

BEYOND SCHMUTZ: THE CURSES, SLANG, AND STREET LINGO  
YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN YOU SPEAK DEUTSCH

TALK DIRTY

# GERMAN

ALEXIS MUNIER & KARIN EBERHARDT



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**GERMAN**  
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# Contents



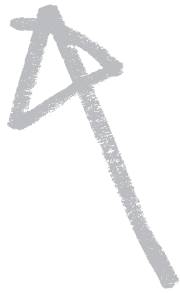
v	Disclaimer
v	Acknowledgments
v	Introduction
1	CHAPTER ONE What's That Strange Language?
10	CHAPTER TWO Getting Our Feet Wet
19	CHAPTER THREE Smart, Simple, or Just Plain Bure
26	CHAPTER FOUR Words in Their Hands and Feet
34	CHAPTER FIVE A Question of Time
41	CHAPTER SIX Food, Culture, and Luck
48	CHAPTER SEVEN Germany's "ic" God
57	CHAPTER EIGHT Lectures on You, Us, and Down
63	CHAPTER NINE Yes, You Do Need an Education
72	CHAPTER TEN Take Your Money Over

79	CHAPTER ELEVEN	The Wrong Side of the Law
90	CHAPTER TWELVE	Following Doctors' Orders
96	CHAPTER THIRTEEN	Looking for Trouble and Keeping the Peace
105	CHAPTER FOURTEEN	Life is a Cabaret, Beer Garden, or Disco
116	CHAPTER FIFTEEN	Forbidden Pleasures
125	CHAPTER SIXTEEN	S/He's Got the Look
140	CHAPTER 17	Looks Aren't Everything
147	CHAPTER 18	Love Is a Wonderful Thing
158	CHAPTER 19	Partners and Their Private Parts
174	CHAPTER 20	Dirty, Dirtier, and Dirtiest German
184		Bibliography

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**To my husband Matt,**  
who always has the right words for me.  
—Karin Eberhardt

**To my husband Emmanuel,**  
who should watch his words more carefully.  
—Alexis Munier



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FIRST CLASS



## INTRODUCTION

Oh, Deutsch!—while French may be considered the language of love and Spanish deemed so many the future of the United States, this headfirst Spanish has its merits as well. Not just a one-trick pony, Deutsch has been influencing Europe for centuries. Used in one form or another in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and in parts of Denmark, France, Belgium, and Italy, it is also the most widely spoken second language in the majority of Eastern Europe.

Some may stereotype German as harsh and unpleasant, but those who are right to know better are acutely aware of its logical, yet oddly romantic nature. After all, this language gave birth to romanticism, inspiring poetic and musical genius in greats like Goethe, Heine, and Brahms. Then again, it is so shared, the hearts and minds of Billie Holiday and the Pope himself.

But how to reconcile traditional Hochdeutsch with the current state of the German tongue? Germany's own regional dialects and incomprehensible derivatives in Switzerland and Austria may leave you wondering if you have had one too many bites of *Beifloazen* or are just a plain old *Schneekopf*. No fear—*Talk Dirty: German* is here to give you a basic introduction into the netherworlds (and lesser regions) of the language you're likely to hear in the German-speaking world. Whether seducing a *Adelensee* in München or a *Kein Kahr*, your rate of success can only increase with this grilling (and) guide.







## CHAPTER ONE

*Man spricht kein Deutsch!*

# What's That Strange Language?

Germany as a country did not exist until 1871, so it's understandable that a unified German language struggled before that time. Made up of various lands, Germany has long been home to a variety of regional dialects. The first steps toward cementing a German language were taken by Martin Luther. Not Dr. King, but his ideas about German parables. In John's New and Old Testaments (translations of 1522 and 1534), Martin Luther used Sächsische, spoken in the region of Saxony, which was the most widely understood dialect at that time. To help the good book reach as many Sächsische farmers as possible, Luther originally had a long list of vocabulary words that were translated into different regional dialects. Even today, German pronunciation varies from region to region—which is why a tourist from Hamburg might have difficulties understanding what those beer-guzzling Bavarians are talking about at Oktoberfest.

Did you know that Goldilocks and the Three Little Pigs also played an important role in the creation of modern German? We . . .

not exactly, but the Brothers Grimm, famously associated with fairy tales, also published a dictionary, which was the most complete guide to German available. Then, in the twentieth century, the Duden Handbook took over as the respected guardian of the German language. More recently, a controversial spelling reform was introduced in the mid-1990s. The controversy focused on whether a language is an unchangeable cultural identity or rather a living, breathing, and constantly changing tool for communication. After a decade of bickering fueled by peppermint *Schnapps* and *Lëbkuchen*, parliament finally approved the reform. While the new spelling rules are easier for international use, the authors bemoan the loss of the cute little umlauts (ö,ä,ü) and the superbly statuesque ess-laut (ß).

### **Foreign Influences in German**

German is by no means pure; over the years it has been influenced by many different languages, including French, Latin, Greek, and most recently English and Turkish.

### **French vs English in German**

A very common phrase still in use is: *Wie Gott in Frankreich leben*, literally “to live like God in France,” or to live in the lap of luxury. Since when did the French have things so good, you may ask yourself. If that’s the case, be sure to check out *Talk Dirty: French* for all the answers.

While the French once had a strong influence on the Germans, today French is at best *passé*—if not “out” completely. German used to be full of French expressions (such as the idiom *Wie Gott in Frankreich leben*), but this was before ridiculous French rockers like Johnny Hallyday and Claude François destroyed Germany’s faith in their neighboring nation. Thankfully, the Germans came to their

senses when seduced by the likes of Britney Spears and Coca-Cola. But when God still lived in France, German *savoir vivre* hit a high note; today's American-influenced *Lifestyle* falls a bit flat. *Rendez-vous* have been replaced by the *Date*, and caviar and champagne *Fêten* have given way to the less glamorous *Pizza Party*.

## Denglisch

*Denglisch*, a combination of the words *Deutsch* and *Englisch*, is a form of slang currently in use in all of the German-speaking world. It mixes German and English willy-nilly, making for strange syntax and grammar. While France has a high commission to develop new French words to replace imported American terms, Germany has no such body . . . yet.

### **Germanization of English Words**

As it has no set of grammar rules, *Denglisch* verbs run the gamut from traditional German-type conjugations to decidedly American ones (note the unusual past tense and its two variations):

#### **downloaden**

to download

**Ich habe letzte Woche einen kostenlosen Pornofilm gedownloadet, aber meine Frau hat ihn gelöscht.**

*I downloaded a free porno last week but my wife deleted it.*

#### **chillen**

to chill

**Halt einfach den Mund und chille, Mann!**

*Just shut up and chill, man!*

### **More on Grammar**

*Denglisch* also features English usage that is incorrect in German. As an example, some prepositions have changed to reflect their English equivalents:

**TBG** Im Jahre 1990 fiel die Berliner Mauer.

**DG** In 1990 fiel die Berliner Mauer.

*The Berlin Wall fell in 1990.*

### **Mixed Bag**

A sentence in *Denglisch* can often be created simply by stringing English and German words together:

**TBG** Mein toller Liebhaber entwirft für seine Firma Kleidung für Alleinstehende und leitet nebenbei die Firmenmannschaft.

**DG** Mein cooler Lover designt für seine Firma Outfits für Singles und managt nebenbei das Firmenteam.

*My cool lover designs outfits for singles for his company and also manages the company team.*

**TBG** Ich habe keine Ahnung.

**DG** I have keine Idee.

*I have no idea.*

**TBG** Ich brauche neue Kleidung, lass uns einkaufen gehen.

**DG** Ich brauche neue Outfits, lass uns shoppen gehen.

*I need new clothes; let's go shopping.*

Oftentimes, *Denglisch* speakers will substitute a German word with the English equivalent:

**TBG** Hey, Klaus ist heute so gut gekleidet, ich wette er hat später eine Verabredung.

**DG** Hey, Klaus ist heute so dressed-up, ich wette er hat später ein Date.

*Hey, Klaus is so dressed-up today, I bet he has a date later.*

**TBG** Der Verkaufsschlager war einfach unglaublich.

**DG** Der Bestseller war einfach unbelievable.

*The bestseller was simply unbelievable.*

**TBG** Der Kundin wurde eine gründliche Veränderung und ein neues Aussehen versprochen.

**DG** Der Kundin wurde ein komplettes Make-over und ein neuer Look versprochen.

*The customer was promised a complete makeover and a new look.*

Perhaps the fall of the dollar and the lessening of U.S. influence in the world will lead to a reduction of English words in the German business sphere. But today English sneaks its way into almost all commercial products and services.

While using *Deutsche Telekom*, don't forget that there are *Sunshine* and *Moonshine-Tarife*. You will pay more for the sunshine. Instead, you may want to make a *City Call* which is cheaper than long distance.

If you have a letter to mail, you'll go to the *Deutsche Post*, where you can do some *One Stop Shopping*, and one of your stops will be at the *Postage Point* to get your stamps.

When traveling by train, make sure you find the *Service Points* in the Bahnhof. You can purchase a *City Express Ticket* and then go to a *Meeting Point* or relax in a *DB (Deutsche Bahn)-Lounge* while waiting for your ICE (*InterCityExpress*).

After you arrive at your destination, you may want to get a *Coffee-to-go* (used instead of the German *Kaffee zum Mitnehmen*). But if you have enough time you can find a bar that has a *Happy Hour* (rather than the correct *Blaue Stunde*) or a restaurant with an *All-You-Can-Eat Buffet*.

To do all of the aforementioned things you'll need some money, so you better head to the bank and talk to your *Account-Betreuer*.

Here is a list of German slang words that sound English but don't quite mean what you might think they should:

<b>German Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b><i>Baracke, f.</i></b>	<b>hut, shed, run-down house</b>
<b><i>Billion, f.</i></b>	<b>trillion</b>
<b><i>Body-Bag, f.</i></b>	<b>backpack</b>
<b><i>Chef, m.</i></b>	<b>boss</b>
<b><i>down/uploaden</i></b>	<b>to down/upload</b>
<b><i>Dressman, m.</i></b>	<b>male model</b>
<b><i>Evergreen, m.</i></b>	<b>golden oldie</b>
<b><i>Handy, n.</i></b>	<b>mobile phone</b>
<b><i>jobben</i></b>	<b>to do short-term work, to have a summer job</b>
<b><i>mobbing</i></b>	<b>bullying</b>
<b><i>Oldtimer, m.</i></b>	<b>vintage or classic car, or aircraft</b>
<b><i>Präservativ, n.</i></b>	<b>condom</b>

<b>German Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Shooting, n.</b>	<b>photo shoot</b>
<b>Showmaster, m.</b>	<b>TV show host</b>
<b>Slip, m.</b>	<b>briefs, panties</b>
<b>Smoking, m.</b>	<b>tuxedo, dinner jacket</b>
<b>Spleen, m.</b>	<b>tic</b>
<b>String, m.</b>	<b>thong</b>
<b>trampen</b>	<b>hitchhiking</b>

## ***Kanak Sprak*: Turkish Takeover Is Not Limited to Kebabs Alone**

*Kanak Sprak* is a German ethnolect created by Turkish youth in the late 1980s. This 'sociolect' is named for the book *Kanak Sprak* (1995) by German-Turkish author Feridun Zaimoglu who introduced readers to a unique combination of German and Turkish slang. Its name comes from the Turkish word *Kanake*, which was originally an insult for Turks, and *Sprach*, talk. Minorities and immigrants now embrace the word *Kanake*, comparable to some African Americans using the word "niggah."

*Kanak Sprak* is gaining in popularity, especially among urban youth, who use it to express mostly sex terms, greetings, insults, and feelings.

Sometimes *Kanak Sprak* is just a simple Turkish word that takes the place of a German one:

### ***Ian, Turkey***

man/dude

**Tam tschuki Ian! (from the Turkish *Tamam cok iyi Ian!*)**

*Pretty damn cool, man!*



Often, though, *Kanak Sprak* has its own grammar and spelling rules, which are nearly impossible to predict. Prepositions and articles are seldom used, and schwas (the final 'e'), especially in first-person conjugations, are dropped:

**TBG** Ich gehe zum Bahnhof.

**DG** Isch geh Bahnhof.

*I'm going to the train station.*

Other times, *Kanak Sprak* respells German words the way they sound when pronounced. Often, *oda was* (TBG *oder was*), "or what," is added at the end of a phrase:

**TBG** Hast Du Probleme? Oder bist Du ein Spinner?

**DG** Was hast du für Problem? Bissu Spinna oda was?

*You gotta problem? Are you stupid or what?*

## Austrian and Swiss German—The Other Two German Languages

When you arrive in Switzerland or Austria, you might be in for a shock if you hope to speak your high school German here. Although *Hochdeutsch* appears in all written forms of the language (i.e. newspapers, signs, menus) you may not grasp what these folks in *Lederhosen* are saying, even if your German is pretty good. Don't worry, even Germans have a hard time understanding the Austrians and the Swiss. When Swiss or Austrians speak in their native dialect, the grammar, intonation, and even the vocabulary are different. No wonder Germans watch Swiss or Austrians movies either dubbed or with subtitles. Because these dialects are not slang

into German as, we won't do it to be so an' Aus' an' here. We can't, knowst, per' me' us, a few examples of our A'nti-Engl'ige

**Piefke, m., Austria**

Kraut, Heil'ig, Jerry

Piefke, Spaghettifresser und Schlitzauge sind alles doofe Schimpfwörter für Leute eines anderen Landes.

*Meat, pasta, and thick are all stupid insults and derogatory terms for people from other countries*

Austrians use the word Piefke as a disparaging term for a German - somewhat like the African use of griot for an African. Even in Hochdeutsch, Piefke is a "jargonous term," so it is not a word to be used lightly. Fin Müller's Piefke is "a little jargonisch."



**Gopfertami, Switzerland (Barnese)**

Goddeh mit, lit. God damn me!

"Gopfertami!" riel sie aus.

"Goddamn it!" she cried.

**Schaeffækku, m., Switzerland**

fuck 13 m.o.m., lit. s'fess's cock

Haut dini Klappa, du huere Schaeffækku!

Shut your hole, you fucking whore!



## CHAPTER TWO

*Willkommen!*

# Getting Off on the Right Foot

About a quarter of a billion of the United States, and not all of them, claim at least partial German ancestry. But lucky enough, it was a German who introduced the United States to Germany once again in the mid-1960s. When President John F. Kennedy made his famous speech in West Berlin, he eschewed “Ich bin ein Berliner” (though his speechwriter had known that a *Berliner* is a resident of the city; famous enough its area code). President Kennedy should have simply stated: “Ich bin ein *Amerikaner*!”

Nevertheless, introducing yourself presents another obstacle. In Germany, they may find you persistent in offense when claiming to be *Amerikaner*. They’ll immediately point out that America is a actually two separate continents, north and south, and not a country. Rather than getting offended, we suggest just chucking and referring them that *Amerikaner* is the German word for a U.S. citizen. When they come up with a new term, you’ll be happy to use it.

But before the most important thing to watch when introducing yourself in Germany is your choice of formal or informal language.

**DU and SIE:**

Many languages have formal and informal forms of address, but the Germans are, of course, *sozialer gründer*, "social" along these lines. Always use the formal Sie unless your conversation partner suggests to use the informal du. In business situations, men and women are always referred to as Herr and Frau.



The formal form of address is not just limited to business settings. Even after twenty years, German neighbors might still *siezen* each other. Although *engstirnig* is changing with the younger folk, a nice tradition remains: in order to officially drop the Sie and start using the informal du, two people toast each other (of course with beer) and cross the path to call each other *du*, and by their first names.

## Meet the Family

**meine Alten, pl**

my parents; t. my old ones

Meine Alten gehen mir derzeit ganz schön auf den Sack.

My parents are really getting on my nerves these days.

**Kohlenbeschafter, pl**

parents; t. coal diggers

Horst kann nicht mit uns ins Kino kommen. Seine Kohlenbeschafter sind total geizig.

Horst can't come with us to the movies. His parents are totally stingy.

**nicht von schlechten Eltern sein**

to be not half bad; lit. not from bad parents

**Sein Englisch ist nicht von schlechten Eltern.**

*His English isn't half bad.*

**Hotel Mama, n.**

home; lit. Hotel Mother

**Er wohnt noch immer im Hotel Mama, weil's billiger und bequemer ist.**

*He's still living at home because it is cheaper and easier.*

**Muttersöhnchen, n.**

mama's boy, lit. mother's little son

**Wie kannst du nur mit Christian gehen? Der ist das totale Muttersöhnchen.**

*How can you date Christian? He's a total mama's boy.*

**Kniebeißer, pl.**

rugrats; lit. knee biters

**Dirk: "Gestern wollte sich doch glatt so ein Kniebeißer an der Kinokasse vordrängeln." Holger: "Was die sich rausnehmen."**

*Dirk: "Yesterday this little rugrat tried to jump the line at the movies." Holger: "The nerve."*

**Bälger, pl.**

kids

**Die Bälger heutzutage haben überhaupt keinen Respekt mehr vor Erwachsenen.**

*Kids today have no respect for their elders anymore.*

**Plagen, pl.**

children; lit. troubles

**"Schau doch mal nach, was die Plagen machen."**

*"Can you check what the children are up to?"*

**Nesthäkchen, n.**

baby of the family, nestling

**Sonja ist das Nesthäkchen in der Familie und wird von allen verwöhnt.**

*Sonja is the baby of the family and is spoiled by everyone.*

**Sohnemann, m.**

junior; lit. son-man

**Tag, Frau Meier, wie geht's dem Sohnemann?**

*Hello Ms. Meier, how's your son?*

**Halbstarken, pl.**

adolescent; lit. half-strongs

**Du führst dich auf wie ein Halbstarker. Werd mal erwachsen.**

*You are acting like a real adolescent. Grow up.*

**Krampfadergeschwader, n.**

senior citizens; lit. varicose vein brigade

**Da hat mir doch glatt jemand vom Krampfadergeschwader erzählen wollen, ich könnte hier nicht rauchen.**

*One of these old farts tried to tell me I couldn't smoke here.*

**grufties, pl.**

old people; lit. people living in a vault

**Manche Grufties haben noch ganz gute Ideen.**

*Some old people still come up with good ideas.*

**Angetrauten, pl.**

the in-laws

**Ich komme gut mit meinen Angetrauten klar.**

*I get along fine with my in-laws.*

**Lesterschwein, n.**

sister act ally 'Schwester ein', titled

Klaus, darf ich vorstellen: mein Lesterschwein.

Klaus, darf my sister.

**Lebensabschnittsgefürte, m.;**

**Lebensabschnittsgefährtin, f.**

partner + stage-of-life partner

Sie ist seit zwei Jahren meine Lebensabschnittsgefährtin.

She's been my partner for two years now



It really means, usually, when someone tend to change their partners so often as they change their underwear. A Lebensabschnittsgefährtin is a long-term partner who accompanies one for just a certain stage of one's life. However, should you later realize so might your choice of word too

**Gartenerpredigt halten, f.**

to give someone a lecture about smoking

Nachdem mein Vater mich beim Rauchen erwischt, hat er mir eine Gartenerpredigt gehalten.

After my father caught me smoking, he'd given me a

**Putzimmel, m.**

the (husb) + the (wife) + the (ing)

Meine Frau zu Hause hat den Putzimmel, da ist nichts und niemand vor ihr sicher.

My wife at home catches her, so that she's always got something for

**Drachenfutter, n.**

peace offerings or make-up gifts; lit. dragon fodder

**Rosen und Pralinen sind geeignetes Drachenfutter.**

*Roses and chocolates are good make-up gifts.*

**Ex, m./f.**

ex-partner

**Mein Ex hat mich gestern angerufen.**

*My ex called me yesterday.*

**Beziehungskiste, f.**

friendship/relationship; lit. relationship box

**In ihrer Beziehungskiste krachte es gewaltig!**

*They had a serious relationship crisis!*

**Macker, m.**

boyfriend, originally derived from *Macher*=maker, doer

**Das ist ihr neuer Macker.**

*That's her new boyfriend.*

**Scheich, m.**

boyfriend; lit. sheik

**Carols Scheich ist voll der Angeber.**

*Carol's boyfriend is a real showoff.*

**Ische, f.**

girlfriend; lit. gal

**Die Ische vom Stefan könnte mir auch gefallen.**

*I wouldn't say no to Stefan's girlfriend.*

**Auserkorene, f.**

girlfriend, fiancée; lit. the chosen one

**Hast Du schon die Auserkorene von deinem Bruder kennengelernt?**

*Have you met your brother's girlfriend yet?*



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