particular way of speaking.

Again, the borders here are not strictly geographic—certainly much less so than the former Iron Curtain—but the shared experience of talking to one another in the language of the host country, which is the second or third language for most of the inhabitants of these districts. The migrants came from distant areas where a wide range of languages are spoken. The majority of this speaker group is third-generation immigrants, who have learned to speak German fluently, and use it to communicate regularly with one another. However, their word choice and syntax are not the same as in areas where the majority of the residents is of German ancestry. Their way of speaking German has been influenced by language contact as well; in informal contexts, most of them speak a German variety flagged by a more or less openly marked German dialect representing their regional belonging.

For all these users, language contact is not restricted to two languages, even less to two language varieties. Every single day they are in contact with people belonging to different language communities and use several languages. In line with Auer/Muhamedova (2005, p. 52–53), we must re-think the still well-established methods of researching language contact based on the languages which we assume to be in contact. However, the data and the way the interlocutors perform suggest that we should start from their concrete utterances:

We wanted to argue for an approach to code-mixing utterance as the starting point, rather than the monolingual ‘codes’ which these mixed



utterances seem to refer to. Our examples demonstrate that often, there is no monolingual code which can be taken as the point of reference. This conclusion is also reached by Myers-Scotton in her 2002 theory with respect to the matrix language; here she insists that the matrix is not identical to any single ‘monolingual’ language but is just an abstract construct. [...] The conclusion, however, is inevitable: bilingual talk cannot be analysed as a mixture of two monolingual codes (Auer/Muhamedova 2005, p. 52–53).

In the broader context of border studies, Lösch (2005) has proposed leaving behind binary theories of cultural differences. He proposes using the term *transdifference* instead (for a recently published application cf. Gaio 2018).

### 5. *Experiencing transdifference and research perspectives*

Similar to the larval stage of insect development, transdifference refers to an in-between phase—it is a transitional state in the liminal space. This phase is unsteady, but people may decide to develop its structure further. In doing so, they establish a new routine, e.g. a shared practice of valuation or a new language use, which may become shaped as a recognized form. A new order emerges and the new variety becomes more and more stable, limited by its own borders becoming more and more durable during this process. The term “transdifference” offers us the opportunity to analyze the phases of betweenness from different perspectives: they can be heard in the conversations between speakers and their interlocutors, overheard, documented, and transcribed in our linguistic data, and also observed in the behavior of consumers, as shown by the survey data in the first part of this article.

Examples in modern times of former creole languages, such as *kreyòl ayisyen* in Haiti, Papiamentu in the ABC islands (Bachmann 2005 & forthcoming), or the emergence of the Romance languages a thousand years ago, show that a community’s way of speaking may develop into a fully-fledged language that can be used in all domains of society.

The data and our analysis convincingly show that liminal spaces are characterized by betweenness. We argue that betweenness is an essential concept for social perception, language communication, and processes in border spaces where experiencing in-betweenness is frequent. Research on transitional stages questioning and sometimes overcoming former borders should therefore be encouraged and employed in interdisciplinary re-

search, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the particular cultural contexts which favor or discourage the transition toward new behavior in any kind of social environment.

By bridging economics and linguistics, particularly pragmatics and perception studies, our aim was to boost the concept of betweenness in the broader context of border studies. The perspective of betweenness as a shared point of reference in interdisciplinary research has the potential to enable discussion of the data belonging to different data types, and to scaffold a comparative analysis. At best, this proposal may encourage other researchers in the field to continue interdisciplinary border studies.

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**Abbreviations**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| ADJ        | adjective                                  |
| DER        | derivation                                 |
| ENG        | English                                    |
| GER        | German                                     |
| IMP        | imperfect                                  |
| L1, L2, L3 | [speaker of] first, second, third language |
| N          | noun                                       |
| Pl         | plural                                     |
| POL        | Polish                                     |
| Pres.      | presence                                   |
| RUS        | Russian                                    |
| Sg         | singular                                   |
| V          | verb                                       |
| 2.P.       | second person                              |
| 3.P.       | third person                               |

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