

# 7. Regional Varieties

Ling 380/Soc 427 (Spring 2021)

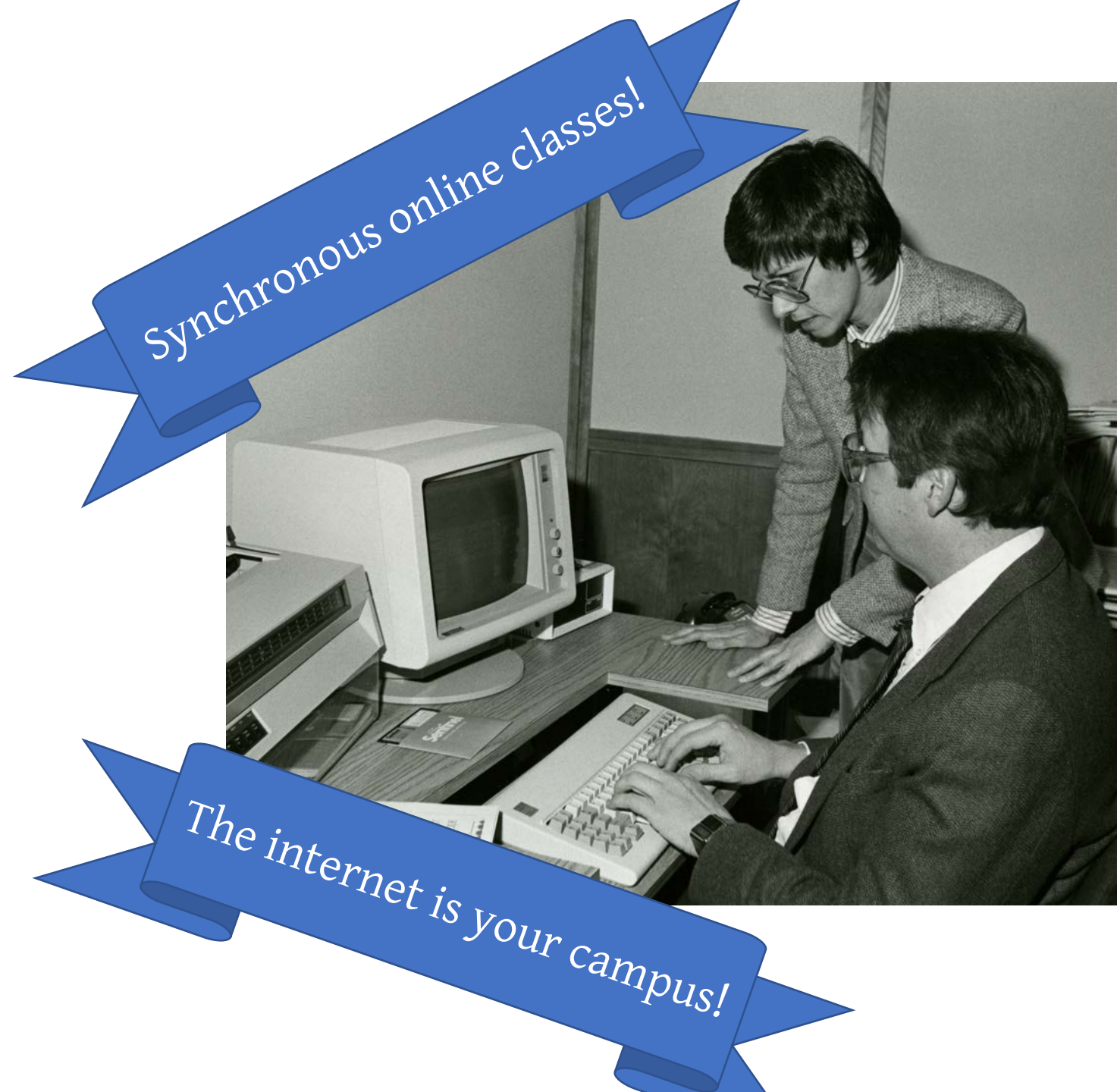
Joseph Pentangelo

The College of Staten Island, CUNY

# Cool classes!

In the fall, I'll be teaching...

- The Structure of Words  
Ling 350 37447  
Fridays, 2:30–6:20
- Semantics & Pragmatics  
Ling 405 46569  
Wednesdays, 6:30–9:50



# What we'll cover today...

1. Midterm review
2. Regional varieties
3. How to get vaccinated (in NYC)

# Midterm Review

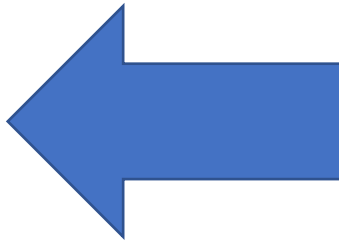
1. Which of the following is a social dialect?

- Baghdad Jewish Arabic
- Morse code
- Midlantic English
- Mandarin Chinese



2. In Labov's study of Martha's Vineyard English, he found that:

- Some locals shifted their pronunciation to be more accommodating to summer tourists
- The ethnically Portuguese and English populations spoke noticeably different dialects
- Some locals shifted their pronunciation to further differentiate themselves from summer tourists
- Martha's Vineyard English was essentially the same as the British English of the 18th-century



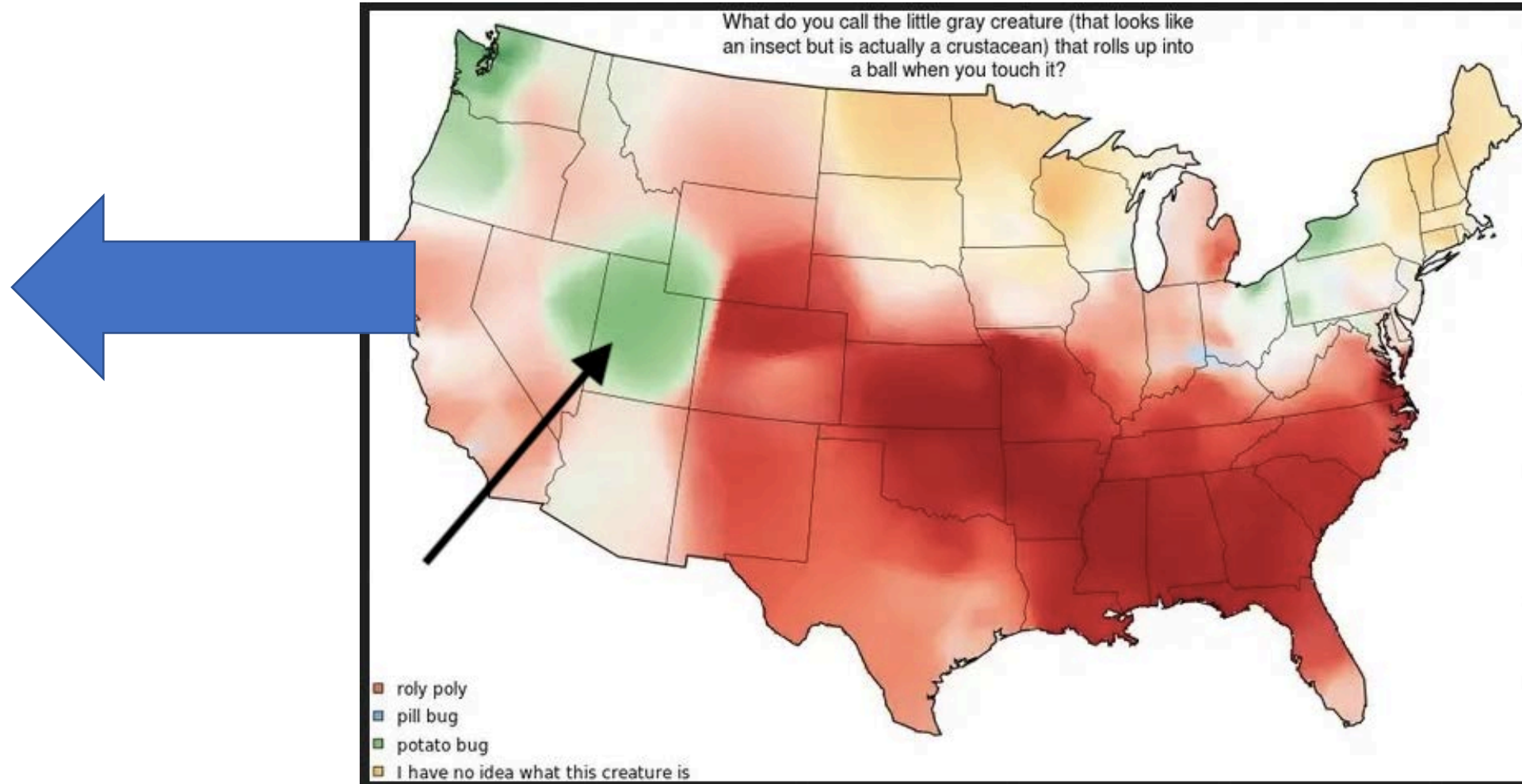
3. Which of the following is a regional dialect?

- Pig Latin
- Polari
- New York City English
- Old Church Slavonic



4. In the below image, what is the arrow pointing to?

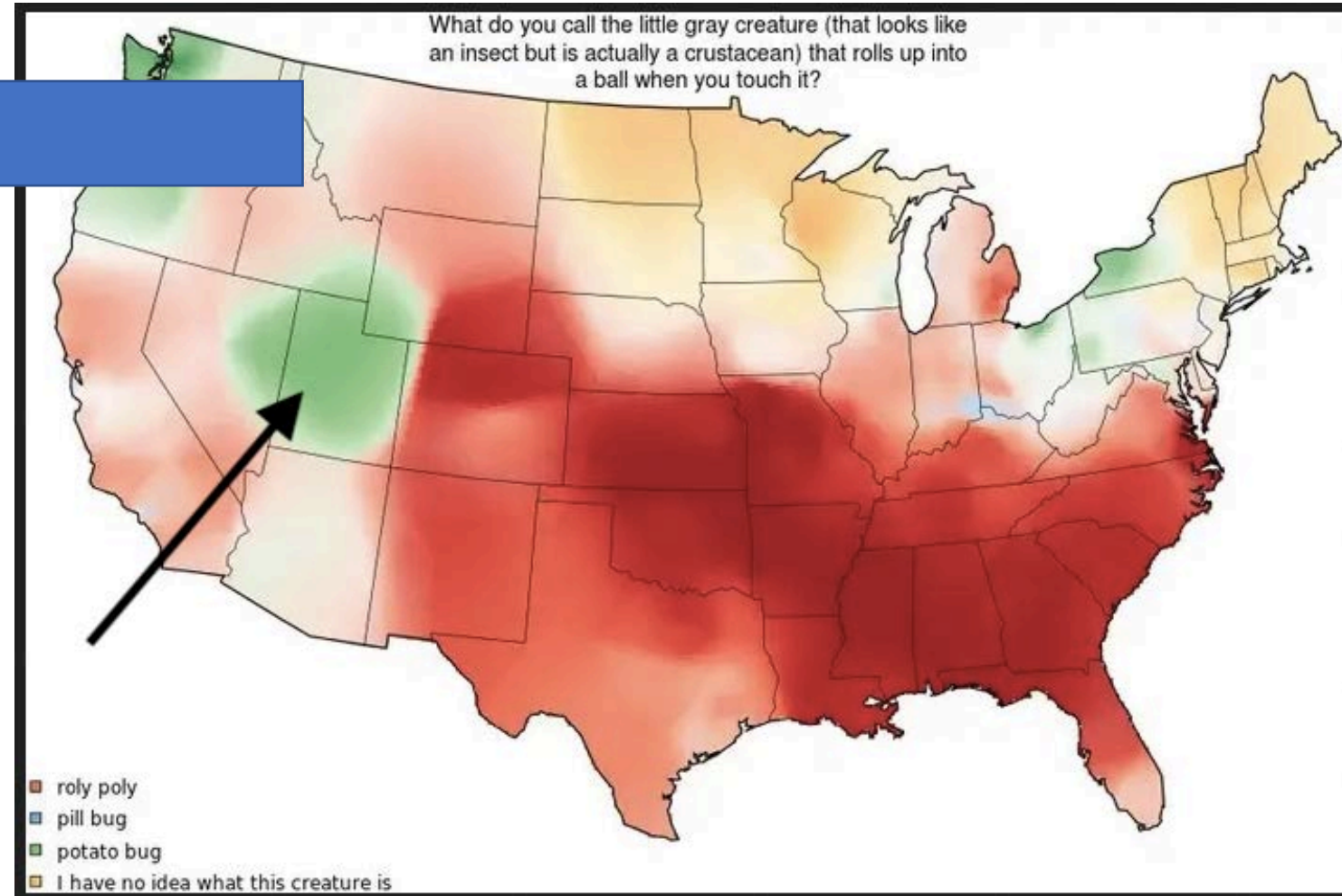
- A sociolect
- A code
- An isogloss
- Georgia





5. In that same map, what are “roly poly,” “pill bug,” and “potato bug”?

- Linguistic variables
- Dialect continua
- Codes
- Names for different kinds of animals



6. True or false: dialects, languages, styles, registers, and varieties can all also be considered codes?

- True
- False



7. In a diglossic situation, the H variety is:

- used more widely than the L variety
- more highly-regarded than the L variety
- learned by everyone in the society
- associated with those living at a higher altitude



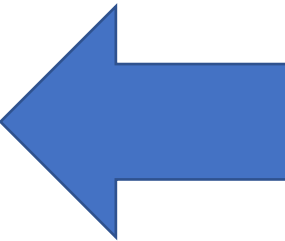
8. Which of the following is true?

- Multilingualism makes it impossible to achieve mastery of any given language
- Globally, multilingualism is more often the norm than monolingualism
- Multilingualism is rarely found in cosmopolitan areas
- Multilingualism is a recent development, arising from post-WW2 globalization



## 9. What is crossing or styling?

- When someone abandons their first language in favor of a variety they learned later in life
- When someone adopts the linguistic features of a population that they wish to express solidarity with
- In a diglossic situation, when one uses features of the L code when operating in the H code
- When someone moves but keeps speaking the regional dialect they spoke in their former area



10. Different styles are appropriate to given situations. Knowing which style to use when is part of:

- Communicative competence
- Regional variation
- Enregisterment
- Recodification



## 11. Why might code be a better term to use than language or dialect?

its a neutral word. its a system used between two or more people when talking to each other. more general term used to not make anything seem substandard or standard. it's largely synonymous with language or dialect or style. it's a much more neutral way of talking about them

Code might be a better term to use than language or dialect because the word code is "neutral" and does not "arouse emotions" like other terms might.

12. Speakers of Hindi and Urdu often maintain that they speak two different languages, even though their mutual intelligibility is quite high. How might you explain why this is? Refer to at least one of Bell's criteria for discussing languages (beginning on p.33). (2pts)

Regardless of mutual intelligibility, speakers of Hindi and Urdu may maintain that they speak two different languages because of Bell's criteria of autonomy. This is the idea that a language must be felt by its speakers to be different from other languages. This can be subjective, but as long as a group of speakers believe that their language differs, it will fill this criteria. A second criteria could be standardization, which is the process by which a language has been codified in some way and that a measure of agreement be achieved about what is in the language and what is not. As long as the speakers of Hindi can more or less agree on its vocabulary and grammars, and as long as speakers of Urdu can do the same, these can both be considered different languages.

In Bell's Criteria "historicity" is used when discussing language, Historicity is when a particular group of people finds a sense of identity through using a particular language: it belongs to them. Although Hindi and Urdu have a high mutual intelligibility they are still regarded as two different languages because each group of people find their identity through using that specific language. For example Pakistani people find their identity when speaking urdu even though Hindi is very similar, they want something of their own because it comes with their identity.



13. On March 5th, we talked about the “grunge English” hoax. Why might someone involved in grunge, or any other subculture, intentionally misrepresent their social dialect when talking to an outsider?

Someone involved in grunge, or any other subculture, intentionally misrepresent their social dialect when talking to an outside to keep that dialect exclusive. For example, with the origins of Cryptocurrency, Crypto mining and a plethora of other terms weren't released to the public to preserve its secrecy. This is also why some people say IYKYK (If You Know, You Know).

14. Give an example of a diglossic situation. Which code is the L variety, and which the H variety? You can use an example that we discussed in class, or one of your own.

Katharévousa (H variety) and Demotic (L variety) in Greece.

Standard German language VS Swiss German language. Standard French language VS Haiti Creole. L variety can be regarded as less prestigious, spoken and learnt language. While H variety is seen as prestigious and more powerful language. It is a taught language.

15. Give an example of metaphorical code switching. Describe a situation in which such a switch might take place, and what it might look like. (2pts)

Metaphorical code switching can take place when a person during conversation changes codes to signal a change in formality, politeness, etc. An example of this is if two people are having a friendly conversation and person A begins to hit on/flirt with person B. In order to signal disinterest or that he/she is uncomfortable- person B may switch codes and become less friendly, less chatty and begin answering with one word responses to person A.

**Metaphorical Code Switching:** Choice of code reflects a redefinition of the situation. By changing codes, you signal a change to informality, politeness, humorousness, etc.

**Example:** I have a Jamaican Background and understand Patois. There was a student that was infuriated with the teacher and started switching from English to Patois. I noticed his frustration and code-switched so he could feel that he wasn't an outsider and began calming him down by conversing in Patois.

## 16. What is register? When might people from different social and regional groups speak the same register?

Registers are a set of language components used by a certain occupation, organization, or social group. People from different regions may be able to use the same registers because they are affiliated in the same group. For example, a person from Africa and American can understand their registers if they are both Islam. Their religion is what will bring them together.

sets of language items associated with discrete occupational or social groups. people from different social groups and regional groups might speak the same register at work when they come together as coworkers when sharing activities

## 17. Give an example of a social dialect that you speak or know about. Who speaks it? What are some characteristic features of it? (2pts)

Although I do not speak it, polari is a social dialect that began in the mid 20th century and was used by "the (male) gay subculture in London. During the 50s being gay was a crime so Polari was used by many gay men who wanted to communicate without getting in trouble. Some features of Polari are influenced by features of "underprivileged languages, such as Italian and Yiddish." Some Polari words that are similar to Italian for example are the word "good"- in Polari translates to bona and in Italian is translated to buono. Another word in that is similar in Polari and Italians the word for "see." Polari -"vada" italian- "vedere"

I'd say that I speak AAE. I'd say this because certain terms/slang that I use in my community or in the African American community differ from average speech. After watching "3 ways to speak English by Jamila Lyisscott" I connected with the video and noticed that I change my dialect in regards to the setting. Some characteristic features would be referring to something I've eaten that is good, I'd tell my friends "This Sandwich Slaps". On the other hand, in a more professional setting or one without my friends, I'd just say "this meal taste good".

A social dialect spoken in my home city in Albania, is associated with Catholic religion. In my city, which is called Shkoder, the majority of the population is Muslim however both religions live in total harmony. However, in order to distinguish from Muslims, Catholics have developed a form of a social dialect which has to do with differences in speech sound production. The most common example is: the letter /gj/ in Albanian is the affricate /dʒ/ and that is how the Muslim population pronounce it and it is the standard form. However, the Catholic population produces it as /gij/ rather than /dʒ/ and that is how you know that if you hear that type of pronunciation it is coming from a person who is Catholic. Another difference is that they will replace the sound /tʃ/ with /kj/ for instance "to cry" in Albanian is "qaj" --> /tʃaj/ and the Catholic social dialect for it would be /kaj/.

# Regional Varieties

# Regional Dialects

- “Dialect” can be a difficult term, hard to pin down.
- Still, we can talk about two types of dialects: regional dialects and social dialects.
- These are based on the notion that people can be arranged into groups, and members of a particular group will use language in a more or less consistent way. Their peculiar language use can be identified with that group.





# Regional Dialects



# Social Dialects



Men's dialect



# Social Dialects



Women's dialect

# Social Dialects



Moustache dialect



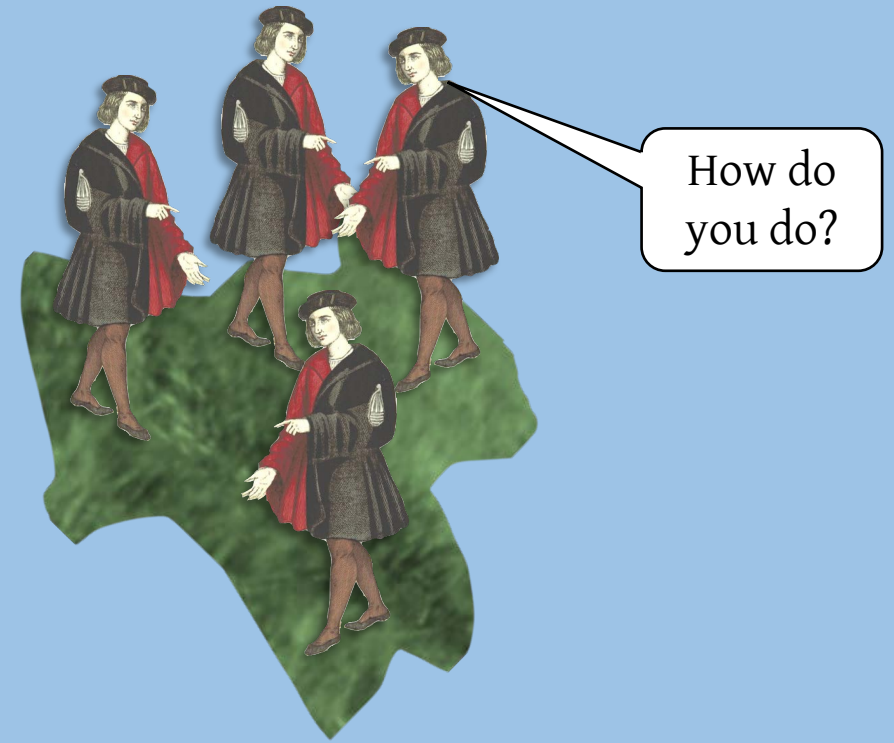
# Social Dialects



How else might this population be grouped?

# Regional Variation

- Let's say there's a group of people that speak a language.
- Some of those people move far away, while others stay put.
- Over time, their descendants' speech will diverge in the two locations.
- Over even more time, especially if the populations don't communicate much (if at all), their speech will diverge so much that they will become two totally different languages.



# Regional Variation

- Regional variation is a big driver of language change over time, including how Latin differentiated into French, Italian, Romanian, etc.
- Let's revisit some slides that we saw back in February to illustrate.



Two major languages spoken in the Empire were Latin and Greek.



The Roman Empire in 117 AD  
CC BY-SA 3.0. Map by Tataryn

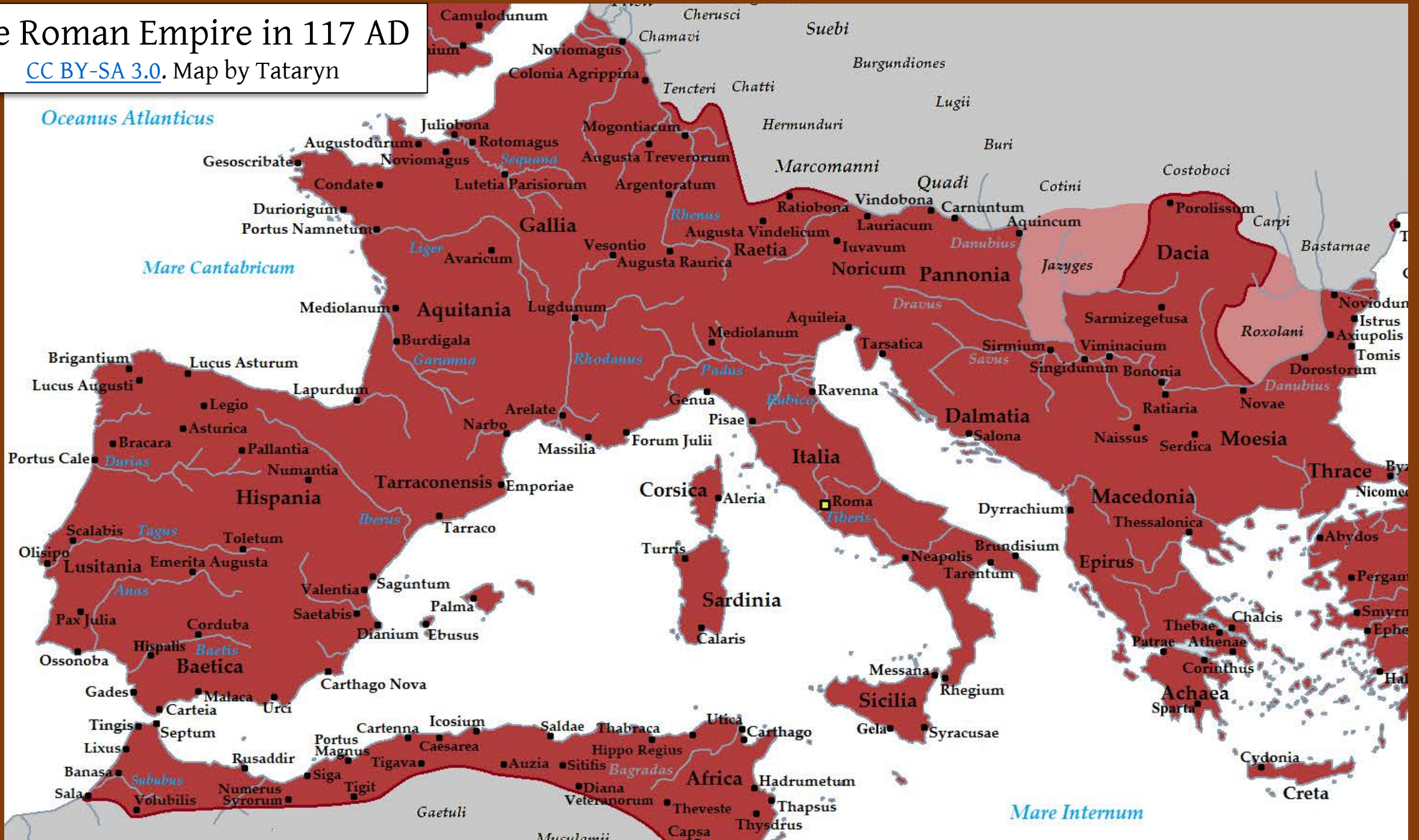
Latin was most widely used in Western Europe, while Greek was used in Greece, Anatolia (modern Turkey), Egypt, and elsewhere.



# The Roman Empire in 117 AD



CC BY-SA 3.0. Map by Tataryn





# Romance Languages in Europe

© 2009 Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.



All of these languages descended from Latin.

Centuries ago, there were many different *regional dialects* of Latin.

Over time, those regional dialects diverged so significantly that they became different languages.

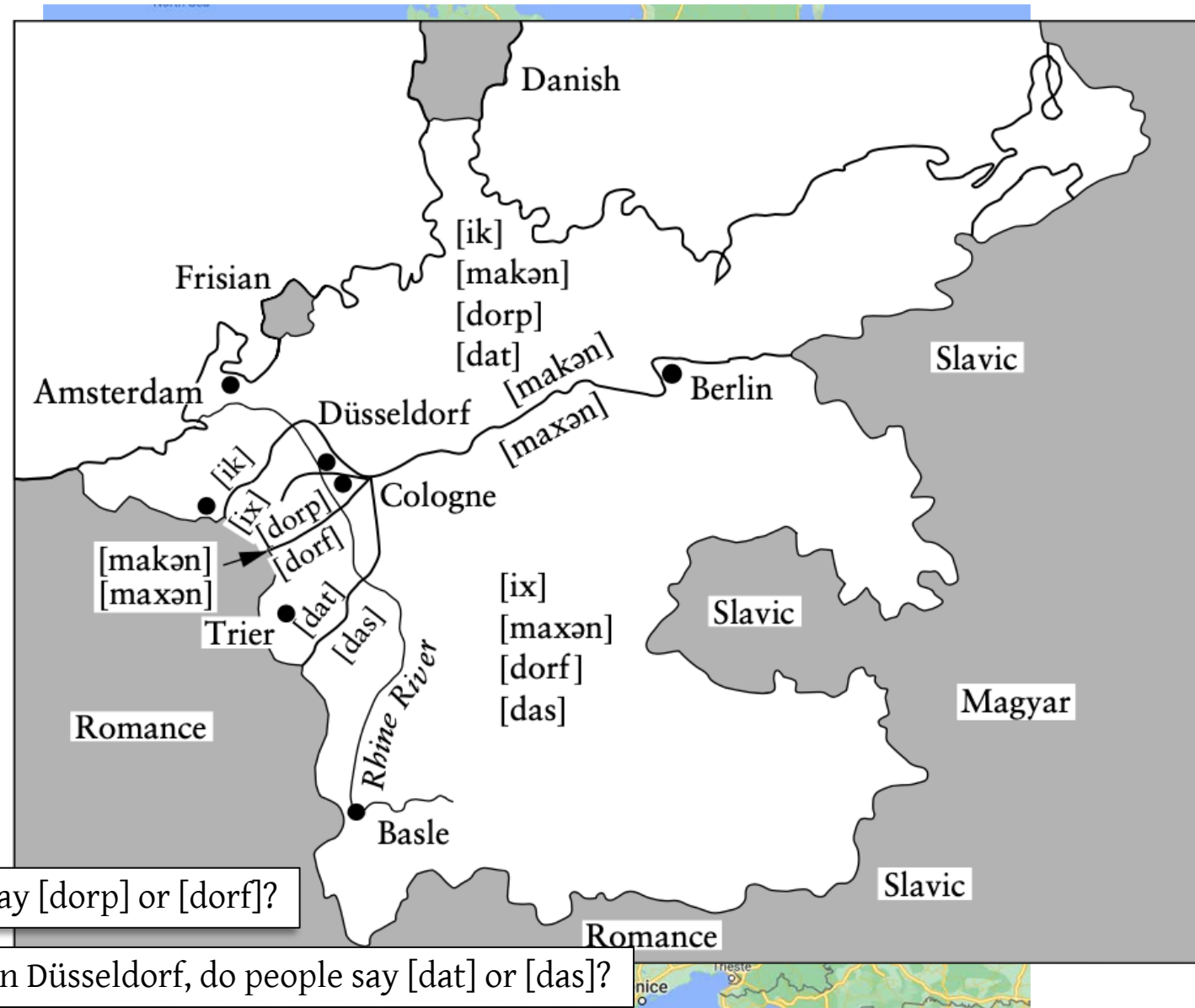
# Dialect geography

- The people who map out regional dialects are called *dialect geographers*.
- They often produce *dialect atlases*.

They try to show the geographical boundaries of the distribution of a particular linguistic feature by drawing a line on a map. Such a line is called an *isogloss*: on one side of the line people say something one way, e.g., pronounce *bath* with the first vowel of *father*, and on the other side they use some other pronunciation, e.g., the vowel of *cat*. Quite often, when the boundaries for different linguistic features are mapped in this way the isoglosses show a considerable amount of criss-crossing. On occasion, though, a number coincide; i.e., there is a *bundle of isoglosses*. Such a bundle is often said to mark a *dialect boundary*.

# The Rhenish Fan

The Rhenish Fan is one of the best-known sets of isoglosses in Europe, setting off Low German to the north from High German to the south. The set comprises the modern *reflexes* (i.e., results) of the pre-Germanic stop consonants \*p, \*t, and \*k. These have remained stops [p, t, k] in Low German but have become the fricatives [f, s, x] in High German (i.e., Modern Standard German), giving variant forms for ‘make’ [makən], [maxən]; ‘that’ [dat], [das]; ‘village’ [dorp], [dorf]; and ‘I’ [ik], [ix].



In Trier, do people say [dat] or [das]?

In Trier, do people say [dorp] or [dorf]?

In Düsseldorf, do people say [ik] or [ix]?

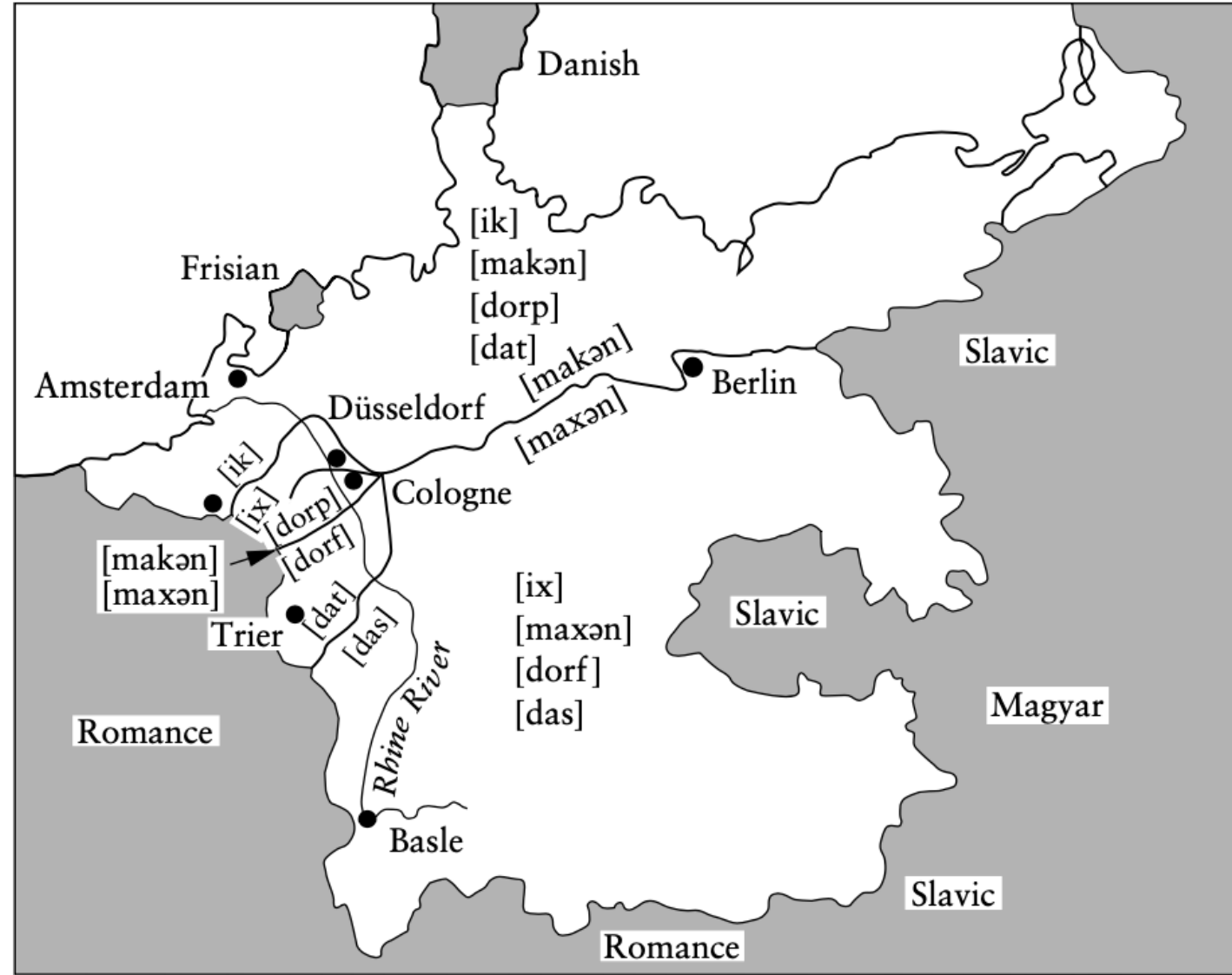
In Düsseldorf, do people say [dat] or [das]?

In Berlin, do people say [maxən] or [makən]?

In Berlin, do people say [ix] or [ik]?

# The Rhenish Fan

In-between areas, like Düsseldorf and Trier, are sometimes known as *transition areas* – they only have this sound change in some words, but not all. They thus represent a transition between High German and Low German, being fully neither.



# Dialect geography

- Why have dialect geographers largely focused on rural areas?

Rural areas were regarded as 'conservative' in the sense that they were seen to preserve 'older' forms of the languages under investigation. Urban areas were acknowledged to be innovative, unstable linguistically, and difficult to approach through existing survey techniques.

One basic assumption in dialect geography is that regional dialects are really quite easy to sample: just find one or two people in the particular location you wish to investigate, people who are preferably elderly and untraveled, interview them, and ask them how they pronounce particular words, refer to particular objects, and phrase particular kinds of utterances.

- What are some limitations of this approach?
- What are some limitations of regional dialectology in general?

# Discussion!

- If you were trying to create a dialect atlas, how might you decide on who to survey?
- What sorts of words or features would you be looking for?
- How would you try to get your participants to produce those words or features?

# Task!

- Consult *The Atlas of North American English* (2006), available on our course site. Skim through the beginning of chapter 4 (beginning on page 21). How did the researchers recruit participants?
- Look at the questionnaire on page 32. What are your thoughts?



# Linguistic variable

“A *linguistic variable* is a linguistic item which has identifiable variants.”

- What are some of the linguistic variables that the researchers were after in the Atlas of North American English? Think back to the questionnaire on p.32.

## Discussion! (p.146, q.4)

I have suggested that certain linguistic variables are particularly marked, i.e., speakers and listeners are acutely aware of them. We immediately notice either the presence or absence of something. One consequence is that all a speaker must do is use a single instance of the 'wrong' variant, e.g., drop an *h* when he or she should not, to reveal that the middle-class style being used is actually overlaid on a working-class one. Can you think of other examples of this phenomenon, when someone 'gives himself or herself away' by using a linguistic feature in such a way? (Note that it is also possible to give away your middle-class or upper-class origins while pretending to be working class.)

How to get vaccinated (in NYC)