Dialect as an Educational and Social Challenge

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1. A SHORT HISTORICAL NOTE

I will not deal here with the problems of minority languages, or their speakers, which certainly are of great importance for the Basque region, but only with problems which arise from variational diversity within one and the same language, especially problems of dialect speakers as compared to the speakers of the "standard variety" – as I prefer to say instead of "standard language." By "dialect" I mean 'regional dialect', i.e. regional non-standard variety; the specification as "regional" does, however, not preclude social significance. I will draw heavily on my studies in the German-speaking countries but try to show problems and to raise questions which are of general relevance. There seem to have been dialect-related social and educational problems for as long as standard varieties have existed, or as they have been used in school as the medium of instruction and taught as subjects in their own right.

Dialect-related problems vary depending on the linguistic distance between the dialects and the standard variety, for one thing. Thus

in the German language area, educational and social dialect problems have been more severe towards the south and the north, since the dialects there differ more from standard German than in the central areas. Standard German is mainly derived from East-Middle German dialects, though there have been massive incorporations from elsewhere, particularly from the southeast, which was the imperial centre for centuries. The Low German areas in the north suffered particularly from having to acquire and to use a standard variety very different from their own. The extent of their linguistic distance from standard German has led to the Low German dialects being characterised as "pseudodialectalised" into German (i.e. High German) (Kloos 1978), since from a purely linguistic point of view they could be considered as belonging to an entirely different language (Low German vis-à-vis High German). Accordingly, the Basque dialects should be distinguished according to their linguistic distance from Standard Basque. Bizkaia Basque may develop a similar relation to the standard variety "euskara batúa" as did Low German to High German.

Because of the enormous difficulties that standard German (which is High German) poses for speakers of Low German, there have been particularly radical suggestions for the solution of problems. For example, the language policy of the French Revolutionaries influenced Ludolf Wienbarg (1834) to propose the eradication of all Low German dialects, in order to enable the underprivileged classes of the population to actively participate in political life. Though Wienbarg's suggestions are often ridiculed, they have, in fact, become a reality insofar as the Low German dialects have receded to such an extent that they now cause fewer school problems than the High German dialects. While the Low German dialects have largely disappeared, the High German dialects are still very much alive, especially in the south of the German language area. The example of the Low German dialects shows that social and school difficul-

ties can result in dialect "death" which can be seen as one way of problem solving. If such a solution should be unwelcome, language planning, or rather variety planning, and variety politics would have to conceive other possibilites.

Wienbarg's objectives, like those of the French revolutionaries, were radicalisations of earlier pedagogical views, which need to be seen within the prevailing intellectual climate of the time, that of philosophical enlightenment. Language cultivation was favoured, of which standardisation was one aspect; so, too, was the rigorous imposition of the "cultivated" variety on the whole population. A very crude but useful dichotomy can be made between views such as these, and the views of the Romantics, who admired 'original' (i.e. 'uncultivated') varieties. One finds the Romantic view, for example, in Jacob Grimm's writings. Later on, attempts have become prevalent to reconcile both views by stressing that the teaching of the standard variety should be based on the child's dialect, without attempting to eradicate it.

Formulated so vaguely, this idea allows, however, a wide range of variation in practice, particularly with regard to which language skills are taught to which pupils. The socially disadvantaged children have often been taught only rudimentary skills in the standard variety, whereas the privileged classes could acquire a comprehensive mastery. Thus, members of different social classes have become equipped very differently for linguistic requirements in later life. In most societies, the solid mastery of the standard variety is a prerequisite of holding any kind of leading professional position.

The educational problems faced by dialect speakers were discussed, in Germany and elsewhere, in numerous publications up to the 1930s, with the main – and often the only – emphasis being on spelling. In Nazi-Germany, or fascist Italy, these problems were, howe-

ver, no longer mentioned in educational publications, presumably because social differentiation, of which inevitably they are a part, was a taboo subject (see, for a more detailed analysis, Ammon [1972] 1973: 131-42). In Spain under Franco they could not be treated openly either for obvious reasons.

2. REDISCOVERY OF THE PROBLEM

A general awareness of social discrimination re-emerged during the world-wide students' revolt of the late 1960s, and this led to a rediscovery of the educational problems encountered by dialect speakers. Basil Bernstein's (1971-75, for example), the British educational scholar's, theory of "elaborated" and "restricted codes" was very influential at that time, and this further stimulated an interest in the problems. A restricted code is, of course, quite different in nature from a regional dialect, one reason being that it can be used both by dialect speakers and by speakers of the standard variety. A restricted code is, roughly speaking, a firm habit of implicit language use that is only fully comprehensible to members of the social in-group or multiplex network. Nevertheless, parallels were drawn between dialects and restricted codes. It was felt that both kinds of "codes" placed limitations on the range of verbal activities of the lower class, albeit in different ways. This perspective, which was based on an essentially Marxist view of society, also made people aware of the verbal handicaps that the lower classes might have outside school. They were barred, it seemed, from effective political action in public life because they lacked the necessary verbal skills in the standard variety. Some controversial solutions were suggested: for example, that the lower classes should make their own varieties the medium of public political discourse and that they should endeavour to have them

accepted as valid varieties in the schools. Another, equally controversial suggestion was that the lower classes should be taught the standard variety and an elaborated code, in order to be able to militate for their interests more effectively: it was thought that their regional dialects would not allow efficient transregional communication and that their restricted codes would prevent them from being sufficiently explicit in the presentation of their ideas. Marx' own elaborate writings in the standard variety were given as an example of what was required. There were, of course, numerous other opinions that can be seen as falling between the two poles of this crude dichotomy.

Various attempts were made to refine these views. Amongst these attempts were some empirical investigations in Germany of the extent to which dialect speakers might be disadvantaged in important domains of society, particularly in school. Other domains have not yet been studied in any detail. For some decades there had been virtually no publications on this topic; but suddenly several appeared in Germany in the same year (Ammon [1972] 1973; Hasselberg 1972; Löffler 1972). They triggered, in their turn, further theoretical studies on the educational problems of dialect speakers, as well as a number of practical suggestions and educational programmes designed to overcome the problems. Quite similar research on the school problems of dialect speakers took place in Italy (see, for instance, Grassi 1987) and, later on, in the Netherlands (cf. Stijnen/Vallen 1989), but German and Dutch scholars hardly took notice of their Italian colleagues' parallel endeavours, and vice versa.

3. SOME HINTS AT DEFINING AND MEASURING DIALECTAL SPEECH

For empirical investigations into the social or educational pro-

blems of dialect speakers, the reliable and valid definition of dialectal speech and standard speech has been a challenge. A definition which simply follows the speakers' views is problematic, since these views can diverge considerably between individuals. A more objective basis seems to be more useful. One possibility is the normative difference between both types of varieties. The standard forms, roughly speaking, are legitimately prescribed by certain authorities (for example, teachers) to certain subjects (for example, pupils) in certain formal situations (like in school), whereas the non-standard forms are not – though the non-standard forms may be used by anyone without problems in other, informal situations (for a fuller discussion, see Ammon, 1995: 73-88). As a rule, the standard forms are codified in authoritative dictionaries or grammars. In this case, they can be identified as such in these volumes, i.e. in their most recent editions, in that they are listed there but are not explicitly marked as non-standard. It has to be considered, however, that codifications of "living" languages are always incomplete.

Further problems arise with related terms that are frequently used, such as "moderate dialect" or "broad dialect." They refer to the continuum between dialect and standard, as it exists in many cases, whose extremes are sometimes referred to as "pure dialect" or "pure standard." There is no doubt that adjectives such as "broad" or "moderate" involve implicit value judgements, a fact which becomes clear when one tries to apply them in a similar way to standard speech – for one does not speak of "moderate standard" or "broad standard." Neutral substitutes, however, cannot easily be found. A further problem is that the vagueness of the terms makes them inadequate when precision is needed. It is possible, however, to make the terms more precise, defining specific points in the continuum between pure dialect and pure standard speech. I have called such points "dialect-standard levels (DS levels)".

There are various methods to measure the DS levels of utterances, one of which I have developed myself (cf. Ammon 1973; 1998). Briefly, this method consists of analysing the infinite number of gradations that could be made on the continuum between pure dialect and pure standard speech in the sum total of utterances, or texts, into a finite number of variables of single linguistic units (phonemes, morphemes, words or idioms, the word order in phrases, and so on). In order to measure the DS levels of utterances it is necessary to identify all these variables within a given dialect area – excluding, of course, performance errors – and to describe them clearly and comprehensively, in a kind of grammar (cf. Ammon 1973). In most cases there will be a large number of phonetic variables, a smaller number of morphological, and lexical or idiomatic variables, and a still smaller number of syntactic variables (such as differences in word order). Examples of each kind for the Swabian dialect area in Germany are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Some Variables Between Swabian Dialect and Standard German

	Swabian	*Standard German*	
phonetic:	[guat]	[gu:t]	'good'
morphological:	*drecket*	*dreckig*	'dirty'
lexical:	*Zibebe*	*Rosine*	'raisin'
idiomatic:	*dreiviertel (drei)*	*Viertel vor (drei)*	'a quarter to (three)'
syntactic:	*(das habe ich nicht) können machen*	*machen können*	'(I) could (not) do (that)'

Some variables can be classed in different categories, depending on the grammatical framework that one chooses to use. For example, where the gender of the noun is indicated by the definite article, this

may be categorised either as a lexical or as a syntactic variable (e.g. "der Butter" in Swabian is "die Butter" in standard German: 'the butter').

In order to limit the number of variants in the phonetic variables, it is useful to include only those that differ by at least one feature that is phonemic, either in the dialect system or in the standard system, ignoring more detailed phonetic variation. Even with this restriction, however, it is still possible to find gradations with more than two variants. For example, in the Swabian area where I carried out a good deal of my research, the word "fünf" 'five' occurs with the vowels [ae], [e], [I] and [Y]. I call such a complete set of variants (alternants) between dialect and standard a "dialect-standard ladder" or a "DS ladder" (in German: "dialektale Stufenleiter"). Any variant within such a DS ladder I call a "DS step".

We can now ascribe figures to each DS step. We always ascribe the same figure, e.g. 0, to the broadest dialect variant in any dialect ladder and analogously, another but always the same figure, e.g. 1, to the purest standard variant in any dialect ladder. To the variants in-between we ascribe figures between 0 and 1. In the case of four DS steps like in "fünf" above, for instance, we then ascribe the figures 0, 1/3, 2/3, 1. The DS level of an entire utterance, or text, can now be calculated as the arithmetic means of all the figures ascribed to the DS steps it contains. That way, dialect speakers and standard speakers, or speakers of broad dialect and moderate dialect, can be identified on the basis of their actual utterances - which of course have to be elicited by valid and reliable methods.

Such a method of measuring DS levels of utterances is not, of course, flawless; nevertheless, whilst acknowledging that a number of objections can be made to its use, we do not know of any practicable alternative. It seems better than the crude shortcuts that have been

used to distinguish dialect speakers from standard speakers in other research, like for instance letting the teacher classify her/his pupils into dialect speakers and standard speakers, on the basis of her/his own intuition.

In some of my own research I have classified pupils into dialect speakers and standard speakers by observing their linguistic behaviour in both informal and formal situations. It has been standard knowledge in European dialectology that observing informal language poses methodological difficulties, recently labeled the "observer's paradox" by William Labov (1972); in my own experience it has, however, been even more difficult to set up a situation outside the classroom that was sufficiently formal to elicit standard speech (for details, see Ammon 1978).

On the basis of adequately elicited utterances and their measurement, one can rank-order speakers according to DS level. One can of course also classify them into broad or moderate dialects speakers, etc.

4. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DIALECT SPEAKERS

In a complex society it will always be possible to distinguish many different social characteristics of dialect speakers. When investigating social, and also educational, problems, or social conflicts, it is particularly important –so it seems to me– to analyse social class differences. Differences in sex, age and type of community (urban versus rural) have also been analysed (cf. Mattheier 1980); however, these do not appear to be so relevant to social or educational problems.

As far as social class is concerned, I have often stated the hypothesis that the upper social classes have a greater competence in the standard variety, and that they use it more frequently than the lower

classes. In some societies this hypothesis would be trivial in the extreme; it is usually agreed that the standard variety has developed from the speech of the "power élite", the "intellectual élite", the Royal Courts and the like, and that these sections of society provided the models for the standard. It is agreed, similarly, that the upper classes are able to educate their children in a way that ensures access to the standard variety, which is not necessarily the case for the lower social classes. For most societies it would seem quite unnecessary, therefore, to give detailed arguments in support of the above hypothesis. This is not true, however, in the case of Germany, where suggestions along these lines have been vigorously contested. It would be interesting to analyse this dispute and to investigate its ideological background; this, however, would be a separate topic.

There is of course the possibility of other social distributions. An example is German-speaking Switzerland, where all social classes speak broad dialect in the informal situations including the family. Thus, children of the higher classes grow up in the dialect too, which does, however, not preclude that they nevertheless acquire a more comprehensive mastery of the standard variety at home than the lower class children. I wonder what is the situation in the Basque Country as regards the social distribution of dialect and standard and what are the prevailing ideas in regard of it.

For most societies, the hypothesis that the upper classes have greater competence in the standard variety and that they use it more frequently than the lower classes can be supported in various ways. One line of argument is the following. Typical higher class professions, according to the criteria used by sociologists, are more exposed to public life. Managers, priests, members of parliament or university professors, for example, would find it difficult to avoid public speaking in their professional activities. In public situations, however, standard (or near-standard) usage is the norm; this, in fact, is one rea-

son why standard varieties developed – to make communication possible beyond the boundaries of any given dialect area. In contrast, the members of the lower classes (manual workers or small farmers, for example) rarely use language in public situations and rarely, therefore, find themselves in conflict with norms of speech requiring the use of the standard variety.

Once a relatively clear social differentiation in the use of the standard variety has become established, dialect and standard varieties of the language become symbols or shibboleths, of the different social classes who use them. In other words, the use of these varieties becomes an integral part of a speaker's social identity. As a result, members of the lower social classes may tend to avoid the use of standard forms, even in situations where the norms of speech require them; and, equally, members of the upper social classes tend to avoid dialect forms even when norms of speech do not require the use of the standard. Even in private, personal situations, therefore, members of the upper classes may not want to speak broad dialect, often speaking a variety approximating closely to the standard. And children of lower social classes may be inhibited using, or seriously learning, the standard variety because they have the feeling that it does not fit to their, or their parents', social standing.

There is, of course, variation between the use of dialect and standard in different social situations in the speech of all sections of society. The social classes also vary their speech in different situations. They are generally more inclined towards the dialect in informal, familiar situations and more towards the standard variety in formal, public situations. Lower class people are, however, largely excluded from the latter kind of situations, and higher class people often avoid broad dialect even in very familiar situations – though there are, as I said, notable exceptions as in the case of German-speaking Switzerland. In most cases, therefore, situational variation does not

neutralize, or eliminate, the overall pattern of class differences in the use of dialect and standard. This has been confirmed in a number of studies for Germany for instance (cf. Ammon [1972] 1973; for an overview, Mattheier 1980: 82-90).

It can be seen that if there are dialect-related school problems, these are more likely to affect children from the lower social classes. These children are also more likely to identify with the local dialect, while children from the upper social classes are rather inclined to use, and to identify with, the standard variety. The fact that there are more dialect speakers among members of the lower class children than among higher class children has been confirmed for Germany, but also for other countries, in various investigations, (see, for example, Hasselberg 1976; Ammon 1978; Reitmajer 1979). This contrasts with German-speaking Switzerland, where –as a consequence of general dialect use in informal situations– dialect-related school-problems seem to be less class-specific.

5. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE INVESTIGATING THE SCHOOL PROBLEMS OF DIALECT SPEAKERS

When one tries to investigate empirically the school problems that may be encountered by dialect speakers, one faces a complex set of variables and factors, which include the following.

Types of dialect and standard speakers

One may want to distinguish different types of dialect speakers as well as standard speakers, for instance broad and moderate dialect speakers, or indigenous and non-indigenous speakers.

Age groups

A decision has to be made about which age groups to study, out of the range from kindergarten to highschool. Ideally one should monitor a representative sample of children throughout their school career, but it is rarely possible for a research project to do this. In Germany, a favorite age group has been fourth grade of primary school (around age 10), since it is at the end of this school year that streaming begins in the school system, which is extremely important for a child's subsequent educational 'fate'.

Intervening variables

Various variables can intervene and distort findings, especially if one does not have the means to analyze a very sizable sample. It may be useful to control some of these potential variables. Obviously, there are many factors other than dialect that can cause school difficulties. In one of my studies (Ammon 1978) I chose to control the following four factors: social class (two distinct classes in one analysis, three in another), sex, IQ (using Raven's Progressive Matrices test), and residence in the town as opposed to residence in the country. Partial correlations were calculated, which showed, without interference from any of these four factors, the effects of speaking a broad dialect or a moderate dialect on different kinds of school achievement, and of being indigenous versus being non-indigenous. After controlling the effects of all these variables, the effects of dialect alone on school achievements remained noticeable but not very great.

Problems worth investigating

One has to decide which potential school problems to investigate.

Favorite objectives have been spelling, written composition, reading ability, oral participation in class, marks gained for language (mother tongue) and other subjects, and success in streaming. In addition, pupils' attitudes towards dialect and standard, or towards dialect and standard speakers, and the extent to which teachers are aware of potential school problems of dialect speakers have been considered relevant.

6. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF DIALECT SPEAKERS IN SCHOOL

Spelling

Spelling problems have been one of the favorate objects of investigation, especially in Germany (cf. Rosenberg 1989, also for the following items). It proofed useful to distinguish different types of errors caused, or possibly caused, by dialectal speech:

– direct transferences from the dialect,
– indirect transferences (hypercorrections),
– errors possibly related to dialect, but also explainable otherwise,
– errors unrelated to dialect.

The overall results indicate very strongly that dialect speakers do have considerable additional problems in spelling. Direct and indirect dialect transferences amounted to between 10 % and 35 % of overall errors depending on area and age group in Germany.

Written composition

Spelling is of course one component of written composition, and a great number of spelling errors can have a negative impact on

marks. Also, written composition in school requires the choice of standard lexical and grammatical forms; dialect is only acceptable in quotations; dialectal forms are, as a rule, evaluated as incorrect, or simply errors. Therefore, dialect speakers were compared to standard speakers with respect to

- "errors" other than in spelling (lexical or grammatical non-standard forms or other errors),
- length of text in number of words (i.e. word tokens),
- number of word types in relation to word tokens,
- teachers' overall evaluations of compositions.

Dialect speakers tended to show poorer results in all four respects: their compositions contained more "errors" (other than spelling), they produced shorter texts and lower type-token ratios, and they received worse overall evaluations for their compositions. Differences in text length and type-token ratio can be explained as the dialect speakers' attempts to avoid errors by writing shorter compositions with fewer different words. Alternatively, one could say that they know fewer words of the standard variety and that they have learned not to use dialect words in written composition.

Reading

It is assumed that dialect speakers have more difficulties in learning to read, since they are less familiar with the language of the reading text, which is in practically all cases the standard variety. To test this, reading tests were administered which measured

- the number of errors in intonation
- in pausing (within words and between words),
- in accent and pitch,

- the number of morphological and lexical errors (such as incorrect prefixes or misread words),
- the tempo of reading,
- the overall quality of the reading performances as judged by several independent experts.

Again, dialect speakers did more poorly in all respects. Also, the additional hypothesis was tested that dialect speakers would be better able to decipher unfamiliar sequences of letters, since they have had more experience in reading unfamiliar texts and, perhaps, have learned to look at the graphic representation of words more closely. Pupils were asked to read aloud a short Latin text. The results tentatively confirmed the hypothesis. Standard-speaking pupils had to correct themselves more frequently as they read, they read more slowly, and they made more incorrected errors than dialect speakers. It therefore remains to be tested whether dialectal speech does not function as a challenge which in the end results in even better reading skills than standard speech. This may particularly be true for very intelligent and highly motivated children, while for others the challenge might be too great.

Oral participation in class

General hypotheses here were that

- dialect speakers would participate less frequently in class,
- they would be reprimanded by the teacher more frequently than standard-speaking pupils.

These hypotheses were empirically investigated in different ways: by classroom observation or by monitoring group discussions with entire classes counting frequency of participation and length of utterances, or by simply asking teachers to evaluate the pupils' overall

participation in class. The dialect-speaking pupils again showed lower achievement in all respects. They were, in addition, reprimanded more often for inadequate language use. I strongly recommend more direct classroom observations for future research, using varied methods and different categories of analysis. Class room interaction may be assumed to be of great importance for the teachers' overall evaluation of pupils which can become part of the evaluation of any specific skill.

Marks in language (mother tonge) and mathematics, and streaming

In all three respects, dialect speakers fared worse than standard speakers. They received inferior marks in language (mother tongue), mathematics and worse recommendations in regard of streaming. Fewer were recommended for the "Gymnasium" in Germany, the academically most challenging form of secondary schooling. The lower grades even in mathematics indicate that this subject too requires considerable language skills.

7. PUPILS' AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS DIALECT AND STANDARD, AND TOWARDS DIALECT SPEAKERS AND STANDARD SPEAKERS

Various investigations (e.g. Ammon 1978) disclosed that students tend to have relatively clear-cut attitudes towards dialect and standard, or dialect speakers and standard speakers. In matched-guise tests, they qualified dialect speakers as lower class, assigning them typical lower-class occupations (bricklayer, labourer etc.), and as less intelligent than standard speakers, but at the same time they judged them as more friendly and good-natured. These judgements clearly

contain the wide-spread social class stereotypes where the economically more successful social straighter are also regarded with less sympathy. These judgements were quite homogenous among dialect-speaking and non-dialect speaking students alike and could be found even among elementary school students. Obviously, even young students have an intuitive knowledge of the social distribution of dialect and standard. They seem, at the same time, to be prejudiced against dialect speakers. They may feel that dialect speakers are less intelligent than standard speakers without noticing that the dialect speakers' inferior school achievements are, at least partially, caused by their social situation and by dialectal speech itself. Similar results as reported above were found for different countries, for example for Britain on the basis of quite refined investigations (Giles/Powesland 1975).

As to teachers' attitudes, various interview studies in Germany revealed a wide-spread awareness of the school difficulties of dialect speakers. Most teachers claimed to have observed difficulties in spelling and in oral class participation. More refined views of the school difficulties of dialect speakers were, however, seldom. Teachers also often expressed the opinion that the intelligent pupils had few difficulties if any caused by dialectal speech. If this statement is taken as a general proposition, as often seems to be the case, it can serve as a premise for the conclusion that dialect speakers who do have school difficulties are unintelligent. There is then the danger that the dialect speakers with educational problems are seen as less intelligent than the standard speakers rather than seeing dialectal speech as the cause of the problems and making specific attempts at helping the students to overcome their difficulties.

Generally, teachers had very few specific ideas as to how to deal with dialect speakers in class. This was not surprising, since teacher training has paid virtually no attention to dialect until recently. Some

teachers were not sure whether it was important for dialect speakers to acquire a solid mastery of the standard variety. They were not aware the fact that without that mastery they may encounter language-related difficulties in later life. They were also not able to identify dialect transferences in written texts. When they were asked to correct and to mark a written composition which contained numerous direct and indirect dialect transferences, their corrective behaviour varied widely as well as the marks they gave for the text. It therefore seems that dialect speakers can be treated very differently depending on the particular teacher they happen to have. All these results indicate that the educational treatment of dialect speakers is underdeveloped even today. This seems to be the case in numerous countries.

8. TEACHING MATERIALS FOR DIALECT SPEAKERS IN GERMANY

There have been various attempts at pedagogical improvements for dialect speakers, notably in the Netherlands (cf. van den Hoogen/Kuijper 1989) and in Germany. The latter country seems to be the only one for which specific teaching materials have been developed: booklets which contrast dialect and standard linguistically for each dialect region and which give detailed suggestions as to how to deal with dialect-related school problems. Such materials exist, however, only for West Germany, the area of the former Federal Republic, since they were developed before the re-unification of the country. They cover most West-German dialect areas but not all.

Each booklet contains at least the following three main sections, which, however, differ from booklet to booklet in length and proportion:

1) a general introduction into dialect-related school problems,
2) a rough description of the dialect area in question,
3) an overview of the specific linguistic difficulties faced by dialect speakers in the area.

The authors suggest in each case that teachers use the booklets on the one hand for curriculum planning and class preparation and on the other hand as a guide for corrections and marking. The first kind of advice relates mainly to devising efficient and considerate ways of teaching the standard, the second to the diagnosis of special dialect difficulties and fair evaluation and marking. The precise usage of the booklets is left to the teachers discretion, since the situation of the dialect speakers varies widely from class to class depending on their age and on the proportion of dialect speakers and standard speakers among other things.

The detailed description of the linguistic difficulties of dialect speakers (in part 3) has been based on empirical research in each case, especially on the search for dialect transferences in large numbers of written compositions. The linguistic difficulties found there presented in some 20 to 40 chapters varying from booklet to booklet. Each chapter concentrates on a relatively narrow section of grammar: for example, the short vowels of the standard variety which are missing in the dialect, certain differences in consonants, in the forms of the definite article, in the tenses, in the semantics of certain nouns, in word order in subordinated sentences, etc. Each of the chapters follows the same pattern of presentation:

a) a rough linguistic description of the problem area, the vowels, noun gender etc.,
b) a list of attested errors of dialect speakers (dialect transferences) as examples,

c) a short explanation of how these errors may have been caused, specifying mainly which processes of transference or hypercorrection can be assumed to be responsible,
d) suggestions of teaching methods for the particular problem area -these suggestions are, as indicated above, not very detailed in most cases, since teachers are expected to adjust them to the particular situation in class,
e) a more detailed grammatical description than was given at the beginning of the section.

Unfortunately, it has remained unclear to what degree and with what results these booklets have been used. It seems obvious today that the editors and authors made a mistake in not seeking the explicit support of the school administration of the federal states. Therefore, using these booklets remained each teacher's personal responsibility. There have been new attempts recently to revive this project, but it remains uncertain whether they will be successful.

9. FINAL REMARKS ON THE POTENTIAL SOCIAL DISAD - VANTAGES OF DIALECT SPEAKERS

It has been pointed out time and again that it is an advantage for anyone to know the dialect of the area in which they live. Only then will they be fully accepted in a number of important social groups in most cases. There is no doubt that this is true in numerous language areas. It seems to be less obvious, however, that the solid mastery of the standard variety is often even more important for social and economic success. If dialect speakers do not, at the same time, have a solid mastery of the standard variety they are often at a grave social disadvantage. For most of the more attractive professions such a solid mastery is required. This is largely due to the fact that these profes-

sions require exposure to public and formal situations, for which, as a rule, the use of the standard variety, or a close approximation to the standard variety, is the norm. Whoever cannot meet this norm will have difficulty holding the respective professional position. Also in political life, public speaking plays an important role. Therefore, anyone who wants to engage in this domain needs sufficient skills in the standard variety. If this is true, it seems obvious enough that dialect speakers who do not have good skills in the standard variety, in addition to their dialectal skills, are at a social and political disadvantage. It seems important to be acutely aware of these disadvantages in order to conceive the adequate language-teaching objectives for school.

It is of course necessary, at the same time, to develop more tolerance towards dialectal speech and towards the deviations from the standard norm in each society. This can, however, not mean, in my view, that dialect speakers are not provided with a solid mastery of the standard variety in school. Such a mastery is even required for their writing skills. The solid command of the standard variety does not preclude comprehensive practical skills in the dialect at the same time. Retaining comprehensive skills in both varieties, dialect and standard, is however tricky. There is then always the danger that some families, especially the educationally less motivated, will communicate with their children exclusively in the dialect and, as a consequence, not convey any standard skills onto them. An all too radical view, that only perceives the dialect as a social and educational handicap, entails on the other hand the possibility that the dialect will recede or even disappear altogether. Conceiving an adequate educational policy and implementing it in such a way that the desired results are actually obtained is a formidable challenge.

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