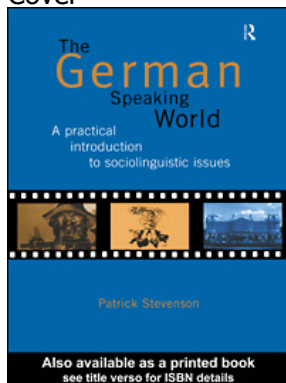


Cover



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[next page >](#)

Chapter 4

Regional variation in spoken German

- **The nature of regional variation in German** 62
- **Identifying German dialects** 65
- **Distinctive features of German dialects** 68
- **Practical tasks** 74
- **Further reading** 81

[< previous page](#)

page_61

[next page >](#)

The nature of regional variation in German

One of the most striking characteristics of Germany and Austria is the enduring strength of their regional traditions. Although both modern states are centralised to the extent that they have national governments, located in Bonn (moving to Berlin by the year 2000) and Vienna, respectively, their federal structure means that many powers are devolved to the individual **Länder**, and many people still identify more closely with their **Land** than with their country. Similarly, many Swiss locate themselves socially more in relation to their home canton than to either the nation as a whole or to their ethnolinguistic group (see Chapter 2).

These traditions manifest themselves in many ways: architecture, dress, customs, food and language. English-speakers from, say, the UK or the USA are familiar with the phenomenon of regional variation in spoken forms of English, but even those who have quite an advanced knowledge of German are often taken aback by the sheer extent of the diversity in spoken German. This is a very complex issue, but the main reason for this contrast between English and German is that regional forms of German typically have distinctive features on all linguistic levels (phonological, syntactic, morphological, lexical), while regional forms of English are distinguished from each other (at least in people's perceptions of them) overwhelmingly in terms of phonetic/phonological differences.

The different forms of regional speech in German are not completely distinct from each other, but, as we shall see in the next section ('Identifying German dialects', pp. 65–8), there are ways of looking at the similarities and differences between them that allow us to classify them into groups on linguistic and geographical criteria. For the sake of simplicity, we can say that they form a continuum, ranging from the highly localised rural **dialects** (**Dialekte** or **Mundarten**) to the more widely spoken varieties of **colloquial speech** (**Umgangssprache**). The speech forms nearest to the dialect end of the continuum are linguistically furthest removed from standard German, and can be baffling to the outsider. Indeed, many German-speakers have difficulty identifying and understanding dialects from areas geographically remote from their own. This need not pose insurmountable problems: for example, urban speech forms generally

differ less markedly from standard German than rural ones, and regional characteristics persist much more in the south (southern Germany and all of Austria and Switzerland) than in the north. However, even the more 'homogenised' urban speech forms retain many of the features of traditional dialects spoken in the surrounding areas, and speech differences are still considered an important aspect of regional identity. There is a high level of public awareness of the distinctive characteristics of local and regional speech forms, and in recent years the general resurgence of 'local values' has led to an increase in the prestige, and consequently in the visibility, of these forms in public contexts: many local and regional newspapers carry regular columns in dialect; there are radio and television broadcasts in dialect; and even public notices are sometimes in dialect to create a sense of informality or even humour. For example, Gloy (1977:77) refers to a notice in a government department in Baden-Württemberg proclaiming 'Do kannsch au alemannisch schwätze' (Du kannst auch Alemannisch sprechen) and to an apologetic notice from the Bremen Senate outside a building site (written in a Low Saxon dialect): 'Dat duert nich lang, wie makt dat ok for ju, un wenn ji nix to doon hebbt, denn kiek man een beten to' (Das dauert nicht lange, wir machen das auch für dich, und wenn du nichts zu tun hast, dann guck' mal ein bißchen zu). The pleasure that some people have in their local speech form is evident in texts such as this tongue-in-cheek notice displayed in an office in Frankfurt am Main, where a Rhenish Franconian speech form is spoken:

ACHTUNG

GOMBJUDER-RAUM

Dieser Raum is voll bis unner die Degg midd de dollsde elekdrische un vollelekdronische Anlaache. Staune un gugge därf jeder, awwer rummworschdele un Gnöbbscher drigge uff de Gombjuder, dörffe nur mir, die Exberde.

[Standard German equivalent: Achtung. Computer-Raum. Dieser Raum ist voll bis unter der Decke mit den tollsten elektrischen und vollelektronischen Anlagen. Staunen und gucken darf jeder, aber herumwursteln und Knöpfchen drücken auf dem Computer dürfen nur wir, die Experten.]

Furthermore, interregional rivalry is often manifested in the evaluation of dialects: for example, Figure 4.1 shows the relative popularity and

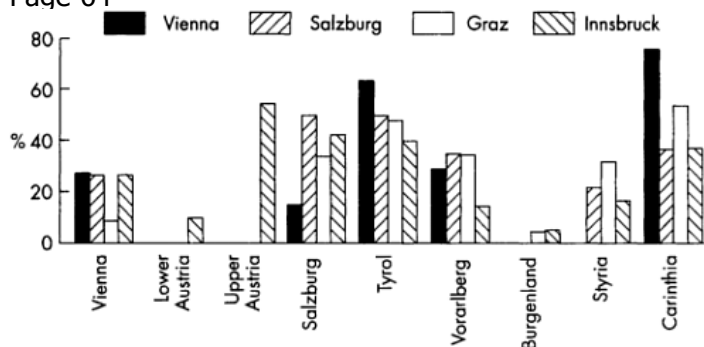


FIGURE 4.1a Relative popularity of Austrian dialects

Source: Moosmüller 1995

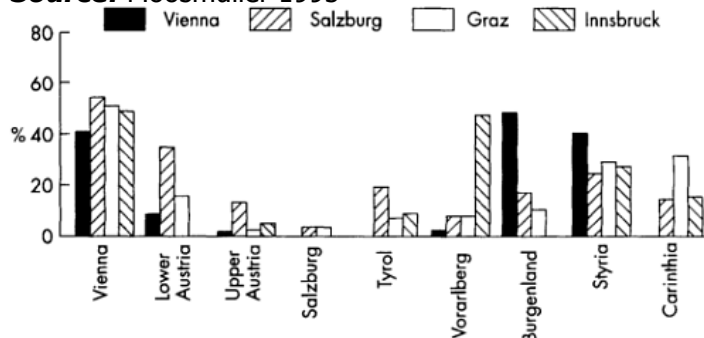


FIGURE 4.1b Relative unpopularity of Austrian dialects

Source: Moosmüller 1995

unpopularity of Austrian dialects amongst inhabitants of the four cities of Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Graz.

|| To see for yourself whether you have clear views on variation in your own language, try to draw up your personal 'league table' of ten regional varieties of English (number 1 is your favourite, number 10 is your least well liked). What do you think your preferences are based on? Compare your list with fellow students' versions and discuss with them how they arrived at their ranking orders.

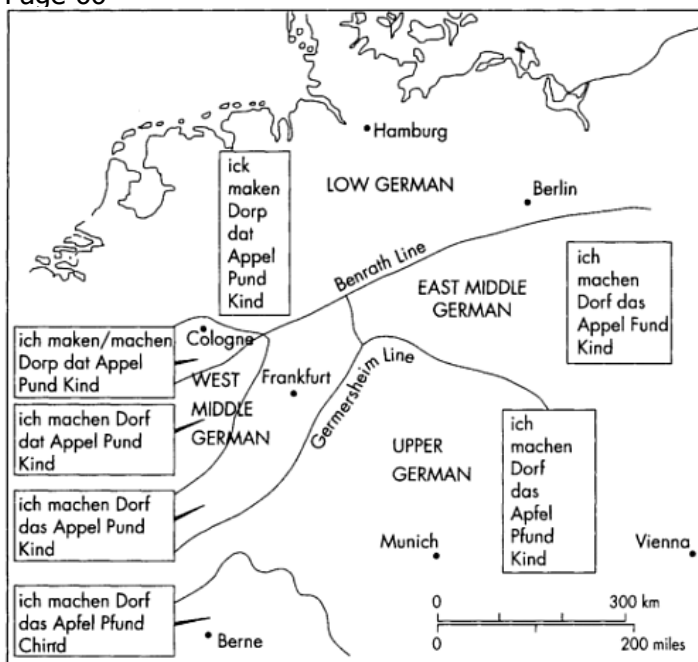
!! If you have access to native speakers of German, devise a brief questionnaire asking them to evaluate ten regional varieties of German (or the speech forms they associate with ten cities or regions). Ask them to explain their judgements.

The expression of such attitudes is not only an entirely subjective matter, but is also generally more a reflection of (stereotypical) images of the inhabitants of particular places than a response to the speech forms themselves. In the next section we shall attempt to identify the salient observable differences between German dialects. The object of this exercise is neither to perpetuate stereotypes nor to make you into a dialect expert, but simply to establish some basic patterns of similarity and contrast that should give you some idea of what to look out for when trying to determine where a particular speaker comes from. The practical tasks that follow are designed to give some initial practice in 'dialect spotting'.

Identifying German dialects

The most accessible way to approach regional differences is to begin with relatively large contrasts that correspond to the general perceptions of native speakers. The fundamental contrast that German-speakers make, whether they are thinking of language or of virtually any other aspect of social behaviour, is between north and south. 'The north' is, very roughly, understood to be the relatively low-lying, flatter areas of northern Germany, while 'the south' incorporates the higher, more mountainous region of southern Germany, Austria and the German-speaking parts of Switzerland.

These geographical characteristics are worth mentioning here, as they may help to reinforce in your mind the basic linguistic division between Low German (i.e. northern) and High German (i.e. southern) dialects; a line dividing Low from High German dialects would run east-west from just south of Berlin to just north of Cologne (see Map 4.1). Since 'the south' is such a vast area, and since there are important linguistic contrasts between what we might call the 'deep south' and the more northerly part of the area, High German is normally further divided into Central (or Middle) German and Upper German. These basic divisions are represented in Figure 4.2. It is also important to note here that 'High German' is ambiguous, as it is also the popular term for 'standard German'.



MAP 4.1 The variable extent to which the second sound shift (High German sound shift) affected regional speech forms

Source: Barbour and Stevenson 1990; adapted from König 1978

Note: common words are given as examples

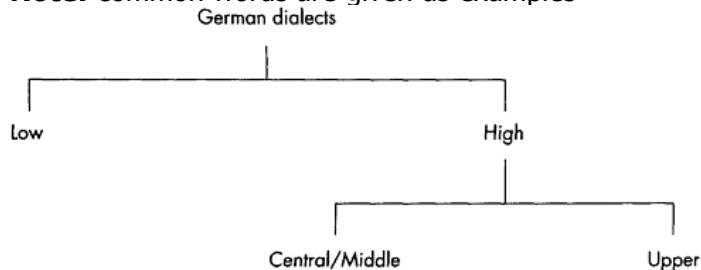


FIGURE 4.2 German dialects: basic divisions

There are many contrasts between Low and High German dialects, but the most prominent feature that distinguishes them is the so-called 'second sound shift' (**die zweite Lautverschiebung**, hereafter LV2 for short). This phonological change began in the southeast of the German-speaking area of Europe and gradually spread north and west roughly between the fifth and eighth centuries AD, but did not progress beyond what dialectologists refer to as the Benrath line (see Map 4.1). In those dialects in which the shift has taken place, the **stop** or **plosive** consonants /p, t, k/ have been replaced by **affricates** /pf, ts/ or **fricatives** /s, x/. For example, while Low German dialects have the older forms /apɐl/, /va:tɐr/ and /ma:kən/ for **Apfel**, **Wasser** and **machen**, most High German dialects have /apfəl/, /vasər/ and /maxən/. A number of other distinctive features are worth mentioning here, partly as they provide further 'markers' for identifying Low and High forms, and partly as they are also useful in distinguishing between dialects **within** each of the main groups.

Phonology

In addition to LV2, there are three further phonological features that are quite distinctive:

1 **Diphthongisation of the vowels** /i:, u:, y:/. In the Middle Ages, most dialects had **monophthongs** (or 'single vowels') in words such as **zīt**, **hūs** and **hiute**, corresponding to modern standard German **Zeit**, **Haus** and **heute**. Since then, these single vowels have been replaced in many High German dialects by the **diphthongs** found in the modern standard forms: /ai, au, ɔi/. Virtually all Low German dialects, on the other hand, have retained the monophthongs.

2 **Unrounding of front rounded vowels** /y:, Y, ø:, œ/. In modern standard German, words such as **föhle**, **Fülle**, **Söhne** and **Götter** have front rounded vowels (see **front vowel; rounded vowel**), and these are also to be found in the equivalent forms in most Low German dialects. However, in many High German dialects they are replaced by the corresponding unrounded vowels /i:, i, e:, ɛ/.

3 **Lenition. Lenition** is a phonological process in which certain consonants become less strongly articulated. Its most noticeable effect is that it removes the audible distinction between pairs of words such as **Deich** [daɪç] and **Teich** [taɪç]: both are then pronounced [ʔaɪç]

(compare the pronunciation of **writer** and **rider** in American English). The same applies to the contrasts between /b/ and /p/ (e.g. **backen** vs **packen**) and /g/ and /k/ (e.g. **gönnen** vs **können**). The distribution of this feature in the High German area is rather complex, but it is not present in most Low German dialects.

Morphology

Again, there are three **morphological** features that can usefully be singled out:

1 **Case forms.** While High German dialects have two cases corresponding to the accusative and dative forms of standard German, most Low German dialects have a single non-nominative ('oblique') case: for example, **mi** might be used as an equivalent to both **mich** and **mir**.

2 **Plural forms in the present tense.** While High German dialects have two forms, as in standard German, most Low German dialects have a single plural form in the present tense of verbs: e.g.

wir/ihr/Sie/sie spielen.

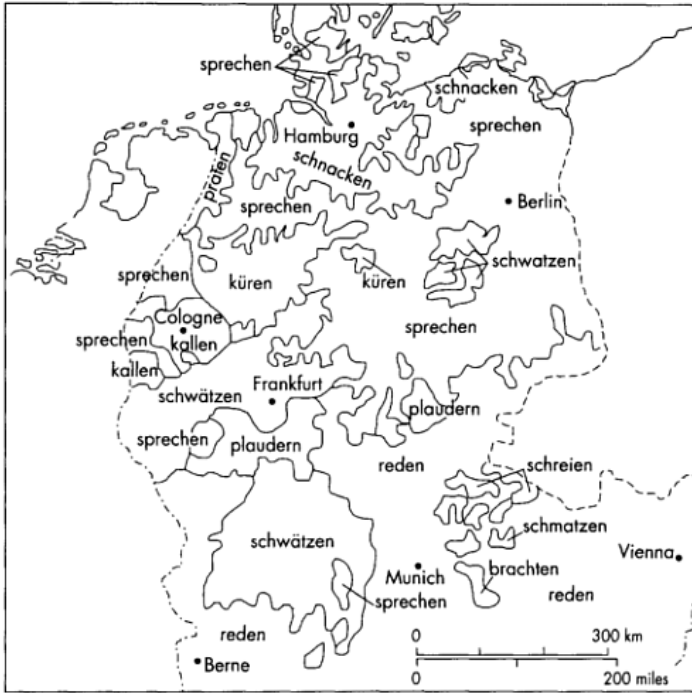
3 **Past tenses.** While Low German dialects have both an imperfect (or 'preterite') and a perfect tense, Upper German dialects have only a perfect tense.

Lexis

Apart from pronunciation, differences in **lexis** are probably the most striking features of any dialect. Map 4.2, which shows regional variants for 'to speak', gives an impression of how varied dialect vocabulary still is in German.

Distinctive features of German dialects

Having identified a small number of key features to look out for, we can now give a slightly more detailed outline of the relationships between the various dialects that are conventionally grouped together under the general headings of Upper, Middle and Low German. The notes that



MAP 4.2 Different words for 'speak' in traditional German dialects

Source: Barbour and Stevenson 1990; adapted from König 1978

follow focus mainly on the features mentioned above, but a few additional points of interest are given where appropriate. We shall start in the south and work our way northwards.

Upper German

To some extent, the tree diagram and the labels used in Figure 4.3 are misleading, as they give a false impression of the existence of discrete entities: the reality is much more fluid. However, the labels will be found in any reference work on the subject, and the divisions will enable us to make some useful general observations.

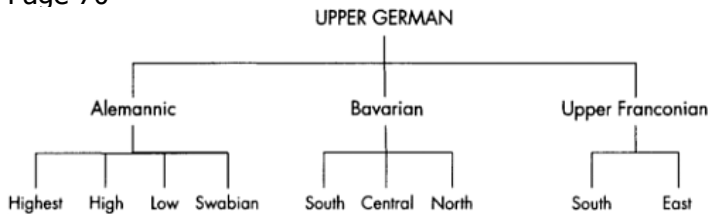


FIGURE 4.3 Upper German dialects
UNIFORM FEATURES

The reason for grouping these various southern forms together, on linguistic as well as geographical grounds, is that they share certain significant structural features.

Phonology The most fundamental distinguishing feature of Upper German forms is that the second sound shift has consistently affected the relevant sounds in all positions (i.e. at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of words). Other common and identifiable characteristics are that front rounded vowels are typically unrounded and that lenition is widespread.

LV2 present throughout:

Pfeffer, Apfel, Dampf

unrounding present:

müde pronounced [miəd], **König** pronounced [keniç]

lenition widespread:

Teich and **Deich** both pronounced [ɬaɪç]

Morphology In terms of the features mentioned in the previous section, these dialects are similar to standard German in that they have identifiable accusative and dative forms, and (with some exceptions, such as Swabian) have two plural forms in the present tense of verbs (one for the subject **ihr** and one for the subjects **wir/Sie/sie**). An important difference from standard German, as well as from northern speech forms, is that they have no preterite tense. Another common feature is the reduction of certain verbs forms: for example, through the deletion of the unstressed short central vowel ('schwa') in the past participle prefix **ge-** and of the final **-n** in past participles and infinitives.

dual case pattern: accusative+dative

dual plural forms in present tense of verbs

no preterite

reduction of past participle prefix and deletion of final **-n** in participles and infinitives: **gesehen** → **g'sehe** [gze: ə]

Lexis Common lexical features are too numerous to mention here (see Further reading, p. 81), but one very distinctive characteristic is that diminutive forms are of the **-lein** type (as opposed to the **-chen** type found in the north): **-lein/-li/-le/-la**.

MAIN DIFFERENCES

While all of these southern forms have certain features in common, there are a number of features that are less widespread and that therefore justify the subdivisions in Figure 4.3. For example, here are some distinctive phonological features that are not uniform across all Upper German dialects:

– In some Alemannic dialects, the diphthongs /ai, əi, au/ may occur in some contexts but not in others, e.g.

frei may be pronounced [frai], but **Haus** may be [hu:s] and **Schweizerdeutsch** [ʃvi:tsərɔy:tʃ] (which is correspondingly spelled **Schwyzerdütsch** in Swiss German).

– In High Alemannic and South Bavarian forms, LV2 has affected relevant sounds even in initial position: e.g. **Kind** is pronounced [kxint] or even [xint].

– All Alemannic dialects have /ʃt, ʃp/ for /st, sp/, even in final position: **ist**=[I ʃt].

– Low Alemannic dialects have uvular [R], which is otherwise rarely found in rural areas.

– In Swabian dialects, certain vowels are nasalised: e.g. **Gans** is pronounced [gäs].

– In Central Bavarian dialects, /l/ is 'vocalised' (i.e. realised as a vowel): e.g. **Salz** is pronounced [z əits], just as in some forms of British English **milk** is pronounced [mi:ʊk].

Central/Middle German

Of all the dialect areas, West Central/Middle German is by far the most diverse (see Map 4.1), and there are actually further important sub-

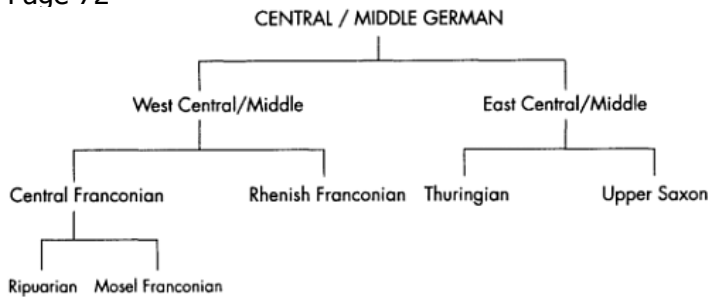


FIGURE 4.4 Central/Middle German dialects

divisions which have not been included in Figure 4.4 in order to avoid excessive detail. One of the reasons for this diversity is that many of the innovations that spread (generally speaking) from the southeast of the German-speaking area gradually petered out the further north and west they progressed.

UNIFORM FEATURES

There are in fact very few uniform features. Apart from the **-cben** type diminutive forms, the only uniform features are morphological.

Dual case pattern: they have distinct accusative and dative forms.

Dual plural forms in the present tense of verbs.

They have both perfect and imperfect (preterite) tense forms.

MAIN DIFFERENCES

Phonology As this is a transition area between south (High) and north (Low), the phonological patterns are highly complex. The famous shape of the isoglosses shown in Map 4.1 (**der Rheinische Fächer**, the Rhenish fan) can best be understood by analogy with an electrical flex without a plug: what appears to be a single isogloss running from east to west across the map is revealed to be a 'bundle' of isoglosses that more or less coincide until they reach the Western end of their extent, when they spread out like individual wires emerging from their insulating cover. What this represents

is the variable progress of LV2. For example, while all Middle German dialects have the changes

medial /p/ → /f/

schlafen [ʊla:fən]

medial /k/ → /x/

machen [maxən]

medial /t/ → /s, ts/

essen [ɛsən], **Katze** [katsa]

none have

medial /p/ → /pf/

Appel [apəl]

and none have

initial /p/ → /pf/

Pund [pʊnt] (but East Middle German has [fʊnt]).

In most forms, /p/ is replaced by /f/ after **liquid** sounds like /l/ and /r/, as in **helfen** or **Dorf**. However, Ripuarian dialects (spoken in the area around Cologne) retain the older forms: [dʰ:rp], [hɛlpən]. In some relic forms in Ripuarian and Mosel Franconian dialects, the change /t/ → /s/ has also not occurred: for example, **das** and **was** remain [dat] and [vat].

Low German

Here too, there are more subdivisions than Fig. 4.5 suggests, but they are not significant for our purposes. Furthermore, the differences between West and East Low German are less important than the features that they share and which mark the contrast between Low German and High German.

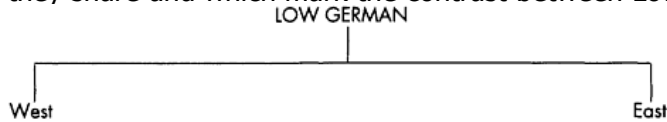


FIGURE 4.5 Low German dialects

UNIFORM FEATURES

All Low German dialects lack the 'classic' phonological innovations that spread from the south:

No LV2: **Wasser**, **Pfeffer**, **ich** remain [vatər], [pɛpər], [Ik]

No diphthongisation: **Haus** remains [hu:s]

No unrounding of front rounded vowels: **müde** remains [my:də]

and /st, sp/ generally remain /st, sp/, as opposed to /ʃt, ʃp/, in all positions: **Stein** [stain], **bist** [bist].

They all have a single 'oblique' (i.e. non-nominative) case: in most dialects, it is a form similar to the standard dative ([mi, di]), but in some it resembles the standard accusative ([mIk, dIk]). The encounter with the distinction between accusative and dative in standard German has resulted in the so-called **Akkudativ** in some dialects (notably the urban speech forms of Berlin), which is a kind of confusion of the two: **Ik liebe dir**.

Finally, virtually all Low German dialects have a single plural form for verbs in the present tense (either **-et** or **-en**, but not both), regardless of subject; both perfect and imperfect (preterite) tense forms; and **-ken** type diminutives.

Practical tasks

In this final section of this chapter, a number of practical tasks are offered to give you an opportunity to apply what you have learned about the distinctive features of German dialects. Just as the aim of the descriptive section was not to make you an expert on dialectology but to give you an overview of possible ways of distinguishing regional forms, so here the object is not to try to develop a profile of particular dialects, but rather to give you some practice in observing forms of regional variation by identifying specific features.¹

¹ The examples have been chosen more or less at random and have been selected on the basis that they give a sense of the range of variation across the geographical spectrum from south to north. They are taken to be 'representative' only in the sense that they are fairly readily identifiable to native speakers of German (i.e. the original spoken versions of the texts reproduced here in written form). Apart from in the first example, the transcripts of speech are given in 'normal' orthography rather than in phonetic script. This is a crude and imprecise form of representation,

Sample 1: Zurich

Ueli, a 35-year-old native speaker of **Züritüütsch**, was asked to tell the story depicted in a cartoon by Sempé (Figure 4.6). The first part of his account is given below in a broad phonetic transcription, followed by an equivalent version in standard German. Can you isolate phonological and lexical features in his speech that would help you to identify him as a speaker of a Swiss (High Alemannic) dialect?

[alzo: das ɪf ə gʁɪxt fən sāpe:, ə bildɪgʁɪxt. dʌ zɪtst ə gzelʃaft bi:m
 abɪgessə, ɪf luʃtɪg, wa:tət ufs essə unt fʁtri: ʔt zɪx tsi:t, mit gʁɪxtə.
 aɪnə fʁtselt fə glati:s unt nəm u:sgang, unt rums! dʌ li:gt ʔ. alə
 amy:zi:rən zɪx kæʃtli:x unt naty:rli:x vekt di: gʁɪxt ɛ:nli:xə ɛrlabnis
 bi: alən ɔndərə. dʁ ɛrʃtə fʁtselt vi: ʔ baɪm aŋlɪn fər lʊtər i:fər ɪ haŋ
 hɪnabrʊtʃt unt ɪm vasər landət. dʁ frəlɪxkait ʃti:gt]

Also, das ist eine Geschichte von Sempé, eine Bildergeschichte. Da sitzt eine Gesellschaft beim Abendessen, ist lustig, wartet aufs Essen und vertreibt die Zeit mit Geschichten. Einer erzählt vom Glatteis und einem Ausgang und rums! da liegt er. Alle amüsieren sich köstlich und natürlich weckt die Geschichte ähnliche Erlebnisse bei allen anderen. Der erste erzählt wie er beim Angeln vor lauter Eifer einen Hand hinabrutscht und im Wasser landet. Die Fröhlichkeit steigt.

Sample 2: Frankfurt

Frankfurt speech has many of the features typical of Central/Middle German dialects, particularly those known as Rhenish Franconian (**Rheinfränkisch**). The following text is taken from the transcript of an interview with a Frankfurt taxi driver. Comment on the words in italics (some, but not all, of which contain features described under Central/

but it is used here to enable those less practised in phonetic transcription to attempt the tasks, and because the exercises are concerned with the recognition of a relatively few, broadly defined features, as opposed to the close reading of whole passages and fine-grained phonetic analysis; Sample 3 actually appeared in this form. Where it is impossible to represent a particular sound in this way, a phonetic transcription of the word concerned is added in brackets. Most good dictionaries include a section on phonetic symbols.



FIGURE 4.6 Dinner party anecdotes
Source: Sempé 1962

Middle German dialects in the previous section pp. 71–3). You could also compare this authentic text with the pastiche of Frankfurt speech in the office notice shown earlier (p. 63).

INTERVIEWER: Warum haben Sie gerade diesen Beruf gewählt?

TAXI DRIVER: **Da Vada** [fa:ɖa] hat **a Taxiunternehma** gehabt, da **lach** [laʃ] nichts näher, wie der Sohn auch wieder das Taxi zu **übernehme**.

INTERVIEWER: Erzählen Sie mir ein bißchen übers Leben in Frankfurt.

TAXI DRIVER: Oh, ich bin hier ja groß **geworde** in Frankfurt, beziehungsweise **drübbe** in **Saksehaue** (Sachsenhausen, die Frankfurter Altstadt), ja, und man gewöhnt sich da natürlich an seine Heimatstadt, und **isch** behaupte, Frankfurt is' a schöne Stadt, **gell**. Gibt natürlich aach negative **Anzeiche** [antsaiʒa], und Frankfurt is' ja rein geographisch, öhm, **liecht** sie im Zentrum von Deutschland, mir **habe** 'n **große** Bahnhof, da **komme** viele Gäste aus aller Welt, **Geschäftsleute** [ɣiʃɖa], und mir **habe** den große Flughafen.

INTERVIEWER: Was müßte ein Gast in Frankfurt unbedingt gesehen haben?

TAXI DRIVER: Ja, vor **alle Dinge** mal **da Römer**, **da Römerberch** (Römerberg), **da** Paulskirche, und das **Goedehaus** [ɣøɖa] is' natürlich sehr **wichtig**, und öh unsere neue **alde** [alɖa] Oper, die is' aufgebaut **worde**, **hädde** [hɔɖa] schon a paar Jahr früher aufgebaut werden können. Was haben **mer** noch, **mer** haben **da Palmegarde** [a:ɖɣa] (Palmengarten), man müßte **sisch** den **besischtisch** (besichtigen). Und dann **Saksehaue**, und da müßte man also auch amal den **Ebbelwei** [ɛɔlvai] (Apfelwein) koste und **da Ribbsche** [riʃɔa](Rippchen) mit Kraut **esse**.

Sample 3: Cologne

The popular Cologne-based rock band BAP was one of the first German bands to reject the orthodoxy of the 1960s and 1970s that to be taken seriously you had to sing in English. They were in the vanguard of a movement to compose lyrics not simply in German but in their local dialect, a practice previously associated with traditional folk music and the like. BAP's lyrics are in a stylised form of **Kölsch**, an urban speech variety that derives from Ripuarian (**Ripuarisch**). The text in this exercise is one of their songs; the list of common **Kölsch** features below might help you to understand the lyrics:

[< previous page](#)

[page_77](#)

[next page >](#)

/t/ not → [s] in some relic forms
 /p/ not → [f]
 /p/ not → [pf]

/ai/ → [i:]
 /au/ → [ʊ]
 /g/ → [j]
 /b/ → [v]

lenition

final 'consonant clusters' simplified definite article=**da** (all genders)

Miscellaneous lexical items

Zeit	= Zick
seit	= sick
dein	= ding
heute	= hück
Ende	= Eng
er	= hä
wir	= mer
weiter	= wigger

Read the lyrics and attempt to 'translate' them into standard German (a version is given at the end of the chapter). Then consider which version you find more successful as a rock lyric. NB Tip 1: It is a song about 'lost love'. Tip 2: Don't expect the lyrics to be particularly meaningful!

Jraaduss

1 Manchmohl setz ich he römm un ich frooch mich, woröm et su kumme moot, wie et kohm, wie et jetz ess un ich saach mer, dat et irgendwo wiggerjonn muss, jraaduss

Noch häng ding Bild ahn der Wand un mäht mich rejelräsck krank ich hann ding Stemm noch em Ohr un ich froore mich nur ob dat alles nix woor, en dä letzte paar Johr, met dir.

dat, wat, et
auf=op
klopft=klopp, Kopf=Kopp
Apfelsaft=Appelsapp
weiß=wieß, bleib=bliev
aus=uss
gestern=jestern
ab und zu=avv und zu
später=späder
fest=fess

Refrain

Bliev do, wo de bess, halt dich irgendwo fess, un bliev su, wie du woors, jraaduss.

2 Avv und zo merk ich dann, wie joot et dunn kann, wemmer Luftschlösser baut un op Zufäll vertraut, janix mieh plant, op janix mieh waat, nur su. Dann weet alles verdräng, well sons nix mieh jet bring, weil sons himmelblau grau weet und mir alles zovill weet weil em jeden Jedanke e Bild vun dir steck, jank weg.

Refrain

3 Et woor schön, et woor joot, ahm Eng e bessje ze koot. dausend un ein Naach, wo Donner un Blitz kraach, 'ne Film ohne Schluß, wo nix ess wie et muß, jraaduss. Denk ens aff un zo dran, ahn dat wat mer noch hann, wat uns keiner mieh nemp, weil et woor ess un stemp, ahn dat Stock 'Ich' vun dir und dat Stock 'Do' von mir, jraaduss.

Refrain**Sample 4: Berlin**

Rather like the speech varieties associated with London or New York, **Berlinisch** is a speech form that is particularly readily identified by German-speakers wherever they come from. While there are relatively few morphological features peculiar to **Berlinisch** (most such non-standard features are common throughout North Germany), there are a large number of lexical items typically associated with Berlin (e.g. **Schrippe** for **Brötchen**, **dufte** for **chic**). However, it is pronunciation features that are particularly distinctive. The six most common **variables**, with their standard and non-standard realisations (**variants**), are:

Variable	Standard variant	Berlinisch variant
(g) gemacht	[g]	[ʝ]
(ai) einmal	[ai]	[e:]
(au)1 auch	[au]	[o:]

(au)2 **auf**
 (ç) **ich**
 (s) **das**

[au]
 [ç]
 [s]

[u]
 [k]
 [t]

(See Schlobinski 1987:60–7)

It is important to realise that the way these variants are used differs from one speaker to another: few speakers will use the non-standard variant of any of the features on every possible occasion, but most of the **Berlinisch** forms are likely to be found at least some of the time in the speech of a typical Berliner (and this is true of variation in all regional speech forms). A number of factors influence the relative frequency of non-standard realisations, some of which are difficult to account for precisely (e.g. social context, social class or the speaker's mood), but some of the features are subject to identifiable linguistic constraints. For instance, the (au)1 variable is 'lexically restricted', that is to say, it is confined to a small handful of words and is most frequently observed in **auch**. The realisation of the (g) variable, on the other hand, varies according to the phonological context: the non-standard [J] variant tends to be used far more in the affix **ge-** than in any other context (e.g. you are more likely to hear **jerufen** than **jrün** or **eijentlich**).

Some of these features are illustrated clearly in this extract from an interview with an 80-year-old **Berlinerin** (recorded in the late 1980s): how consistent is she in her use of non-standard variants? (Note also other features that are common to many non-standard (Northern) varieties: e.g. **denn** for **dann**; **nich** as the normal form of **tag question**; **elision** and **assimilation**, as in **hammer** for **haben wir**, **anne Mauer** for **an der Mauer**).

INTERVIEWER: Hat sich in Berlin seit dem Krieg sehr viel verändert?

FRAUS.: Sehr viel, is' ja überhaupt nicht wiederzuerkennen. Wenn ich dran denke, wie wir früher die Friedrichstraße und die Leipzigerstraße 'lang jejang' sind, und der der Potsdamer Platz, det sieht ja heute furchtbar aus. Ik kann mir det ooch gar nicht angucken. Da anne Mauer. Na ja, und der Alexanderplatz, der is' ja auch, hat sich ooch vollkommen jeändert.

INTERVIEWER: Wie haben Sie die Nachkriegsjahre persönlich erlebt?

FRAUS.: [...] Ja, zweiundfuffzich hat denn wohl meine Tochter jeheiratet, und denn kam Peter vierundfuffzig uff da Welt. Na ja, denn ging et eigentlich denn, kam paar bessre Jahre, denn mußte mein Mann uff Rente gehn, weil er schwere Arteriosklerose hatte, nich', der hat 'n Beipaß jekriegt, denn sind wir acht Jahre nach West-

deutschland jezogen, da war ich immer krank. Na ja, denn hatten wir in Berlin wieder eine Wohnung gesucht, sind wir nach Hause jezogen. Inzwischen war denn ooch meine zweite Enkelin jeboren, und nun hab' ich noch zwei Urenkel.

!!! As we are dealing with spoken varieties of German, there is obviously no substitute for listening to actual speech. Collect your own data in the form of recordings of television or radio programmes, film soundtracks or popular music, and use this for practice in transcription and as the basis for the kind of analysis suggested in the tasks above.

Further reading

Barbour and Stevenson (1990), Chapters 3, 4 and 5, on the form and study of regional variation in German. Clyne (1995), Chapter 4, on the use and function of dialects and on language in education in Germany and Austria.

Dittmar, Schlobinski and Wachs (1986), on variation in and attitudes towards **Berlinisch**.

Durrell (1992), Chapter 1, on general aspects of regional variation, with many useful examples.

König (1978), contains brief, accessible introductions on many aspects of regional variation, illustrated with a large number of maps and figures.

Mattheier (1980), on how, where and why German dialects are used, and on language use in education.

Moosmüller (1995), on attitudes towards regional variation in Austria, especially in the speech of politicians.

Müller and Wertenschlag (1985), a listening comprehension course on Swiss German, intended mainly to help 'other' Swiss citizens over-come comprehension problems .

Russ (1990), detailed but accessible linguistic descriptions of individual dialects.

Russ (1994), on various aspects of regional variation in German.

Schlobinski (1984), a popularised historical account of research into the form and use of **Berlinisch**.

Schönfeld and Schlobinski (1995), on sociolinguistic changes in Berlin speech since unification.

[< previous page](#)

[page_81](#)

[next page >](#)