

German Dialects, Names & More

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As I was saying in my post, *Getting into German Dialects*, over the course of two millennia, German has developed a lot of dialects. How different are they? Let's look at the Lord's Prayer, the Vaterunser, in High German, in Platt, and in Swiss German. And there are dialects within dialects; Platt and Schwyzerdütsch differ from the standard language High German the most.

High German ~ Hochdeutsch

Vater unser im Himmel,
geheiligt werde Dein Name.
Dein Reich komme.
Dein Wille geschehe,
wie im Himmel so auf Erden.
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute.
Und vergib uns unsere Schuld,
wie auch wir vergeben unseren
Schuldigern.
Und führe uns nicht in Versuchung,
sondern erlöse uns von dem Bösen.
Denn dein ist das Reich und die
Kraft und die Herrlichkeit
in Ewigkeit.

Amen!

Plattdeutsch ~ Low German

Unse Vader in'n Himmel.
Laat hilligt warnn dien Nomen.
Laat komen dien Riek.
Laat warnn dienen Willen,
so as in'n Himmel, so ok op de Eerd.
Uns dääglich Broot giff uns vundaag.
Un vergiff uns unse Schuld
as wi de vergeven doot,
de an uns schüllig sünd.
Un laat uns nich versöcht warnn.
Maak du uns loos un frie vun dat Böse.
Denn dien is dat Riek un de Kraft
un de Herrlichkeit in Ewigkeit.

Amen.

a dialect of Switzerland

Iisa Ätti, Düü, waa Dd im Himel bischd
Diin Name wwei mmer heiligen
Diis Riich megi zöe-n is chun
Dii Wwille gscheeji uf Ärden asoo wie
im Himel
Gib is hiit iisers tägli Brood
Und vergib is iiser Sindi, gliich wie o
mier virtgäben dänen,
waa si an iis virsindeged hein
Und lach is nid in ene Falle trampen;
nein, erlees Düü iis vun allem Beesen
Diis ischd ja ds Riich, Chrafd und
Herrlechi, und das fir alli Eewwigkeit.
Aammen

Our Father, who art in ... good heavens, those hardly look anything alike. Well, if you really dig through it, you'll see related words and phrases...

As far as what they sound like- try YouTubes of the Vaterunser in various German dialects. Even different YouTubes of the same dialect will sound different- there aren't just dialects, or subdialects, but sub-sub-dialects. A skilled German linguist can often figure out which village a German comes from, because there's a noticeable difference just from one village to another.



How about some comparisons of specific words?

Even this example papers over major variations just within Platt and within Bavarian.

What does this do to genealogy? Mostly not too much, since a lot of family history is written by bureaucrats writing the standard language, and people generally felt they needed to write in standard High German. Dialect will still work its way in, though.

English	Low German	High German	Bavarian
salt and pepper	Salt un Peper "ZALT oonn PAY-per"	Salz und Pfeffer "zalts oont P-FEF-fer"	Soit und Pfefferr "soit oont pfefferr"
a pound of cake	een Pund vun Kaak "ayn POONNT foonn Kawk"	ein Pfund von Kuchen "ine P-FOONNT fawn KOO-khuhn"	n Pfund Kuachn "n ploont koo-akhn"
foot	Foot "FOAT"	Fuß "FOOS" like Foosball	Fuess "foo-ass"
one	een "EYN"	ein "INE"	oa "o-a"
two	twee "TVEY"	zwei "TSVY"	zwóa "tsvo-a"
three	drie "DREE"	drei "DRY"	drei "dreyy"
four	veer "FAIR"	vier "FEAR"	viar "fee-art"
five	fiif "FEEF"	fünf "FINE"	fiinf "finf"
six	ses "ZES"	sechs "ZEKS"	sechs "seks"
seven	söm "ZEEM"	sieben "ZEE-buhn"	siebn "seebn"
eight	acht "AHKHT"	acht "AHKHT"	acht "akht"
nine	negen "NAY-ghuhn"	neun "NOIN"	nein "nine"
ten	tein "TINE"	zehn "TSEYN"	zehn "tseyn"
water	Water "VAWuhr"	Wasser "VAH:suhr"	Wasser "VAW-serr"
he	he "hey"	er "air"	dr "drr"
that	dat "dot"	das "dahss"	dös "derss"
horse	Peer "pear"	Pferd, Ross	Bössl "rerssl"
He sees you	He seit ju slaopen	Ich sehe euch schlafen	Dr siakt önk
sleeping	"hey zite you slawpm"	"ih Y ZEY-uh Y oih Y shlaafen"	"drr see-ahkt ernk roo-ass-in"

The same profession or name can come out very differently in the various dialects:

An ancestor named for their profession as a butcher might be named:

Metzger, Fleischer, Fleischhacker, Fleischhauer, Fleischmann, Schlachter. And that's before it potentially gets anglicized into Slaughter, Fleisher, Fletcher and more.

Here are some first at last names showing just a part of how much variation there is:

<u>High German</u>	<u>North German</u>	<u>Central German</u>	<u>South German</u>
Georg	Jürgen, Jörgen	Georg	Georg
Anna, Anne	Anke, Anneke	Anne	Annerl
Stein	Steen	Stein	Stein, Stain
Heinrich	Hinnerk, Hinrich	Heinrich	Heinrich, Hein, Heinerl
Straube	Struwe, Struve	Straub, Strobel	Straub
Krüger	Kröger Krüger	Wirt	Wird
Müller	Möller	Müller	Müller

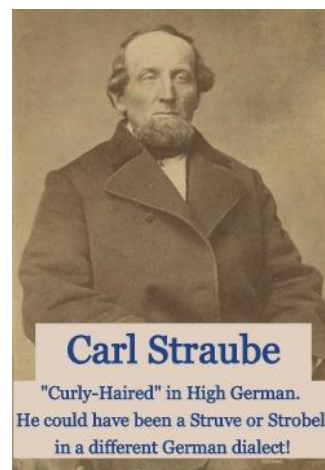
The word that High German knows as *straube* ("shtraobuh") means 'curly-haired', and it shows up as a last name, but it varies by region:

North Germany has it with a v sound: *Struve*, *Struwe*, *Struwevolt*, *Struveke* ("stroovuh") etc.

Central Germany and South Germany have *Straube* or *Strobel*, even *Strube*.

There's just that much variation from region to region.

Going back a few centuries, records may be kept in Latin, so a *Georg Krüger* may be Latinized into *Georgius Tabernarius*



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