
Vorlesungsskript zum Deutschkurs

Fernando Martins Cardoso

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Fantasie ist wichtiger als Wissen, denn Wissen ist begrenzt.
Albert Einstein

Preface

A new journey begins on studying German. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Ut purus elit, vestibulum ut, placerat ac, adipiscing vitae, felis. Curabitur dictum gravida mauris. Nam arcu libero, nonummy eget, consectetur id, vulputate a, magna. Donec vehicula augue eu neque. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Mauris ut leo. Cras viverra metus rhoncus sem. Nulla et lectus vestibulum urna fringilla ultrices. Phasellus eu tellus sit amet tortor gravida placerat. Integer sapien est, iaculis in, pretium quis, viverra ac, nunc. Praesent eget sem vel leo ultrices bibendum. Aenean faucibus. Morbi dolor nulla, malesuada eu, pulvinar at, mollis ac, nulla. Curabitur auctor semper nulla. Donec varius orci eget risus. Duis nibh mi, congue eu, accumsan eleifend, sagittis quis, diam. Duis eget orci sit amet orci dignissim rutrum.

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Aussprachekurs

*Der Alte verliert eines der größten Menschenrechte:
er wird nicht mehr von seines Gleichen beurteilt.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

This chapter is dedicated to study the German language pronunciation. The content is based on the first chapter of the book [1], on the Aussprachekurs from Professor Raville in [5], and on the pronunciation indicated in [4] and [10] using International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Accent and pronunciation

According to [5], accent is a particular way of pronouncing certain phonemes, which can change the melody and rhythm of a particular word or phrase. While pronunciation has a more rigid structure which, even with the variation in accents, must be preserved so as not to compromise the communication process. Therefore, this material focus on German standard pronunciation (*Standardaussprache*) to keep the speech clear during verbal communication.

To check the stressed¹ syllable of German words, the website of the famous German dictionary Duden can be consulted at the following link <https://www.duden.de/>. To check phonetic transcription and etymology, Wiktionary, the free dictionary available in <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/> has an excellent database. Finally, to check pronunciation with audio recordings of native speakers, the website <https://www.forvo.com/> is a great option.

How to improve the pronunciation in German

In [5], the following tasks are suggested to improve pronunciation:

- Always read aloud, and use a voice recorder frequently.
- Check your pronunciation on Google Translate or similar online translators. Do they “understand” you?
- Identify what is most challenging for you to pronounce and practice a lot until you master it.
- When speaking German, articulate a lot and exaggerate. This is normal in the beginning.
- Sing in German.

¹In linguistics, and particularly phonology, stress or accent is the relative emphasis or prominence given to a certain syllable in a word or to a certain word in a phrase or sentence [9]. But this accent must not be confused with the sociolinguistic meaning of accent mentioned on the previous paragraph, which is a way of pronouncing a language that is distinctive to a country, area, social class, or individual [7].

A

Letter name [a]. In words, this letter sounds like the a in **algae**.

Examples:

1. **aus**: [aus]
2. **auf**: [auf]
3. **an**: [an]
4. **aktuell**: [aktu'ɛl]

Ä

Letter name [a] Umlaut, pronounced [ɛ:]. In words, this letter can sound long (i.e., stressed), or short (i.e., unstressed) [ɐ].

Examples of long ä:

1. **Hähnchen**: ['hɛ:ŋçən]
2. **Käse**: ['kɛ:zə]
3. **schläfst**: ['ʃlɛ:fst]
4. **Verspätung**: [fɛr'ʃpɛ:tʊŋ]

Examples of short ä:

1. **ändern**: ['ɛndərn]
2. **Gäste**: ['gɛstə]
3. **Männer**: ['mɛnər]
4. **März**: [mɛrts]
5. **wäscht**: [vɛʃt]

Depending on the area of Germany, ä can sound as short in words where it is usually long, e.g., **schläfst** being pronounced as ['ʃlɛfst], and **später** being pronounced ['ʃpɛtər].

B

Letter name [be:]. In words, this letter sounds like b before vowels, as in **bow**. And it sounds like silent p at the end of words and before consonants, as in **map**.

Examples:

1. **Ab**: [ap]

2. **bald:** [balt]
3. **bekommen:** [be'kɔmən]
4. **Bier:** [bi:r]
5. **Bus:** [bʊs]
6. **gelb:** [gɛlp]
7. **gibt:** [ɡɪpt]
8. **habt:** [hapt]
9. **halb:** [halp]
10. **Obst:** [o:pst]
11. **siebzehn:** ['zi:ptse:n]

C

Letter name [tse:]. In words, this letter sounds like ts before e and i, and sounds like k before a, o and u. It is not a common letter in German language, mostly used in foreign words incorporated into German.

Examples:

1. **Café:** [ka'fe:]
2. **campen:** ['kɛmpən]
3. **Celsius:** ['tselziʊs]
4. **Chaos:** ['ka:os]
5. **Curry:** ['kœri]

D

Letter name [de:]. In words, this letter sounds like d before vowels, as in **dog**. And it sounds like silent t at the end of words and before consonants, as in **cat**.

Examples:

1. **Bild:** [bɪlt]
2. **Dame:** ['da:mə]
3. **dämpfen:** ['dɛmpfən]
4. **davor:** ['da:fɔr, da'fo:r]
5. **Freund:** [frɔynt]

6. **Hand:** [hant]
7. **Kind:** [kint]
8. **Land:** [lant]
9. **Stadt:** [ʃtat]
10. **Versand:** [fɛr'zant]

E

Letter name [e:]. In words, this letter sounds like Spanish or Portuguese **e**, as in **abuelo**. But it sounds more subtle at the end of words, as in **moment**.

Examples:

1. **eine:** ['aɪnə]
2. **esse:** ['ɛsə]
3. **Frage:** ['fra:gə]
4. **heute:** ['hɔɪtə]
5. **lese:** ['le:sə]
6. **Sprache:** ['ʃpra:xə]
7. **Wange:** ['vʌŋə]

F

Letter name [ɛf]. In words, this letter sounds like **f** as in **fate** or **friend**.

Examples:

1. **Fach:** [fax]
2. **fegen:** ['fe:gən]
3. **Feier:** ['faɪər]
4. **Flug:** [flu:k]
5. **freundlich:** ['frɔʏntlɪç]
6. **Frucht:** [frʊxt]
7. **Fußball:** ['fu:sbal]

G

Letter name [ge:]. In words, this letter sounds like g before vowels, as in **g**ate. And it sounds like silent k at the end of words and before consonants, as in **d**ark.

Examples:

1. **Flugzeug:** ['flu:kt͡sʊŋk]
2. **Gesicht:** [gə'zɪçt]
3. **lügt:** [ly:kt]
4. **mag:** [ma:k]
5. **sagt:** [za:kt]
6. **Sonntag:** ['zɔnta:k]
7. **Weg:** [ve:k]

As per article in [3], there are two exceptions for the general rule of g pronunciation: the g is not pronounced after n, and it is pronounced as ch in the German word **ich** when it comes after i.

Examples:

1. **Hunger:** ['hʊŋɐ]
2. **lang:** [laŋ]
3. **länger:** ['lɛŋɐ]
4. **Zeitung:** ['tsaɪtʊŋ]
5. **vergänglich:** [fɛr'gɛŋlɪç]
6. **ewig:** ['e:vɪç]
7. **fähig:** ['fɛ:ɪç]
8. **fertig:** ['fɛrtɪç]
9. **richtig:** ['rɪçtɪç]
10. **ständig:** ['ʃtɛndɪç]
11. **vierzig:** ['fɪrʦɪç]

H

Letter name [ha:]. It sounds like h in **have** at the beginning of words, it is not pronounced between vowels, and it prolongs the duration of the vowel that comes before it.

Examples of h at the beginning of words:

1. **haben**: ['ha:bən]
2. **Hallo**: [ha'lo:]
3. **Haus**: [haʊs]
4. **heißen**: ['haisən]
5. **Humor**: [hu'mo:r]

Examples of h between vowels and prolonging vowels:

1. **früher**: ['fry:ər]
2. **gehen**: ['ge:ən]
3. **Höhe**: ['hø:ə]
4. **ihr**: [i:r]
5. **Uhr**: [u:r]

Exceptions: compound words, e.g., **woher**, and foreign words adapted to German, e.g., **Alkohol**.

I

Letter name [i:]. It sounds like i in **illness**.

J

Letter name [jɔt]. It sounds like i in **mania**.

Examples:

1. **ja**: [ja:]
2. **Jahr**: [ja:r]
3. **jetzt**: [jɛtst]
4. **jedoch**: [je:'dɔx]
5. **jemand**: ['je:mant]
6. **jetzt**: [jɛtst]
7. **Junge**: ['juŋə]

In words of English origin, the original pronunciation of j is kept as in **job**. Examples: **joggen** ([ˈdʒɔɡən]), and **Pyjama** ([py'ɕa:ma]).

K

Letter name [ka:]. It sounds like k in **kid**, with a plosive intonation [2].

L

Letter name [ɛl]. With no vowel, it sounds like spanish l in **miel**.

Examples:

1. **Alkohol:** ['alkoɦo:l]
2. **helfen:** ['hɛlfən]
3. **Himmel:** ['ɦiməl]
4. **Hotel:** [ɦo'tɛl]
5. **Milch:** [milç]
6. **schnell:** [ʃnɛl]

M

Letter name [ɛm]. At the end of words, it sounds like the m in **room**.

Examples:

1. **Baum:** [baʊm]
2. **einem:** ['aɪnəm]
3. **im:** [ɪm]
4. **komm:** [kɔm]
5. **Raum:** [raʊm]
6. **wem:** [ve:m]

N

Letter name [ɛn]. At the end of words, it sounds like the n in **Heaven**.

Examples:

1. **Bösen:** ['bø:zən]
2. **Mädchen:** ['mɛ:tçən]
3. **mein:** [maɪn]

O

Letter name [o:]. It sounds like long o in Spanish word **pollo**, or short o like in **hot**.

Examples:

1. **rot**: [ro:t]
2. **Tochter**: ['tɔxtər]

P

Examples:

1. : □
2. : □
3. : □

Q

Examples:

1. : □
2. : □
3. : □

R

Examples:

1. : □
2. : □
3. : □

S

Examples:

1. : □
2. : □
3. : □

T

Examples:

1. : □

2. : □

3. : □

U

Examples:

1. : □

2. : □

3. : □

V

Examples:

1. : □

2. : □

3. : □

W

Examples:

1. : □

2. : □

3. : □

X

Examples:

1. : □

2. : □

3. : □

Y

Examples:

1. : []
2. : []
3. : []

Z

Examples:

1. : []
2. : []
3. : []

ß

Letter name *eszett* or *scharfes S*. In words, this letter sounds like the ss in passing and comes after a long vowel or diphthong (blend of two vowel sounds in a single syllable).

According to [8], as the ß derives from a ligature of lower-case letters, it is itself exclusively lower-case. The proper transcription when it cannot be used, or when writing a word in all capital letters, is **ss** or **SS**. The ß is not used in Switzerland and Liechtenstein, where it was replaced by **ss**.

Examples:

1. **außen**: ['aʊsən]
2. **dreißig**: ['draɪsɪç]
3. **Fuß**: [fu:s]
4. **groß**: [gro:s]
5. **Gruß**: [gru:s]
6. **heißen**: ['haɪsən]
7. **schließen**: ['ʃli:sən]
8. **Spaß**: [ʃpa:s]
9. **Straße**: ['ʃtra:sə]
10. **weiß**: [vaɪs]

When the vowel is short, the word is written with **ss**. Examples:

1. **essen:** ['ɛsən]
2. **Fluss:** [flʊs]
3. **gerissen:** [gə'ɾɪsən]
4. **krass:** [kras]
5. **muss:** [mʊs]

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