

***Longue durée* and social styles:
Shifting indexicalities in the Berlin vernacular from the perspective of historical
sociolinguistics**

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0. Preface

This chapter is dedicated to the memory of Agathe Lasch (1879-1942),¹ Germany's first female professor of linguistics and a specialist on Low German. Her groundbreaking work on Berlin is to this very day the single-most important contribution to the urban historical sociolinguistics of the city, on which all subsequent research (including the following remarks) is based. Agathe Lasch was born in Berlin into a Jewish merchant family. Since women were not allowed at Prussian universities at the time, she studied in Halle/Saale and in Heidelberg, where she completed her PhD with the Neogrammarian Wilhelm Braune in 1909 on the *Geschichte der Schriftsprache in Berlin bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts* ('History of the written language in Berlin until the middle of the 16th century'), published in 1910. In the first 220 pages of the thesis, Lasch gives a detailed linguistic analysis of the written documents of the time, including an exact socio-biographical reconstruction of the social field in which the local scribes in the chancelleries of the city council, the legal courts, and the Hohenzollern residence produced their documents. (The second part, about 100 pages, is a systematic phonological and morphological description of the Middle Low German dialect spoken in the city, following the neogrammarian *Ortsgrammatik* model.) A university career was impossible for women in Germany at the time, so Lasch took up a position as *Associate* and later (from 1913) *Associate Professor of Teutonic Philology* at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania. During this time, she published her still authoritative *Mittelniederdeutsche Grammatik* (1915). She left during the First World War because of the hostile anti-German

¹ All biographical details are from Kaiser (2009) and Maas (2014, cf. <http://www.esf.uni-osnabrueck.de/biographien-sicherung/1/181-lasch-agathe->; consulted Feb 10, 2015), who also gives an excellent evaluation of her scientific work in the context of the time.

atmosphere in the United States and received an offer to join the *Deutsche Seminar* in the *Hamburgische Kolonialinstitut* (which in 1919 was fused with the newly founded University of Hamburg), where she worked as the first editor of the *Hamburgische Wörterbuch*. From 1923 she was professor (*extraordinaria*) for Low German philology there, until she was sent into early retirement in 1934 when the Nazi government excluded all Jews from the public sector. During her 10 years as a professor in Hamburg, she wrote – among many scholarly articles on Low German – "*Berlinisch*" – *Eine berlinische Sprachgeschichte* (1928). The book summarizes her earlier results in a more accessible and popularized way and continues the history of the Berlin vernacular up until the time of its writing, but also gives a grammatical and lexical description of the modern Berlin vernacular. After her forced retirement, she returned to Berlin in 1937. She worked and published (abroad) until 1939, under increasingly difficult conditions. Several attempts by friends and colleagues to secure a university position for her in the Baltic, the USA and Northern Europe failed, partly due to interventions of the German government. In August 1942 she was deported with many other Jews from Berlin to Riga and either died on the way or was killed there.

1. Introduction: historical urban sociolinguistics – between *longue durée* and social styles

The beginnings of sociolinguistics are usually equated with the 'invention' of the term in the 1960s. However, the interest in how linguistic variation and change are intertwined with social structure, and how social agents display their identities through language, has of course a much longer history. This chapter is intended to draw attention to one tradition of 'sociolinguistics' *avant la lettre* which evolved in the context of the socio-historical analysis of written documents in the urban context, and of which Agathe Lasch was a prominent and brilliant representative.²

Historical urban sociolinguistics is almost entirely restricted to the investigation of written language. Its empirical basis is therefore fundamentally different from that of contemporary variational sociolinguistics, which prioritizes the investigation of vernacular

² This is of course not the place to discuss the ways in which historical urban sociolinguistics developed nor to give an overview of its chief representatives or results. Hünecke (http://tu-dresden.de/die_tu_dresden/fakultaeten/fakultaet_sprach_literatur_und_kulturwissenschaften/germanistik/gls/iak_hssf/dateien/biblio_syst) provides a bibliography of publications on historical urban linguistics from a German perspective. Unfortunately, many publications in this field are dedicated to small-scale philological details and fail to integrate their results into a theoretically motivated whole; the theoretical developments in sociolinguistics at large are often ignored. Agathe Lasch, on the other hand, was able to combine philological competence, attending with meticulous care to the details of the data, with a good view of how these results added up to a 'total picture' of how language developed in its embedding into the social history of the city. Her work still stands out in this respect.

The field of historical sociolinguistics in general is of course large and flourishing, cf. e.g. the bibliography published by the Historical Sociolinguistics Network (http://www.hum2.leidenuniv.nl/hsl_shl/bibliography.htm) which also publishes its own journal.

language on the basis of systematically composed corpora of spoken language. Data of the latter kind only became available toward the end of the 19th century under neogrammarian influence, first through the large European dialect atlas projects (which often neglected the cities, however), later through systematic recordings. The documents that usually provide the basis for research in historical urban sociolinguistics, on the other hand, were written for non-linguistic purposes, came into being outside of scientific surveys, and are unsystematic as they happened to survive the vagaries of time whereas many others did not. This has two important consequences. One is that it is usually difficult if not impossible to apply corpus-based, quantitative analytical methods, at least in one city (in most urban archives, there are not enough comparable and socially stratified data for the earlier periods). More importantly, the extant documents were written for certain purposes and survived for certain reasons. They are therefore biased. They were composed by members of the educated classes who were able to read and write and were either powerful enough to produce 'endurable' ('valuable') texts themselves or to commission them. Texts written by members of the lower classes by and large are only preserved from the 19th century onward. This systematic bias means that what can be reconstructed directly from the data is not language change 'from below' (which is usually the topic of research on vernacular languages, from atlas dialectology to variationist sociolinguistics), but change 'from above': the type of change that began in the upper layers of society. Historical urban sociolinguistics has therefore been most successful in the analysis of changes driven by the 'official' (overt) prestige of the incoming innovations on a regional or even supra-regional level. Change from below often reaches the written language only after a considerable delay, which makes it difficult and often impossible to reconstruct the social mechanisms through which it originated and spread. Vernacular language itself is only indirectly visible in the documents, for instance when speakers of the lower classes are quoted (e.g. in court proceedings for reasons of documentation) or examples of their speech are given in metalinguistic treatises or literary texts with the intent of criticizing it from the perspective of a language educator, or ridiculing it for reasons of entertainment.

On the other hand, the extant historical documents at least partially allow us to reconstruct the social reasons for which a writer may have chosen a particular variable, style or variety out of a range of alternatives. These motivations can be deduced from the writer's social status and biography, from his (or rarely her) professional aims, from the purpose of the document (e.g. a letter) and its recipients. Although these linguistic choices are to a certain degree the decision of an individual, they do not occur in a social vacuum but respond to the social constraints and linguistic ideologies under which the writer produced the text. This

applies to both private and institutional documents. Working within the framework of historical urban sociolinguistics therefore requires a careful interpretation not only of the texts themselves, but also of the context in which they were produced.

Agathe Lasch's doctoral thesis is a masterpiece in this respect. Based mainly on the internal municipal records of the two towns of Cölln and Berlin (which later formed the city of Berlin); the written exchanges between representatives of these towns and the residence of the Hohenzollern margrave, with whom the municipalities were in frequent conflict; letters sent to other towns; and finally reports by travelers who commented on the linguistic situation in Berlin/Cölln, she artfully puts together a sociolinguistic picture of how Berlin/Cölln shifted from Low German to High German during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. In her 1928 book she investigates the history of Berlin in the subsequent centuries, when Berlin gained economic and political importance and finally grew to become one of the largest cities in the world (cf. below). The available documents multiply during this time. Toward the end of the 18th century, the language spoken in the city of Berlin becomes enregistered as the 'Berlin vernacular' (*Berlinisch*). Lasch takes great care in reconstructing this process by investigating numerous literary and non-literary texts and a growing number of pseudo-linguistic descriptions in which the various social personae of the 'typical Berliner' are construed. By the end of the 19th century, the stereotypes linked to these social personae were known not only in the city itself, but all over the German-speaking world. Lasch's study is therefore also an early example of ethno-dialectology and of sociolinguistic enregisterment: i.e., the way in which a vernacular language is construed around certain *types* of speakers by its users and non-users.

In the following, I will summarize her findings and supplement them with more recent research on the linguistic history of Berlin.³ I will do so from a certain perspective on sociolinguistic change which loosely follows Braudel (1958) (also cf. Auer 2013) in distinguishing between historical events of *longue durée* and events of a middle-duration which he calls *conjunctures* (fashions). The latter – I think – can be equated with the formation and transformation of social styles in sociolinguistics (see, e.g., Eckert 2008). (Braudel's third category, i.e. single historical events, would correspond to the singular speech acts.) Events of *longue durée* persist over long periods of time, often centuries, during which changes appear to happen in “slow motion” only. According to Braudel, this retardation of time is due to the enduring relevance of certain structural constraints (for instance, in his case, geographical ones) which are relatively immune to single events and fashions. I propose that

³ In particular, Schönfeldt (1989), Schildt (1986), Dittmar/Schlobinski/Wachs (1986); Schildt/Schmidt (1986).

in the sociolinguistic history of German, and also of Berlin, the period between roughly 1400 and 1950 can be characterized by two such events of long duration. The first is the shift from Low German to High German in the northern part of the German-speaking area. This process sets in in the 15th century at the latest, gains momentum in the written language and (usually later in) the spoken language of the upper classes in the 16th century, but takes roughly until the middle of the 19th century to reach completion in a place like Berlin, a city situated close to the Low/High German border, and even until the 1950s in other parts of northern Germany. The second event of longue durée is the emergence of a common standard for spoken German and the concomitant re-evaluation of horizontal (geographical) linguistic variation in the German-speaking area on a vertical (social) scale⁴. In other words: a model of the evaluation of spoken language emerges in which the ‘pure’ (i.e. non-dialectal), codified spoken standard holds the top position in terms of official prestige, while the most regional variants (in the extreme case, the local dialects) hold the bottom position. This process started in the late 18th century, when the most prestigious variety of German of that time (i.e. the variety spoken in Upper Saxony, particularly in the cities of Dresden, Leipzig, Meissen) was re-/devaluated on the grounds that it showed regional forms and therefore began to be unacceptable in educated speech; this process gained momentum toward the end of the 19th century and continues to the present day, although a new evaluative system appears to have been emerging over the last 30 years.

Both events of long duration must not be seen of course as teleological processes aiming at the establishment of a standard language in its written and spoken form, even though they retrospectively appear to have these teleological traits. In the context of their time, the outcome was unpredictable, and several competing events and processes were at play.

At first glance, the two events of long duration– the shift from Low German to (still highly regionalized) High German and the social devaluation of regionalized vernacular speech vis-à-vis the spoken standard variety – seem to amount to the same thing in Berlin: after all, Low German was the local variety spoken in Berlin before 1500. However, as we shall see, this view is inadequate. The regional variety that began to be stigmatized from the late 18th century onward was not the Low German spoken before 1500, but a very different variety, later enregistered as *Berlinisch*. It was not perceived nor can it be analyzed linguistically as Low German.

⁴ Cf. Reichmann (1988) for the term “verticalization” in this context.

The two events of long duration provided the contextual frame in which the social interpretation of linguistic variation and the formation of linguistic styles must be seen to be embedded. Often, the single linguistic variables involved persisted for a surprisingly long time within these frames. Linguistic change never came to completion, the variables only changed their social meaning. Or, to use a different terminology: the long-term events defined the indexical fields (Eckert 2008) in which linguistic variables were linked to each other as co-occurring features of one particular style, and were given specific social meanings. This will be exemplified in the following sections in more detail.

2. The shift from Low German to High German in Berlin/Cölln

The shift from Low German to High German in the northern German-speaking area is usually regarded as a change from above which occurred in the written language documents first.⁵ Its most compelling evidence is the fact that from 1500 onward, all northern German urban chancelleries stopped writing in Low German, first in outgoing documents and later also in internal writing. Instead, they used some variant of High German. Map 1 shows the exact time when this shift occurred. There was a clear East/West cline, with the eastern cities being ahead of the western ones. But even when compared to neighboring towns such as Magdeburg, Rostock or Schwerin, few other towns started (1510) and completed (1530) the process as early as Berlin/Cölln.

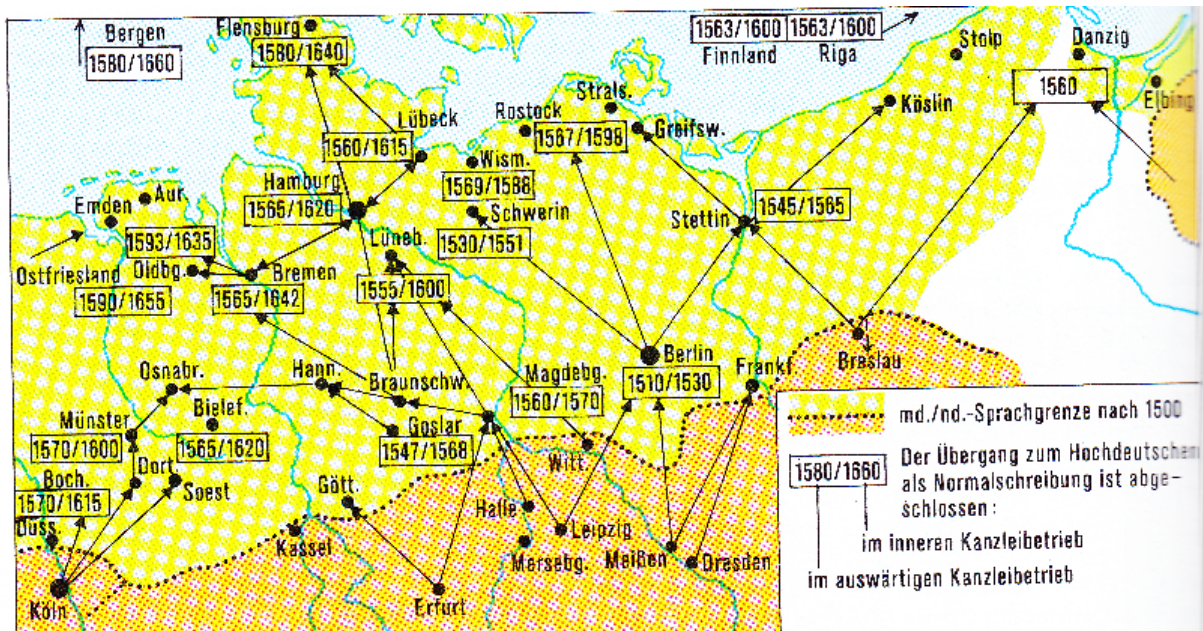


Fig. 1: Transition from Low German to High German in northern German chancelleries, outgoing/internal documents (from: König¹³ 2001: 140).

One reason is geography. Berlin/Cölln were located relatively close to the Low German/High German language border (marked by the dotted line in Fig 1). However, much more important were geo-political and geo-economic changes at the time.

Cölln and Berlin had been founded around 1230 in the margravate Brandenburg, far away from the cultural and political centers in the South, West, and North. Around 1400, Berlin had 6,110, Cölln 2,400 inhabitants; during the next 200 years, the population increased by about 30% (to 12,000 around 1618), only to drop to the old numbers as a consequence of the Thirty Years' War again (cf. Mauter 1986). Until the Renaissance, Berlin was a minor place in terms of population size, even though the regents of Brandenburg became more and more powerful over the centuries.

The two towns (as well as others) formed alliances, and they were additionally linked by treaties and commercial ties to the Hanseatic League, which guaranteed some amount of freedom from the margraves. This northern orientation naturally combined with the use of (Middle) Low German, which was used more and more often in documents in the 14th century instead of Latin as a symbol of urban pride and self-confidence. High German documents are also not absent from the Berlin/Cölln chancelleries of this time; the language was used in documents and letters to High German-speaking addressees where language choice was motivated by the writers' wish to be understood. Lasch (1910: 29-31) argues that they may also reflect the generally higher prestige of High German already at that time. However, they are no proof that High German played a role within Cölln and Berlin.

The ruling margraves had been non-locals from High German-speaking areas since 1323, but they spent little time in Brandenburg and hardly had a cultural or linguistic impact. Things changed in 1415, when a member of the Hohenzollern dynasty (Friedrich VI, later Prince-Elect Friedrich I) from Nuremberg in Franconia was given the margravate as a fief. It took the Hohenzollern princes a long time to break the power and pride of the towns, but in the end, they succeeded. In the middle of the 15th century (1451), the Hohenzollerns built a castle in Cölln and took permanent residence there; the castle was expanded into a Renaissance palace in the 16th century as a visible sign of their power.

Not only did the Hohenzollern dynasty originate from High German-speaking Nuremberg, they also brought along with them a growing number of Franconian-speaking administrators, since they had little trust in the local town patricians. From 1411 onward, there was therefore a split in the upper echelons of the population between a small group who spoke

High German, the language of the residence of the prince, and a large group who spoke the Low German of the town(s). Yet, since relations between the towns and the residence were tense, it seems that the position of Low German in the towns remained uncontested: the documents in the town chancelleries and judicial courts of the time show only very few Franconian features (Lasch 1910: 66, 99).

But there were other, more consequential changes at the time. Following the geo-political and economic power structures of the late 14th and 15th centuries, the towns of Berlin and Cölln changed their orientation from the North (Hanseatic League) to the South (Leipzig) and to the East (Frankfurt [Oder]) (Lasch 1910: 126-129). As a consequence, the scribes (and their principals, the town patricians) increasingly acted in a bilingual network of business contacts. Incoming High German letters or documents included in the town records were no longer translated in the 15th century, as they had been before; the leading class apparently understood High German sufficiently to deal with High German documents in a passive form of bilingualism (while the opposite was not the case: the High German-speaking addressees would not have understood Low German). Nevertheless, all internal documents of the towns of Cölln and Berlin continued to be written in Low German.

The change came only toward the end of the 15th century, and then quite abruptly. Lasch (1910: 104-154) gives an exact description. The tensions between the Prince-Elect and his entourage and the townspeople diminished at that time; officials of the court were for the first time referred to as citizens of Berlin, and there was more and more intermarriage between the two groups. Local men, often university-educated, made a career at the Prince's court, where High German was mandatory. Germanic law, linked to Low German, ceded to Roman law, often practiced by clergymen who had enjoyed an international academic education. At the same time, commercial ties with Leipzig and Frankfurt led to numerous personal contacts. Many young men of the Berlin/Cölln leading classes, mainly merchants, went to the High German-speaking universities of Leipzig and Frankfurt/Oder for their studies (Lasch 1910: 88-89).⁶ In this context, the newly appointed town scribe Johannes Nether, certainly with permission and perhaps even on request of the mayor and the aldermen, shifted the official language of the town records to High German in 1504, although he himself was of Low German background. Shortly after, the judicial court appointed a new scribe who spoke High German as a first language.

⁶ Lasch (1910: 117, 148-151) points out that the University of Wittenberg, founded in 1506, attracted only few Berliners. Wittenberg was the stronghold of Luther's Protestants, in which people in Berlin/Cölln showed little interest. The transition from Low to High German was therefore not linked to Luther and Protestantism in this area, as is often believed.

From this point onward, the spread of High German was fast. Before the middle of the 16th century, the new prestige language was found everywhere: in internal documents; invoices and receipts, not only by merchants but also by ordinary craftsmen; personal notes for internal use in the chancelleries; pupils' stage productions in the newly founded Cölln grammar school (and hence presumably as the prescribed school language); even family names were adapted to High German (for instance, the family name *Schum* appears as *Schaum*, or the family name *Rycke* as *Reiche*, following the replacement of Low German /u:/ with High German /au/ and Low German /i:/ with High German /ai/, respectively; cf. Lasch 1928: 72).

But the transition to High German was not only fast, it also had one particular feature which made the situation in Berlin/Cölln different from that in other, more northern/western German cities in the Low German area: the new language was not exclusively imported into the linguistic repertoire through the written language, but was learned directly through face-to-face contact with the High German speakers in the Upper Saxon territories, adjoining the margravate in the South. Hence, features found later – and still today – in the spoken High German of northern Germany that are due to writing pronunciation, such as the preservation of Low German initial /s/ & obstruent-sequences (e.g. Hamburg /stɪf/, /stain/ instead of std. German /ʃtɪf/, /ʃtain/, 'stiff', 'stone'), are not observed in Berlin. A contemporary visitor from Hamburg, Albertus Kranz, reports (with regret) in his book *Saxonia*, published in 1520, that the people in the *Mark Brandenburg* (i.e., the margravate in which Cölln and Berlin were situated) had taken over the 'Meißnian language'. (Meißen in Upper Saxony, residence of the Wettin margraves, was one of the political and administrative centers in Upper Saxony and the language was often named after it.)⁷

The variant of High German taken over in Berlin, Lasch argues, was the one which was heard in Upper Saxony. Since the High German spoken there increasingly was looked upon as a particularly 'good' High German, it must have been attractive to the Berliners. The most important competitor of the Upper Saxon variant of High German developed in the Southeast (the Bavarian and Franconian-speaking regions) under the influence of the Emperor's court in Vienna (the so-called *Gemeine Deutsch*, 'Common German'). But even though the Hohenzollern family originated from this area, the Berlin variety of High German was clearly not under its influence. It was simply too far away.

So the re-orientation of Berlin/Cölln from the North to the South, i.e. the Upper Saxon area, was not only a straightforward consequence of the ever-increasing political and

⁷ Quoted in Lasch (1928: 70).

economic ties with this region, it was also attractive in terms of the attitudes and ideologies connected to it. Its prestige was enormous and increased even further in the 17th and early 18th centuries, when urban, educated Upper Saxon speech was considered the most elegant and sophisticated German, no longer challenged by the Habsburg ‘Common German’.

The transition from Low German to High German is portrayed by Lasch as a case of language shift in which two sharply delimited varieties contrasted with each other. She insists that the language the Berlin upper classes adopted was a new, exoglossic H-variety imported *in toto* from Upper Saxony. The change came from above, as only the educated classes were able to travel and stay outside Berlin for study purposes or in the context of trading contacts. Only these people were therefore capable of learning both the written and the spoken new H-variety, and initiated a process by which in the long run the Low German vernacular spoken in Berlin/Cölln was replaced more or less entirely by the High German variety spoken in the Upper Saxon cities such as Leipzig. Lasch rejects the idea of internal variation between Low and High German; the phonology ("*Lautgrundlage*") of the new Berlin vernacular after the shift from Low to High German was in her opinion entirely Upper Saxon; only its phonetics ("*Lautproduktion*") continued to be Low German (see, e.g., 1928: 75).⁸ For her, the basis of the Berlin vernacular up to the present day is therefore Upper Saxon, even though she acknowledges that the high number of immigrants from the surrounding Low German-speaking areas during the subsequent centuries reintroduced some Low German features. It was the city which took over the new prestige variety, while the surrounding hinterland remained Low German-speaking. Her model of prestige-driven language change from above is therefore a variant (though not formulated in such terms) of a "city hopping" language spread (cf. Trudgill 1986), a model which was not at all unknown in pre-war German dialectology – in fact it was favored by most of the ‘culturally’ inclined social dialectologists in the interwar period (cf. Bach 1934:§70/1950: §109, 111, and Ch. 5 for a textbook version).

Lasch’s account met with harsh criticism from traditional dialectologists who, working in the neogrammarian framework, could only accept sound change as spreading ‘flatly’ in geography, based exclusively on frequency of face-to-face contact among the masses of ordinary people (not on prestige). The critique was first – and very competently – formulated in a review of Lasch's 1928 book by the renowned Low German dialectologist Hermann Teuchert (1928/1929). It is based on two (unrelated) arguments. One is that the Berlin/Cölln

⁸ Her rejection of internal variation is linked to a rejection of the idea of a "*Mischsprache*" (mixed language) in general, which she links – like many of her contemporaries – to language decay (*Verwahrlosung*): "Das Berlinische ist nicht, wie man immer wieder lesen kann, ein regelloses Gemisch in verwahrloster Form, sondern in seiner Geschichte deutlich faßbar" (1928: 139). [‘The Berlin vernacular is not, as we often read, a rule-lacking mixture in decayed form, but can be given a clear historical description.’]

texts of the time do show Low German features, which points to a mixture of Low and High German which must also have occurred in the spoken vernacular. (See below for an example.) The admixture of Low German therefore cannot be explained as a later development. The second argument is that the High German features found in the rural surroundings of Berlin can not only be explained as a secondary geographical diffusion process from urban to rural language (as Lasch and the city hopping model suggest); rather, they are evidence of a stepwise geographical progression of the southern (Upper Saxon) features into rural speech in the southern margravate (from where they would have reached Berlin together with the immigrants). The debate is still unresolved, and since the answer presupposes a reconstruction of the varieties spoken in the 15th to 17th centuries in Leipzig (or other Upper Saxon cities) and in the rural surroundings of Berlin, both of which are difficult, it will remain hard to resolve. The empirical problem is that many of the phonological features of Low German and Upper Saxon converge. The details need not concern us here as they do not touch the argument of this paper. It seems, however, that Lasch may have overstated her point in the first case (Teuchert's first criticism), while in the second case (Teuchert's second criticism), she was right. Her refusal to accept any internal variation between Low and High German was due to her apparent belief that prestige-driven change from above can only lead to the wholesale replacement of one prestige variety by another. Her main argument is structuralist: the particular combination of phonemes (as we would call them today) found in Berlin after 1500 neither occurs in (Middle) Low German, nor in other variants of High German (*Gemeines Deutsch*), but only in the Upper Saxon language. Therefore, a *Mischsprache* is impossible (cf. 1928: 86-87). Teuchert, on the other hand, argued from a more 'atomistic' perspective and saw the new Berlin variety as an unstructured combination of sounds that each have their own history – some Low German, some High German.

But once we allow internal variation to be socially meaningful (i.e. taking part in the formation of social styles), this problem disappears. The (overt) prestige of the High German innovations cannot be explained in Teuchert's model, according to which they entered the city vernacular through uneducated rural speakers; at the time it can only have resulted from the verbal styles of the upper classes – and they doubtlessly oriented themselves to Upper Saxony. This, however, does not imply that all Low German features disappeared – some of them simply may not have been socially salient.

Of course, language shift did not affect the whole population but proceeded in a socially stratified way. Evidence for this is the fact that the linguistic features that critically and saliently differentiated the old Low German and the new High German varieties can be

observed as enregistering styles tied to certain social figurae. Let us consider as an example an extract from an anonymous Christmas play, performed for the first time by young members of the aristocracy at the court of the Prince-Elect in 1589 (from Bolte 1926: 143-144; also cf. Schmidt 1986: 139-141). The play is in High German, as the context of its production and performance would suggest. However, some of the characters – the shepherds – represent social characters for whom the author(s) chose a different style, i.e. either Low German throughout (for the first shepherd in the following extract) or a mixture between Low German and High German which caricatures the speakers' attempts to speak High German without quite succeeding (the second and third shepherds). The members of the lower class are portrayed by their language, and both Low German and insufficiently mastered High German are presented as typical of these social strata:

Extract (1) (Anonymous, Christmas play; from: Bolte 1926: 143-144. Actus Primi Scena Prima – *Der Hirten Unterredungk*, 'Conversation among the shepherds'):

First Shepherd:

01 Gi Knechte, gedenckt, heft gude Acht!
 You knights, behold, take good care!

02 Thu dem Vih in diser kolle Nacht!
 of the cattle in this cold night!

Second Shepherd:

03 Was uns geburdt, das thun wier gern.
 What we have to do, we do with pleasure.

04 Hilff Gott, wi dutt die Kolle so weh!
 Help God, how the cold is hurting!

First Shepherd:

05 Ick gleub, datt nicht elenger Lüde
 I think that there can't be more miserable people

06 Gefungen werden dise Thide,
 Found at this time,

07 Den die in sottener Angst undt Noth
 Than those who in such fear and pain

08 Erwerwen muten dedt tegeliche Brodt.
 Have to make their daily living.

09 Bi Dage unde Nacht hebbe ich kene Rhu,
 By day and by night I have no rest,

10 Dett richten mi die skengisge Wulffe thu.
 That's what the cruel wolves do to me.

- 11 Bin ich nicht wakendt alle Thidt,
Unless I am awake all the time,
- 12 So kost et minen Skepken ir Hütt.
It will cost my little sheep their skin.
- 13 Itzt thütt ick tu dem ersten Mahll,
Now I'll blow (my horn) for the first time
- 14 Dett klingen muten Berch unde Thall.
So that mountain and valley must resound.
- 15 Thewes, geff acht up min Hörne,
Thewes, mind my horn,
- 16 Dett thudt den skengisken Wulwen Törn!
Which will enrage the cruel wolves!
- 17 Thutte gegen mi tum enger Mall,
Blow (your horn) back to me,
- 18 Datt bliwet ken Wulff da öwerall!
So that no wolf stays anywhere here!

Second shepherd:

- 19 So blas ick als en Gegersmahn,
So I blow (my horn) as a hunting man,
- 20 So gutt als ichs gelernet ha.
As well as I have learnt to do it.
- 21 Loß dich och hören, lieber Gespan,
Let yourself be heard as well, dear friend,
- 22 So flehen die Wulwe all davon.
So all the wolves will take flight.
- 23 So sein wir diese Nacht alle drey
So all three of us will during this night
- 24 Hie mit einander sorgenfrey.
Be here together without worries.

Third shepherd:

- 25 Lieben Gesellens, hörtt min Klagen!
Dear fellows, hear my laments!
- 26 Die Kellt wil mi fast gar verjagen.
The cold is almost chasing me away.
- 27 Vor Frost ich zitter mit dem Horn,
I shiver with my horn because of the frost,
- 28 Mein Blosen ist heutt alle verlorn.
I have lost all my (horn-)blowing today.
- 29 So kalte Nacht ich nie endtpfandt,

- I have never felt such a cold night,*
- 30 So lang ich huet up dessen Landt.
As long as I have shepherded on this land.
- 31 Die Himellrött tigt ok was an,
The red sky signifies something too,
- 32 Wiwol icks nicht verstehen kan.
Although I cannot understand it.
- 33 Datt Gewolk verschwinget ganz undt gar,
The clouds are disappearing entirely,
- 34 Umb uns ist es schön hell undt chlar.
It is quite bright and clear around us.
- 35 Welher weis nun, was das bedeut?
Who knows what this means?

We only pick out some phonological variables of interest here (see underlining), which also play a role in the later sociolinguistic history of Berlin. First of all, there are phonological (and lexical) features which clearly differentiate between the Low German speaker 1 and the High German speakers 2 and 3. An example is the replacement of the Low German high long vowels (/i:, y:, u:/, written <i, ü, u>) with the corresponding High German diphthongs (/ai, oi, au/, written mostly <ei ~ ey, eu ~ äu, au>). Shepherd 1 consistently uses the Low German forms:

<i>Lüde</i> (05)	for	(modern) High German <i>Leute</i> ‘people’
<i>Thide</i> (06)/ <i>Thidt</i> (06, 11)	for	<i>Zeit</i> ‘time’
<i>bi</i> (09)	for	<i>bei</i> ‘at’
<i>min(en)</i> (12, 15)	for	<i>mein(en)</i> ‘my’
<i>Hütt</i> (12)	for	<i>Häut(e)</i> ‘skins’
<i>up</i> (15)	for	<i>auf</i> (‘up’)
<i>bliwet</i> (18)	for	<i>bleibet</i> ‘stay’,

while shepherds 2 and 3 consistently use the new, High German forms:

<i>drey</i> (23)	but not	<i>dree</i> ‘three’,
<i>frey</i> (24)	but not	<i>free</i> ⁹ ‘free’
<i>heutt</i> (28)	but not	<i>hütt</i> ‘skins’.

⁹ In open syllable, Old Saxon /i:/ is lowered to /e:/, cf. Lasch (1910: 244).

There is, however, variation in the grammatical words (*min* (25) vs. *mein* (28) ‘my’, *up* (30)). Low German *tigt ... an* (~ High German *zeigt...an* ‘signifies’, 31) is probably a lexical insertion from Low German.

We find more variation in the Low German stop series /k, t, p/ (<k, t ~ tt ~ td ~ th, p>) corresponding to High German /x, (p)f, (t)s/ (= <ch, pf/f, ts ~ z/s ~ ss>). Not surprisingly, speaker 1 is almost consistently presented as using the Low German forms:

<i>thu/tu(m)</i> (02, 10, 13, 17)	for	(modern) High German <i>zu(m)</i> ‘to (the)’
<i>datt</i> (05, 18) ~ <i>dett</i> (10, 14, 16) ~ <i>dedt</i> (08)	for	<i>dass</i> ~ <i>das</i> ‘(so) that’ and ‘the[neutr.]’
<i>muten</i> (08, 14)	for	<i>müssen</i> ‘must’
<i>wakendt</i> (11)	for	<i>wachend</i> ‘awake’
<i>Thidt, Thide</i> (11, 06)	for	<i>Zeit</i> ‘time’
<i>et</i> (12)	for	<i>es</i> ‘it’
<i>Skep+ken</i> (12)	for	<i>Schäf+chen</i> ‘sheep+DIM’
<i>up</i> (15)	for	<i>auf</i> ‘up’
<i>Törn</i> (16)	for	<i>Zorn</i> ‘rage’.

Only the first-person pronoun oscillates between stop and fricative (cf. *ick*, 05, 13 vs. *ich* 09, 11). For the second shepherd, we observe the opposite distribution – he is portrayed as almost exclusively using the High German forms:

<i>was</i> (03)	but not	Low German <i>wat</i> ‘what’
<i>hilff</i> (04)	but not	<i>help/hölp</i> ‘help’
<i>laß</i> (21)	but not	<i>lat</i> ‘let’
<i>och</i> (21)	but not	<i>ok</i> ‘also’,

again with the exception of the first-person pronoun, cf. *ich* (20) and *ick* (19). But the most interesting speaker is shepherd 3; he tries unsuccessfully to use the High German forms, cf.:

<i>ich</i> (27, 29) ‘I’	but not	Low German <i>ick</i>
<i>was</i> (31, 35) ‘what’	but not	<i>wat</i>
<i>es</i> (34) ‘it’	but not	<i>et</i>
<i>weis</i> (35) ‘know’	but not	<i>weet</i>

weis (35) cf. southern High German *weiß*, Upper Saxon *weeß*, Low German *weet* ‘white’.

If the Upper Saxon way of speaking High German had been the only prestige norm Berlin/Cölln aspired to, this picture would be hard to explain; the shepherds who try to accommodate the new prestige variety should then exclusively use the monophthongs, since they are highly similar to their own Low German forms. It seems that, at least in the written form of the Christmas play, the Common German standard (with <ei, au>) must have played a role as well. Of course the Prince’s court may have influenced this choice, where Common German (the southern variant of the emerging standard) was the preferred prestige norm. After all, the Christmas play was performed in this context.

Two further features deserve mentioning because they are typical dialect features of the margravate, and not generally Low German. One is the realization of the words *kalte* and *Kälte* (‘cold’, Adj & N). The sequence /ol&t/ was simplified to /ol/ (and the umlaut, by analogy, to /el/) in the Low German dialects in and around Berlin/Cölln, hence the adjective *kalte* is pronounced *kolle* (02, 04) by speakers 1 and 2. The playwright certainly chose these words on purpose, for he contrasts them with speaker 3 who instead uses High German *kellt* (26), *kalte* (29). The Low German forms of the margravate seem to have been highly salient and stigmatized. Finally, Low German in the Berlin area showed a specific raising of the stem vowel in the word *dat* (High German *das* ‘that’), which is only used by the Low German speaker 1 in the majority of cases (*dett* in 10, 14, 16, but cf. his *datt* in 05, 18), and never by speaker 3 (cf. his *datt* in 33 and *das* (35)). This feature apparently was (no longer?) salient – at least in this playwright’s representation of the speaking styles of his time. We will come back to its sociolinguistic history later.

Of course there are more Low German interferences in the second and third shepherds’ language. I merely mention some obvious examples without going into detail: *Gegersmahn* (19) for High German *Jägersmann* ‘hunting man’ has a hypercorrect initial /g/ for /j/, an inversion of the Low German rule of initial g>j-weakening; the suffix /s/ in *lieben gesellen-s* is Low German (25); *mi* (26) instead of High German case-differentiated *mich/mir* is the Low German common oblique case; and the velarization in *verschwinget* ‘disappears’ (33) (for High German *verschwindet*) is another typical phonological process of the margravate (/nt/ > /ŋg/, also cf. *elenger* ~ *elender* ‘miserable’, *enger* ~ *ender/ander* ‘other’, *skengisk* ~ *schändisch* ‘cruel’ by the first shepherd).

For the situation in the 16th century, we can conclude

- that High German has taken over not only as the written but also as the spoken variety of the leading classes of Berlin and Cölln;
- that these leading classes are bilingual in Low and High German;
- that the transition has also reached the socially ambitious lower classes who speak a 'learner variety' of High German, while the remaining majority still use Low German;
- that the variety of High German spoken in Berlin is mainly oriented toward the Upper Saxon variant;
- that certain features of Low German are not mastered by a speaker who aims at High German and hence become socially salient, while others do not.

All this variation, however, remains within the overarching *longue durée* process of the shift from Low to High German and is socially meaningful in this context.

3. The re-evaluation of regional as social features

The next centuries, i.e. the period between 1600 and 1900, are still part of the same event of *longue durée* in a certain way, as the replacement of Low German by High German continues to advance among the lower classes. But this change is already complete in the leading/educated classes, who from the 16th century onward speak a Berlin-Saxon variant of High German - or, as they increasingly do in the 17th and 18th centuries, French.

The second half of the 17th century (absolutism and mercantilism) was a time of economic, military and political growth and expansion for the state of Brandenburg-Prussen. Economic growth led to a substantial influx of labor so that the population of Berlin and the adjoining area increased from around 6,000 to around 29,000 within 50 years. In 1701, Friedrich crowned himself King of Prussia, and in 1709 he united the towns and the suburbs outside the walls of Cölln and Berlin to form the city which was now called Berlin. Another 50 years later, this city already had appr. 150,000 inhabitants and was the world's fifth largest. Although immigration by religious and political fugitives from France, Switzerland, Bohemia and German states was substantial, with many of them speaking languages other than German as their L1 (Prussia accommodated around 5,000 French Huguenots alone), the majority of the new citizens, particularly the unskilled workers, came from the region and, at least until 1871, most of them would have been native speakers of Low German (Mauter 1986: 57). The dynamics between city and countryside went both ways: the incoming new inhabitants brought along their Low German dialect and used it among themselves, with often insufficient exposure to the middle class norms to learn the Berlin variant of High German well, but of course they also kept in contact with the folks back home and thereby brought the urban vernacular to the rural surroundings. Hence, the tension between Low German and High

German among the lower class speakers during this time resulted from the incomplete accommodation of the High German city vernacular by Low German (and other L1) speakers.

The process of immigration of Low German-speaking labor continued during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when the population exploded: in 1810, Berlin had a little less than 200,000 inhabitants, in 1871 (now Berlin is the capital of Germany), it reached the size of 750,000 inhabitants, and in 1905 more than 2 million people lived in the city (Mauter 1986: 82). In 1920 the city of Greater Berlin was founded; with almost 4 million inhabitants it was the third largest metropolis in the world (after New York and London).

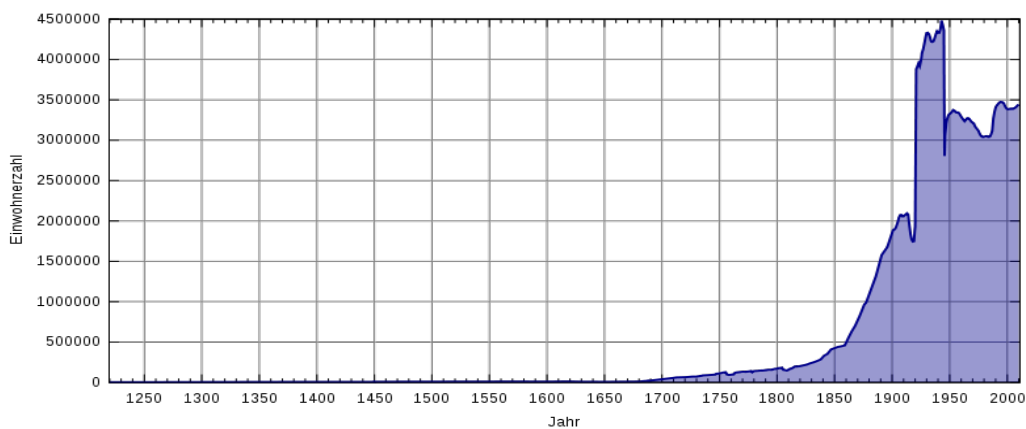


Fig. 2: Population of Berlin from the Middle Ages until 2000. From: Wikipedia, August 2012.

Lasch's argument that this influx of Low German speakers will have affected the Berlin vernacular by enhancing its Low German component is at least highly plausible. For instance, the raised variant of /a/ in the neuter pronoun *dat* 'that' mentioned above (i.e., *det/dit*, see extract (1) above), which was already on its way out of the verbal repertoire of Berlin/Cölln in the 16th century, had its comeback and is to the present day a feature of the enregistered Berlin vernacular. It is a typical dialect feature of Low German in the larger Berlin dialect area, well attested in the late 19th-century dialect survey *Sprachatlas des Deutschen Reichs*, and its widespread use among the incoming labor force will have boosted its use in the city vernacular.



Fig. 3: Geographical distribution of the variants of std. German *das* (neuter demonstrative pronoun/neuter definite article) around 1900 according to the *Sprachatlas des Deutschen Reichs* (map from: Schönfeldt 1986: 233).

But in addition to this ongoing shift from Low to High German, another event of *longue durée* now becomes more important. This is another change from above which begins to exert its influence first on the bourgeoisie, then also on the petite bourgeoisie and the working class: the formation and ideological construction of a national standard variety of spoken German from which all regional features are eliminated. As outlined in the last section, like most other European nations, Germany had a clear prestige variety linked to one particular area, i.e. that of Upper Saxony, until around 1800. The main difference from England, France, Denmark or Sweden was that this area was not that of the capital (which, if anything, would have been Vienna), and that the political and economic power of Saxony did not last. When the economic and political power moved north to Prussia, the cultural and linguistic capital

followed as well. As a consequence, the formerly prestigious variety spoken in Saxony became increasingly criticized for its regional features – and since many of these were also used in the city of Berlin, they had to be eliminated from educated speech there, too. A new generation of grammarians and language teachers propagated a spoken standard which was phonetically close to the variant spoken in the north of Germany, but whose phonology was at least compatible with, if not influenced by, the letter of the already established written standard. The process was a long and difficult one, as the new standard could not be heard anywhere in its pure form, and therefore could not be copied from model speakers as in the previous period. The national and de-regionalized new standard had to be derived from and learned on the basis of the written language, for instance in reading circles typical of the time. Here, the bourgeoisie (women in particular) practiced reading aloud according to the ‘correct’ pronunciation norms.

The first speakers of the new national spoken standard were intellectuals and the members of the upper bourgeoisie. All regional features in the Berlin vernacular, regardless of whether they had Low German or Upper Saxon, or combined Lower German and Upper Saxon sources, now came under attack as indicating a lack of education and hence low social standing. But at the same time, constellations of features from this newly defined sub-standard became enregistered through the media (popular theater, novels, short stories, often published in journals and newspapers with a wide circulation, also increasingly on a national level) as emblematic of the petite bourgeoisie or the upper working class. They became the insignia of (different types of) ‘true Berliners’, who were proud of being a citizen of the capital. The process went beyond grammar, phonology and vocabulary, and also encompassed stylistic and pragmatic features which could easily be mapped onto the character of the social personae they stood for. Through this coupling of linguistic style and social types, the *Berliner Schnauze* (as it was now often called, lit. ‘Berlin gob’) enjoyed a considerable unofficial (covert) prestige inside and outside of the city (see Dittmar/Schlobinski/Wachs 1986 for modern attitudinal studies). In other words, together with the oral standard, which became the carrier of the official prestige, an unofficial prestige emerged in the capital.

Before discussing an example, it must be noted that the encoding of the Berlin vernacular was a highly selective, ideological process which highlighted certain features and deleted others (cf. Irvine/Gal 2000). Not all substandard ways of speaking become enregistered – many disappeared and sound curious at best today (cf. Agha 2003, 2007). The agent of enregisterment is not the court, nor the aristocracy, nor the lower classes; rather, it is the popular media which were controlled by the middle classes and the intellectuals, the same

people who advocated and claimed a non-regionalized standard variety for their own use. They ascribed particular constellations of linguistic features to the lower classes and made them meaningful by linking them to social figures of the ‘typical Berliner’.

While intellectuals and parts of the bourgeoisie struggled for the establishment of a new norm of standard German, the prestige variety of the upper classes was now increasingly French, and particularly the high aristocracy often cared little about the new standard of ‘good German’. Yet their substandard German was not what became enregistered. An example is the informal German written by King Friedrich II (“the Great”) around 1750.¹² His official and most of his unofficial correspondence was in French, and he frankly confessed “je ne suis pas fort en allemand”¹³, but with his long-standing valet and later chamberlain Fredersdorf, who became a friend to him over the years, he exchanged a huge number of informal, often personal notes. They were written in a variant of German which must have been close to his spoken variety, as it shows many traces of orality (and, by the way, disobeyed all rules of orthography, which at the time had already reached a considerable standardization). Ex. (2) is a small extract from one of these letters. It demonstrates that Friedrich’s German was highly divergent from contemporary as well as modern standards, but based on very different linguistic features than those which finally turned into the ‘Berlin vernacular’:

Extract (2): Friedrich the Great writing to his chamberlain Michael Gabriel Fredersdorf in the beginning of November 1753, on the occasion of the latter’s imminent marriage (from Richter 1926: 240)

- 01 lasse Dhr lieber heüte wie Morgen Trauen, wann Das zu Deiner flege helfen kan;
let yourself be married better today than tomorrow, if this can help for your [health] care;
- 02 und wilstu einen Kleinen lakeien und einen Jäger bei Dhr nehmen,
and if you want to take a little valet and a hunter with you,
- 03 so könstu es nuhr thun.
you can surely do it.
- 04 wahr es Möglich, so gehe alles aus den wege, was Dhr Ergern Kan,
if it is possible avoid everything that can annoy you,
- 05 denn es Kan Dhr Den Thoht Thun.

¹² Cf. Lasch (1928: 97-109) for other examples. For the aristocrats, these forms of speech were not yet considered substandard; they still acted in the previous first *longue durée* context in which Berlinish was the Common Language that had succeeded Low German.

¹³ ‚I’m not strong in German‘. Lasch (1928: 102); also cf. Petersilka (2005) on Friedrich’s bilingualism.

for it can bring you death.

06 es Thuth mihr Sehr leidt,
I am very sorry,

07 daß der gestrige Zufal gekommen ist, der uns wieder zurüke-setzet.
that yesterday's attack came, which has taken us aback again.

08 wenn es Dihr Möglich, So continuire doch mit der Tissane.
If it is possible for you, continue with the herbal tea.

09 wenn du sie einen Mohnaht recht hinter-einander Drinken Könst,
If you could drink it one month right without interruption,

10 so würde es gewisse einen guthen effect thun, das bluht versüßen,
it would surely do you good, sweeten the blood,

11 die Materie ihren acreté benehmen, Dihr die Schmertzen lindren
take away the acuteness from the matter, sooth your pains,

12 und Dihr die heillung des geschwihrs befördern.
and forward the healing of your ulcer.

13 nim Dihr doch in acht, ich bitte Dihr recht Sehr darum.
Take care of yourself, I beg you very much.

14 gottbewahre! Fried
God save [you]! Friedrich

Contractions as in *wilstu* < *willst du* ‘want you’ (02) point to the orality of these notes. Disregarding the bizarre orthography and the expectable insertions of French loans (*continuiren*, *Tissane* (08); *acreté* (11)), Friedrich’s German shows a strange mixture of relatively standard phonological and sub-standard grammatical features. The phonology (as far as it can be reconstructed) shows only a moderate vernacular and very little Low German influence; among the few examples are the typical northern German affricate reduction in *flege* instead of *pfllege* ‘health care’ (01), the Berlin/Upper Saxon schwa epithesis in *zurüke* instead of *zurück* (07) ‘back’, and the Berlin/Upper Saxon unrounding in *geschwihr* for std. *geschwür*, but none of the phonological features later enregistered as ‘typical Berlin’ and still existent in the vernacular (such as fricativization of syllable-initial /g/ or retention of Low German /k/ in the first-person pronoun *ich*).¹⁴ The most striking substandard feature of

¹⁴For the first of these features, some examples can be found when a larger sample is analyzed; for the second, there is no evidence at all. Lasch (1928: 104) interprets this as evidence for her hypothesis that Low German features only entered the repertoire later from below, i.e. via immigration of Low German speakers in the 19th

Friedrich's language is not phonological, but morpho-syntactical: these are the numerous uses of the dative pronoun *dih*r instead of std. accusative *dich*, as in

- 01 *lasse Dihr lieber heüte wie Morgen Traue* (instead of std. *lass Dich...*)
'let yourself be married better today than tomorrow'
- 04 *was Dihr Ergern Kan* (instead of std. *was dich ärgern kann*)
'that can annoy you'
- 13 *nim Dihr doch in acht* (instead of std. *nimm Dich doch in acht*)
'Take care of yourself'
- 13 *ich bitte Dihr recht Sehr darum* (instead of std. *ich bitte Dich recht sehr darum*).
'I beg you very much.'

Case conflation is not restricted to the pronouns, and not to the substitution of the accusative by the dative, as

- 11 *die Materie ihren acreté benehmen,*
'take away the acuteness from the matter, sooth your pains,'

shows: here *die Materie* is accusative, but should be dative according to the (then and present) standard norm.¹⁵

Accusative/dative conflation was and is a highly sanctioned and salient feature of the Berlin vernacular, a clear substrate feature from Low German (which only has one oblique case; cf. Ex. (1) above). But as a member of the high aristocracy, Friedrich could afford to disregard this norm persistently and in complete defiance of the dominant bourgeois language ideologies. This style was the King's individual choice, and it was neither directly copied nor did it become enregistered as linked to a typical Berlin 'persona'. Its most prominent feature, i.e. the confusion of the oblique cases, did enter the enregistered Berlin vernacular, but not in the same configuration with other features as in Friedrich's style.

The sources on the basis of which we can analyze the emerging *Berliner Schnauze* in the 19th century are rich (cf. Schmidt 1986: 158-168). I will pick out only one example that shows how linguistic features were mobilized for literary and political purposes by the middle of the century. This is the use of Berlin sub-standard features in political handbills, pamphlets and wall-posters during the 1848 revolution (see the detailed studies by Schildt 1986, Weigel 1979 and Führer 1982). These new media for political mass communication were usually written by educated people who knew standard German perfectly well, but published

century. (*Ik* instead of *ich* is clearly a Low German feature; initial g-fricativization is associated with Low German but at the time also occurred in Upper Saxony.)

¹⁵ *Benehmen* 'take away' is a double-object verb which requires a dative for the benefactive noun phrase.

anonymously in the guise of a popular figure from the (upper) lower class (such as a midwife, head mason, simple soldier, writer or rabbi). The audience were equally educated members of the middle classes who bought the handbills for little money.

Here is a small extract from a handbill published sometime after June, 14, 1848:

Extract (3): “Offener Brief an den Ex-Bürger-General Blesson von Piefke¹⁶” (‘Open letter to the ex-general Blesson of the Civic Guards, by Piefke’), signed “Piefke, mitblamierter Bürgerwehrmann; Berlin, zu haben Neue Schönhauser Str. 12, 1 Trippe hoch; Gedruckt bei Carl Lindow” (‘Piefke, co-blamed soldier of the Civic Guards; Berlin, to be bought in Neue Schönhauser Street 12, 1, up the stairs; printed with Carl Lindow’):¹⁷

- 01 Ik habe eene janze Zeit lang daruf jewartet,
I have waited quite a while
- 02 des der General-Abmucker Isaac Moses Hersch¹⁸ sich ooch iber Ihre werte
perschon hermachen wirde.
that the super-killer Isaac Moses Hirsch would deal with your honorable person as well.
- 03 Aus eene jewisse anjeborene Bescheidenheit habe ik bisher des Maul jehalten,
Out of a certain inborn modesty I have kept my trap shut so far,
- 04 wie’s ville Dependirte in de National-Versammlung dhun;
as many deputies do in the national assembly;
- 05 Aberscht ick sehe wohl in,
But I do understand,
- 06 des Hersch mir des Amt nicht abnehmen will;
that Hersch won’t do the job for me;
- 07 Un da ik jloobe, des die Wuth, die in mir kocht,
and since I believe that the rage which is boiling in me
- 08 durch’t Schreiben een Bischen besänftigt wird,
will be a bit soothened through writing,
- 09 So schneide ik mir’ne Jensefeder zurechte,
I cut a goose feather for myself,
- 10 stippe se in de Dinte,
put it into the ink,

¹⁶ The well-known Berlin figure “Piefke” underwent a semantic-ideological degradation in the 20th century. First used for a typical petit bourgeois, as in this text, it was later extended to a low-ranking soldier in the Prussian army. After the 1866 defeat of Austria in the Austro-Prussian War, the term became popular in Vienna as a negative stereotype of the Prussian military in general. From there, it was generalized to become a derogatory term for Germans *tout court* in Austria and is still widespread in this function today (cf. Godeysen 2010).

¹⁷From Schildt (1986: 184). The handbill comments on an incident that took place on June 14, 1848, when two persons were shot by the civic guards (*Bürgerwehr*) under its commander Blesson, after they had tried to seize arms from the armory.

¹⁸ Hersch is the pseudonym of another handbill writer who published in a mixture of Berlin vernacular and Yiddish, in reality perhaps the publisher S. Löwenherz, cf. Weigel (1979).

- 11 und schreibe eenen offenen Brief,
and write an open letter,
- 12 um Ihnen uf diesem, nich mehr unjewöhnlichen Weje meine Meinung zu sagen,
in order to tell you in this no longer unusual way my opinion,
- 13 uf Nante'sch nämlich,
in Nante's¹⁹ language I mean,
- 14 was man deitsch nennt.
which is called German.

The style of this handbill is more or less the opposite of the King's style: it has a somewhat stilted, hyperformal grammar (by and large standard-conforming, although line 03 contains an example of the aforementioned accusative/dative confusion²⁰). On the other hand it includes a huge number of substandard phonological and some peculiar lexical features. Here is a list of the most important ones:

- The old, Low German stops for High German/standard German fricatives are frequent, but mostly restricted to the first-person pronoun *ik* (cf. lines 01, 03, 05, 07, 09). Other than in the 16th century (cf. extract 1, above), where we find variation, the pronoun is categorically realized as *ik*. The third-person neuter pronoun *das* is once written 't (in the clitic form *durch't*, std. *durch's* < *durch das*, line 08), reflecting the Low German form, but the pronoun in its non-clitic form as well as the homophonous neuter article and subordinator are written *des*, not *det* (02, 03, 06, 07; similarly, *wie's* < *wie es* and not *wie't* in line 04). *Des* is a compromise form between Brandenburg Low German *det* and std. *das*. Another trace of the Low German stops is diminutive *-ken* instead of std. *-chen* (line 08, *Bisken*). Outside these few but recurrent grammatical forms, the standard forms are used (cf. *machen* 'make' 02, *kocht* 'is boiling' 07, *was* 'what' 14, *zu* 'to' 12, etc.), i.e. the Low German stops are restricted to a few highly lexicalized environments. Their Low German background becomes less and less irrelevant and may not have been recognized by many Germans already at that time. They are simply part of the Berlin way of speaking.
- The old (Low German) high monophthongs /i:, u:, y:/ are categorically maintained in the preposition/verbal particle *auf* ~ *uf* and the verbal particle *ein* ~ *in* (see *da-r-uf*, 01; *uf*, 12 and 13; *in*, 05), but never elsewhere (see *aus*, 03; *bescheiden, heit*, 03; *Maul* 03, etc.).

¹⁹ Another well-known handbill writer's pseudonym.

²⁰ *Eene gewisse anjeborene Bescheidenheit* is accusative, although the preposition *aus* requires the dative, i.e. *aus eener gewissen anjeborenen Bescheidenheit*.

- The std. diphthongs /ai, au/ are represented as monophthongs in *een/e/r,s* ~ std. *ein/e/r,s* (01, 03, 08, 11), *ooch* (02), *jloobe* (07), but not in *Meinung* (12). Again, this feature is lexicalized to a handful of words. The feature is shared by Low German and Upper Saxon (although, as pointed out above, Low German also has umlaut ö).
- Fricative realization of initial and medial /g/ is consistent in the text; it is highly frequent, as it also affects the participle prefix *ge-* (cf. *janze* ~ std. *ganze* ‘whole’, 01; *jewisse* ~ std. *gewisse* ‘certain’ 03; *anjeborene* ~ std. *angeborene* ‘inborn’, 03; *jehalten* ~ std. *gehalten* ‘held’ 03; *jloobe* ~ std. *glaube* ‘believe’ 07; *Jensefeder* ~ *Gänsefeder* ‘goose feather’, 09; *unjewöhnlichen* ~ std. *ungewöhnlichen* ‘unusual’, 12; medially: *Weje* ~ std. *Wege* ‘way’).²¹
- Variable unrounding of std. /y, ø, oi/, originally an Upper Saxon feature (cf. Lasch 1928: 226), is observed in *iber* ~ std. *über* ‘over’, *wirde* ~ std. *würde* ‘would’ (02), *deutsch* ~ std. *deutsch* ‘German’ (14) (but not in *unjewöhnlich* ‘unusual’, line 12).
- Lenis instead of fortis syllable-initial /t/ is found in *dhun* ~ std. *tun* ‘do’ (04) and *Dinte* ~ std. *Tinte* ‘ink’ (10). This feature is mostly associated with the Upper Saxon vernacular, but also occurs in Low German.

All these features were certainly recurrent features in the speech of the lower classes at the time.²² The 1848 political writers used them in a stylized way, i.e. in high density, with high consistency and in selective lexical environments. In the typified fictional speaker ‘Piefke’, they co-occur with other features such as an elaborate syntax (cf., e.g., the expanded gerundial in line 12: *uf diesem, nich mehr unjewöhnlichen Weje* ‘in this no longer unusual way’) and euphemisms (cf. *Ihre werte perschon* ‘Ihre werte perschon ‘your honorable person’, 02), which in turn clash with non-standard vocabulary as in *Maul* (‘trap’, vulgar for ‘mouth’), *General-Abmucker* (*abmucken* – ‘to kill’), hyperbolic for another political writer, or the originally Low German *stippen* for std. *tunken* ‘to dip’ (10), as well as the mispronunciation of a loan word (*Dependirte* instead of *Deputierte* ‘deputies’, 04). Highly frequent and salient is the cliticization of grammatical words, as in *’t* (def. article, neuter) < *dat*, 08; *ne* < *eine* (indef. article, feminine, accusative), 09; *se* < *sie*, 10 (def. article, feminine accusative).

²¹This feature is often associated with Low German but was also widespread in the Upper Saxon vernacular, although it is no longer used there and had perhaps already disappeared in the 19th century.

²² There are some more phonological features in the text which must be considered part of the enregistered *Berliner Schnauze*, such as the shortening of *viele* > *ville* ‘many’ (04) and epithetic schwa as in *zurechte* ~ std. *zurecht* ‘to fit’ (09). The palatalization of /s/ before /r/ as in *perschon* ‘person’ (02) and in *aberscht*, an augmented form of std. *aber* ‘but’ (05), is more idiosyncratic.

From a sociolinguistic point of view it is important to note that the phonological features that became part of the *Berliner Schnauze* were no longer differentiated according to whether they originated from (formerly) low prestige Low German or (formerly) high prestige Upper Saxon. All these features were now part of one non-standard repertoire. But in order to receive a certain social interpretation, they needed to co-occur in a certain way, i.e. as a social style. This style was not invented in the political discourse of 1848; it had existed before, presumably since the late 18th century (cf. Gebhardt 1933), and it continued to exist beyond the bourgeois ‘revolution’ well into the 20th century. Some features were added, such as a particular kind of wit, often based on innovative and sometimes absurd metaphors (cf. Dittmar/Schlobinski/Wachs 1986, Ch. 4), or the frequent use of newly coined ‘fashion words’, particularly in the evaluative domain (cf. *jottvoll*, (*janz*) *famos*, ...²³). The number of salient phonological or grammatical features has diminished over time (cf. Schlobinski 1988). Some new features also seem to have entered the enregistered style of Berlin, such as the realization of word-final /-er/ as [a] instead of the standard [ɐ]. But it is always a constellation of features (a ‘style’) that carries social meaning, not the individual variable in itself, and this style is consistently interpreted as a lower class/lower middle class style.

Divergent constellations of features can lead to different social interpretations, and not all non-standard features are socially salient in the same way. As a final example to prove this point, take the fricative realization of /g/ in syllable onset, one of the most prevalent and frequent sub-standard features in text (3). It would be wrong to ascribe to it any kind of ‘inherent’ social meaning; g-fricativization in itself does not index anything. This can be seen from the fact that it also occurs outside the *Berliner Schnauze*, together with other linguistic features. A case in point is the enregistered style of the Prussian army officer (cf. Zimmermann 1987).

Until 1900, the Prussian army recruited its officers exclusively from the aristocracy, mainly from the rural aristocracy of the Prussian hinterlands in Pomerania and West and East Prussia (the famous *Preussische Junker*). Stressing their rural background, these men had a tradition of distancing themselves in terms of habitus from the urban middle classes, whose striving for advanced, academic education they disdained just as much as their standard German. They shared this attitude with the royals, to whom they felt deeply attached. But equally, they of course looked down on the urban and rural lower classes. Their lifestyle, etiquette and linguistic behavior distinguished them from both groups. The attitudes toward

²³ *Jottvoll* < *gottvoll*, lit. ‘full of God’, ‘godly’; *famos*: originally ‘famous’, in the Berlin vernacular simply a highly positive evaluation.

standard German that prevailed in the Prussian military class were therefore very different from, e.g., those of the English aristocracy, who became more and more loyal to “received pronunciation” at the time (Zimmermann 1987).

The influential contemporary satirical magazine *Simplicissimus* portrays the Prussian officer as a chauvinistic, stupid, vain, idle, useless and extremely arrogant member of a caste which desperately tried to keep all ‘intruders’ out. Stiff body hexis, often symbolized by the monocle, and the fetish of the uniform combine with a particular verbal style (see the examples in Fig. 3 and 4).



Fig. (4) From *Simplicissimus* 1897, 2, 27, p. 212; drawing by Eduard Thöny entitled “Cavalry”. The text reads: “Haben Kamerad nich auch das Jefühl? Jehen is eijentlich ´ne Jemeinheit”. (‘Has the comrade the same impression? Walking



(Fig. 5) From *Simplicissimus* 1897, 2, 24, 1897, p 189; drawing by Eduard Thöny, entitled “The mangel beet”. The text reads: “Ja, in meiner Heimat baut man auch ´ne janz bedeutende Rübe. Man kann se zwar nich jenieißen, aber fürs Jesinde eine janz vorzügliche Speise”. (‘Yes, in my homeland they

actually is an insult'.)

also cultivate a really important mangel beet. You can't eat it, but for the domestics, really exquisite food'.)

For the *Simplicissimus*, the most salient single feature of the Prussian officers' style is the fricativization of syllable-initial /g/ < /j/. This feature is used consistently, for instance four times in the 11 words of the text underneath the "Kavallerie" drawing in Fig. (4), and four times in the 24 words underneath the "Rüben" caricature in Fig. (5). G-fricativization co-occurs with cliticization (cf. *'ne* < *eine* and *se* < *sie*) and consonant cluster simplification (as in *nich* < *nicht* and *is* < *ist*), both of which are also part of the *Berliner Schnauze*. The crucial difference, however, between the Prussian officers' style and the *Berliner Schnauze* of the petite bourgeoisie and upper working class is the former's reduced grammatical style, in which finite verbs and grammatical words are often lacking (cf. *aber fürs Jesinde eine ganz vorzügliche Speise*, with omission of the copula and co-referential pronoun *ist es*). It is this feature which makes it clear that we are not dealing with the *Berliner Schnauze*. Grammatical reduction is prominently used in other stylizations of the Prussian officer as well, i.e. it is not restricted to the *Simplicissimus*. Take as an example Carl Zuckmayr's widely known drama "Der Hauptmann von Köpenick" (first performance in 1931, later also a movie). The plot is set in 1906, at the climax of Prussian militarism. The somewhat tragic figure of the Captain of the Guard Regiment von Schlettow (who comes from an old officers' family and loses his job because of a bar brawl in which he tries to intervene but is arrested by the police because he is not wearing his uniform and therefore has no authority) talks like this:

Extract (4) (from: Carl Zuckmayr, *Der Hauptmann von Köpenick*)

(a) (Act 1, Scene 1, von Schlettow talking to his tailor)

- 01 Aber an den Kleinigkeiten, daran erkennt man den Soldaten.
But it is the small things which let the soldier be seen.
- 02 Darauf is alles aufgebaut, da steckt 'n tieferer Sinn drin, verstehense?
That's what everything is based on, there's a deep meaning in it, you see?
- 03 Genau dieselbe Sache wie mit'm Stehschritt.
Exactly the same thing as with the goosstep.
- 04 Leute glauben immer, is Schikane.
People always think it's bullying.
- 05 Is keene Schikane, steckt auch tieferer Sinn drin, das muss man nur kapiieren,
 verstehense?
Is no bullying, is a deep meaning in it as well, you just have to get it, you see?

(b) (Act 1, Scene 3, in a billiard parlour/pub; von Schlettow talking to a friend of his, a young doctor)

- 01 Sehns –
Look
- 02 das müssense sich mal vorstellen –
You have to imagine
- 03 unsereins –
People like us
- 04 Offiziersfamilie seitm Siebenjährigen Krieg,
Family of officers since the Seven Years' War,
- 05 Großvater noch gewöhnlicher Linieninfantrist,
Grandfather still ordinary line infantryman
- 06 ganz ohne 'von' vorne –
all without the 'von' in front –²⁴
- 07 da is man nun in punkto Firmenschild verdammt aufm Kasten.
Then you are damned concerned about your company label

The captain's phonology is close to the standard; only occasionally does he slip into more sub-standard forms (cf. (a), line 05: *keene* instead of *keine*, i.e. std. /ai/ ~ Berlin /e:/ and (b), line 06 *ganz* instead of std. *ganz* 'quite', i.e. syllable-initial g-fricativization). But again, we notice many clitic forms ((a): 02: *steckt 'n < steckt ein; verstehnse < verstehen Sie*; 03: *mit'm < mit dem*; (b): 01: *sehns < sehen sie*; 02: *müssense < müssen Sie*; 04: *seitm < seit dem*; 07: *aufm < auf dem*), cluster simplifications (*is < ist* 'is', consistently) and above all syntactic reductions by omission of front field pronouns, copula, and articles:

[Das ist] genau dieselbe Sache wie mit'm Stechschritt. (line a/10)

[This is] exactly the same thing as with the goosstep.

[Die] Leute glauben immer, [das] is Schikane. (line a/11)

[The] people²⁵ always think [this] is bullying.

[Das] is keene Schikane, [da] steckt auch tieferer Sinn drin, (line a/12)

[This] is no bullying, [there] is a deeper meaning in it as well

Unsereins – [wir sind eine] Offiziersfamilie seitm Siebenjährigen Krieg, (line b/03-04)

People like us – [we are a] family of officers since the Seven Years' War

[Der/mein] Großvater [war] noch [ein] gewöhnlicher Linieninfantrist (line b/5)

[My] Grandfather still [was an] ordinary line infantryman

The point is that within the range of vertically stratified features not every single deviation from the standard language has the same potential of becoming salient in a particular social style. Rather than indexing social class directly and univocally, the single phonological features of the Berlin substandard combine selectively with various other linguistic features and become part of a flexible and changing feature network which turns into an enregistered

²⁴I.e., he did not have the title 'von Schlettow' yet.

²⁵ German requires a definite article before *Leute* 'people'.

style, typical of a certain social persona. Two of these personae have been mentioned here as examples: ‘Piefke’ (as he was construed in the 1848 political debate) and the Prussian army officer (as construed from the end of the 19th century onward).

4. Conclusions

When compared to other European capitals, the city of Berlin shows at least two characteristics. The first is that the variety of German spoken in and associated with Berlin has never been considered the standard language of Germany, even during the time when the city was the capital of Germany. This is not a unique feature of the Berlin language variety; it is also true, for instance, of Rome and the Italian standard at least in pre-fascist times, which is usually ascribed to Tuscany.²⁶ The spoken German standard is construed by laypeople to be spoken in its purest form in the city of Hanover today (Blume 1987), which is located some 250 km west of Berlin (see Fig. 1). This ideological construction of Hanover goes back to the 19th century, when Hanover was part of Prussia (in 1866). Just like Berlin, the city had abandoned its Low German dialect and shifted to High German. When compared to Italy (Tuscany), the decentering away from the political capital to Hanover is remarkable as it has no historical basis whatsoever and cannot be explained as an ideological attempt to anchor the national standard in a high-prestige cultural period of the past (as in the case of Tuscany/Florence).

The second characteristic of Berlin among the European capitals is that the city has no dialectal basis today. The reason is not (as for instance in Paris) that the variety spoken in the capital was simply raised to the standard (since Berlin German was not considered the standard), but it is rooted in Berlin’s special relationship to Low German. Germans would not hesitate to locate Munich in the Bavarian dialect area, Hamburg in the Low German area, or Cologne in the Rhinish dialect area (‘Riparian’ in dialectological terms), and so would the inhabitants of these cities themselves. But Berlin? Some Berliners might call the Berlin vernacular a dialect, but most would not. But nobody would claim that Berlin is located in the Low German (or Brandenburg) dialect area, although historically speaking, this is an entirely correct statement.

The very brief outline of the sociolinguistic history of Berlin given in this chapter can explain these two (folk linguistic) characteristics. The absence of a dialect region into which Berlin could be included by lay speakers is easily explained by the very early shift from Low German to High German. This distinguishes Berlin both from the more southern cities (in the High German-speaking territories), for which no language shift was necessary, but also from

²⁶ The fascist Italian government tried to forge a unified Tuscany-Roman standard, with some success.

most of the northern cities where the shift occurred much later. While in a place like Hamburg, Low German was still spoken in the middle of the last century, the Berliners had given up this variety 100 years earlier. As a consequence, the link between the city vernacular and Low German was lost. In addition, the region of Brandenburg around Berlin took over the particular variant of High German spoken in the city, so that a dialectal Hinterland is lacking. Hence the specific sociolinguistic situation of Berlin with respect to the first event of long duration discussed here (the shift from Low to High German) can account for the dialectological peculiarity of the city.

With regard to the second event of long duration, the establishment of a spoken standard variety, Berlin also plays a special role: when shifting to High German, the Berliners also changed their spoken language, not only their language for writing. This was certainly due to the influence of the adjoining southern region of Upper Saxony whose prestigious German could be heard and copied by the Berliners directly, while other northern German regions had to rely on the written standard (together with their substrate dialects) when developing an oral norm. But this early Upper Saxon influence on the spoken language, which also included substrate features from Low German, also had a disadvantage: when a national norm of spoken standard German began to develop in the late 18th and 19th centuries against all regional ways of pronouncing the language, the Berlin vernacular, firmly established in the linguistic repertoire of the city and widely known all over Germany, worked against its prestige. The language of the city was stratified along a diaglossic continuum with the Berlin vernacular in its most basilectal variant (but not Low German!) as one extreme, and the new, non-regionalized standard variety as the other. But the unofficial prestige of the first was strong, and it was supported (increasingly toward the end of the 19th century) by anti-intellectual, militaristic and aristocratic circles in the capital (including the royals), who distanced themselves from the bourgeois intellectuals favoring the standard. Given this tension, Berlin offered no model for spoken standard German acceptable all over Germany; the centripetal linguistic forces were too strong.

In this chapter, I have also tried to make a more theoretical point on variation and change in the German language area. As the Berlin example shows, linguistic variables in German often have an astonishing temporal persistence. It might at first glance appear disconcerting that certain non-standard features of the Berlin vernacular as we know it today were already in use in the city 500 years ago and earlier. Such stability despite variability could easily be mis-interpreted as ‘variation without change’ in sociolinguistics. However, it would be wrong to apply such an interpretation to the Berlin case. A closer look reveals that

the features in question have repeatedly changed social meaning; in Coupland's sense, we are dealing with socio-linguistic change, even though the linguistic change never came to completion (Coupland 2014). Some of these sociolinguistic changes have been discussed in this chapter. For instance:

- Initial g-fricativization (a widespread process in Low German; see Lasch 1910: 300-302) is attested, but not frequent in the High German of the early period of the language shift (16th century, see ex. (1); cf. Lasch 1910: 165-166), and even in the 17th/18th century, it occurs only sporadically (see ex. (2)). Even though we cannot be sure whether initial written <g> was perhaps pronounced [j], at least in the early period, the feature obviously was not sufficiently salient to be marked in written texts, unless it occurred in hypercorrect forms (/g/ for etymological /j/). It is only in the 19th century that g-fricativization becomes a highly stereotypical phonological feature of the Berlin vernacular (see ex. (3) and (4)). At the same time, its meaning changed: whereas g-fricativization used to be just one among many 'interferences' in the context of the shift from Low German to High German, it later became an enregistered feature of certain styles, e.g. of the *Berliner Schnauze* and the Prussian officers' style.
- Stop realization of the High German affricates/fricatives (reflecting the Low German forms) is a highly salient feature that must have been indicative of a speaker's/writer's competence in High German in the context of the Low German > High German shift (see its distribution in the texts in Extr. (1)). From early on, we have evidence that some grammatical words have played a special role; particularly the 'irregular' behavior of the first-person pronoun High German *ich*/Low German *ik* seems to be very old. Over the centuries, only some few grammatical words have remained in which the old Low German stops are preserved (in addition to *ik*, the determiner/demonstrative *dit* /*det* ~ std.G. *das* still plays an important role in the present-day vernacular). Particularly in the case of *dit/det*, the development is not linear, but the old forms had already almost disappeared, just to re-emerge as a highly frequent feature of the Berlin vernacular in the 19th century (cf. Fig. 2), now a stereotypical lower (!) class marker (hence its absence from the Prussian officers' stereotype, and its only occasional use in the 1848 texts).
- A similar lexicalization process is observed in the vocalic variables. The High German diphthongal counterparts of the Low German long high monophthongs were one of the hardest obstacles in the process of language shift, but also highly indicative of successful mastery of the new prestige language. Hence, Berlin merchant families

emblematically relied on this variable to mark their belonging to the upper classes by even changing their names (cf. above, *Ryke* > *Reich(e)*, *Schum* > *Schaum*; cf. Lasch 1910: 219). Other, less skilled writers produced many hypercorrect forms, such as *aunder* for *unter* ‘under’ (Lasch 1910: 218; old short /u/ did not undergo the diphthongization), or combined the old monophthongs with High German consonants, as in <tziet>, cf. High German *Zeit* / Low German *tiid* ‘time’, or <bleibt>, cf. High German *bleibt*, Low German *bliivt* ‘remains, stays’ (Lasch 1910: 216; also 190, 193). At the end of this process, only the prefixes/grammatical words *auf* and *ein* retained the high vowel (as in *uf*, *ruff*, *rin*) – they were shortened and therefore did not diphthongize. At this point, the change stabilized (cf. ex. (3)) without carrying much social value afterwards.

- Quite differently, the most salient morpho-syntactic feature of Berlin, the conflation of accusative and dative case, a Low German substrate feature, has remained in the city vernacular from the 16th century up to today. From the 18th century onward, it was seen as a ‘problem’ and massively sanctioned by the grammarians and schoolteachers in the city; nevertheless, as ex. (2) shows, it was widespread in the colloquial language even of the high aristocracy. (Even around 1800, highest-ranking generals in the Prussian army confessed to confusing the cases, cf. Zimmermann 1987: 39.) In the 20th century, this feature was downgraded to a lower class stereotype.

These and many other sociolinguistic changes, so I have argued, cannot be attributed to the features themselves, but need to be seen in the context of the social styles in which they are embedded. A sociolinguistic history of Berlin needs to reconstruct these styles, only few of which have been sketched here. Their enregisterment and re-registerment is an ongoing process that continues to unfold today.

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