

GERMANY ELEVEN

Speaker is female, born in 1975. At the time of recording she worked as an actor. She had completed high school, then studied psychology for two semesters at university.

She was born and raised in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, and describes herself as German with Venezuelan and Russian ancestry. Her first language is German. She also speaks Spanish and understands Italian. She began acquiring English at age 11 or 12 in Germany, where she had one hour per week of instruction by German teachers. She taught herself to read English as an adult, while travelling in Asia. She has lived in Hong Kong and travelled to Bangkok and other places in East and South Asia over the course of a year and a half. Other places lived include Spain (Majorca; also Nerja, Málaga; five years); Austria (Ischgl, Paznauntal (Tyrol); three years); Canada (six months), plus briefer stays in many other places. At the time of recording, she had lived in the USA (Los Angeles, Miami, and New York City) for nearly one year, during which she returned to Germany fairly often for brief periods.

TRANSCRIPTION OF UNSCRIPTED SPEECH:

[*How old were you when you started to learn English?*]

I think ... Ah *ja*— we had it, oh, when ... I was, I don't know, in the ... fifth grade. So, at seven you come to school, I will be oh, eleven, twelve, something like that? But this is just one hour a week, and I have to be honest, you didn't learn anything, because everybody? who has the *school* English, don't remember any, and uh on something. Yeah, they* were German, and they probably sound worse than you know. And, um, yeah, I started to really to to *learn* English, uh, when I went to Asia, read a lot of books, but *there* was a problem that they all had the *Asian* ... accent. Then I was long time in South Africa, and there had the South African ... [accent]. And uh, *ja* — I get my whole life confused with a lot of accents. I speak Spanish, then I had three years Italian in school? But I, uh, don't speak it any more, because I mix it with Spanish when I start to learn Spanish. I still understand it? Yeah, and ... that's it.

* The speaker's teachers.

READING IN GERMAN:

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind deine Blätter!
Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit,
Nein, auch im Winter, wenn es
schneit.
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind deine Blätter!

O fir tree, o fir tree!
How steadfast are your leaves!
You're green not only in the
summertime,
No, also in winter, when it snows.
O fir tree, o fir tree,
How steadfast are your leaves!

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!
Wie oft hat nicht zur Weihnachtszeit
Ein Baum von dir mich hoch erfreut!
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!

O fir tree, o fir tree!
You please me very much!
How often has not a tree like you*
delighted me at Christmastime!
O fir tree, o fir tree!
You please me very much!

* Literally: "A tree of yours" or "One of your trees."

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Dein Kleid will mich was lehren:
Die Hoffnung und Beständigkeit
Gibt Trost und Kraft zu jeder Zeit.
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum!
Das soll dein Kleid mich lehren.

O fir tree, o fir tree
Your dress would teach me
something:
Hope and constancy
give comfort and strength at any
time.
O fir tree, o fir tree!
That's what your dress should teach
me.

English translation by Kathie Coblentz.

FEATURES OF SPEAKER'S ACCENT:

Occasional errors in English syllable stress, such as emphasis on first syllable of *superb*, second syllable of *lunatic*, second syllable of *efforts*, first syllable of *penicillin*.

Occasional errors in English vowel length, as in *fleece*: [fli:s] instead of [fliːs]; *can't*: [kæːnt] instead of [kænt].

Occasional raising of [æ], as in *a lot of accents* ['eksənts].

Occasional lowering of [ɛ], as in *effective* [r'fæktrɪf].

Words in the BATH lexical set (aka the “Ask list”) usually pronounced with [æ] but occasionally with [ɑ].

Inconsistent rhoticity; r-colored vowel [æ, ə] before consonants and silences is sometimes absent, and sometimes very hard: *That area was much nearer* ['niəɹə] *for* [fə] *her* [hɜːɹ], *and more* [mɔə] *to her* [hə] *liking*.

Pronunciation of consonant /r/ before vowels is inconsistent. Sometimes it is a labialized alveolar approximant [ɹʷ], sometimes an alveolar approximant without labialization [ɹ]: *Mary Harrison* ['mæɹɪˈhæɹɪsən]. Sometimes it is a uvular approximant: *grade* [gɹɛɹɪ], which is closer to the speaker's pronunciation of consonant /r/ in German (uvular trill [R]).

Devoicing of voiced plosives, fricatives, and affricates, especially in word-final position: *job* [dʒɔp], *porridge* ['pɔɹɪʃ]; *disease* [drɪˈsiːs], *of* [ʌf].

Reversal or confusion of [v] with [w], and vice versa: *vet* [wɛt]; *working* ['vʷɜːkɪŋ]. (Per above, however, /v/ in word-final position is devoiced.)

Dentalization of /t, d, n, s, z/ [t̪, d̪, n̪, s̪, z̪].

[θ, ð] frequently pronounced as dental stops [t̪, d̪], usually in word-initial position; also as [s, z], usually in word-final position.

/l/ is clear [l] in all environments.

Occasional use of high rising intonation in closed statements (High Rising Terminal (HRT), aka *up-speak*, *up-talk*, or, in the USA, *valley-talk*), so that many of her declarative sentences sound like questions (indicated here with a question mark (?)). This appears to be carried over from her intonation pattern in German.

German word order: *I get my whole life confused with a lot of accents* rather than *I've been confused by a lot of accents my whole life*.

Confusion of verb tenses, occasional mistakes in subject-predicate agreement: *I will be* instead of *I would have been*; *everybody don't*.

Some of the pronunciation errors in the reading of “Comma Gets a Cure” may be attributable to unfamiliarity with the words in question, generally in print, sometimes altogether. For example: *veterinary*, *superb*, *lunatic*, *ether*, *efforts*, *wiped*, *course*, *millionaire*. There were also a number of reading errors almost certainly fostered by haste and/or anxiety.

Yew-hew merger in *huge* [ju:dʒ].

English ['ɪŋlɪʃ] instead of ['ɪŋɡlɪʃ].

I have to be honest [æv, 'hɒnɪs].

Running time: 05.08

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